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The Lexico-Semantic Innovation in Nollywood Movies in Nigerian English

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Abstract

Over time, Nigerian English has experienced notable lexico-semantic extensions, as words and expressions acquire new meanings shaped by sociocultural contexts. With the rise of new media, such extensions have increased, particularly through the Nigerian movie industry, which has enhanced the acceptance and usage of Nigerian English. This study examined the lexico-semantic features in selected Nollywood movies, adopting Labov's Language Variation Theory. Data were generated from eleven movies produced between 2015 and 2023 and qualitatively analysed by identifying and classifying phrasal extensions, lexical extensions, loanwords, and coinages. Findings revealed extensive lexico-semantic innovations. Phrasal extensions included: "cashing out" (from withdrawing money to making money), "reduce your temperature" (from body temperature to calming down), "mother of the year" (from praise to sarcasm for a bad mother), "chewing gum" (from candy to persistently extorting someone), "entering my eyes" (from physical sight to attraction), and "sick upstairs" (from illness to emotional instability). Lexical extensions included: "jollof-rice" (from food to pleasant smell), "lockup" (from locking to keeping quiet), "ginger" (from spice to motivation), "chop my money" (from eating to enjoyment), "jungle" (from forest to lawless place), "protection" (from safeguarding to supernatural charm), and "recharge" (from energizing to inflicting harm). Loanwords such as egunje, aso-oke, and aso-ebi, and coinages like "Yoruba demon" and "afterglow" also emerged. The study concludes that Nollywood actively drives and sustains Nigeria's evolving lexico-semantic features.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language changes as people adjust it to their daily needs and realities. In Nigeria, English has taken on local forms shaped by culture, indigenous languages, and patterns of use, leading to what is now called Nigerian English (Adegbija, 1994; Bamgbose, 1995). This variety shows clear differences from British English in both vocabulary and meaning (Bamiro, 1994). These differences do not appear suddenly; they build over time through regular use, especially through meaning shifts, coinages, and extension of existing expressions (Obasi, 2022; Abdullahi-Idiagbon, 2014). What this shows is that Nigerian English grows from real communication needs and reflects the environment where it is used.

Within this process, Nollywood plays a central role. Its wide audience and strong link to everyday life make it a space where language is constantly used, tested, and spread (Haynes, 2016). The films reflect Nigeria's multilingual setting, where English mixes with Pidgin and indigenous languages, and this mixing supports the movement of local expressions into

English (Mowarin, 2010; Akindele, 2017). Because film dialogue closely follows how people speak in real life, expressions used in movies move easily into public speech, social media, and youth language (Sobola, 2019). As this happens, new meanings and forms become familiar and accepted in wider use (Igboanusi, 2002; Bamigbola, 2022). Nollywood, in this sense, both reflects and strengthens ongoing changes in Nigerian English.

These changes become clearer when attention is placed on words and meanings. Lexico-semantics focuses on how words are chosen and how meanings shift in context, offering a way to understand how English adapts in Nigeria (Adegbija, 1994). Nollywood films often combine English, Pidgin, and indigenous languages in a natural way, making speech more relatable and closer to real interaction (Igboanusi, 2002). These include borrowing from local languages, extending meanings of existing words, and forming new expressions, patterns already noted in earlier work (Bamgbose, 1971). This aligns with the view that language reflects social interaction and meaning-making to fit cultural experience (Snoek, 2022), and that contact between languages supports borrowing and change (Philip, 2011). Despite all these studies, there is limited focused analysis on how Nollywood specifically drives and shapes lexico-semantic innovation in Nigerian English, despite clear evidence that films actively spread and normalize new meanings and expressions in everyday use. To address this gap, the study sets out clear objectives: 1. to identify and classify lexico-semantic features (phrasal extension, lexical extension, loanwords, and coinages) in selected Nollywood movies. 2. to determine the role of Nollywood in the spread and acceptance of Nigerian English expressions.

2. AFRICAN ENGLISH: DEVELOPMENT, STRUCTURE, AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC REALITY

The idea of African English started with efforts to show that English used in Africa is shaped by local languages and cultures, not seen as wrong forms. Bamgbose, Banjo, and Thomas (1997) present this clearly from a West African view, showing that these forms of English have social and institutional value. Early work like Simo (1993) describes sound patterns in Cameroon English, while later work such as Schmied (2004) explains similar patterns in East Africa. Rooy et al. (2009) show how English changes across different situations and uses, and Botha and Bernaisch (2025) explain how social life and context shape these differences. Together, these works show that African English have stable structures and follow their own norms.

Later studies focus on how meaning is made in daily use. Babatunde and Akinola (2026) explain how these forms grow through learning, contact, and regular use. Recent work shows strong influence from local languages in everyday expressions. Unuabonah (2026) examines discourse-pragmatic markers in Ghanaian and Ugandan Englishes, while Anderson et al. (2025) focus on borrowed Akan discourse-pragmatic markers in Ghanaian English. In a related study, Unuabonah et al. (2024) examine the context-specific meanings of expressions such as "sorry" in African Englishes. Westphal (2022) shows how question tags are used in Nigerian English in ways that reflect local interaction styles. Nigerian English is further described in sound patterns by Gut and Meer (2026), in sentence and meaning patterns by Babatunde Akanbi and Popoola Toluwalase (2025), and in people's attitudes by Babatunde and Akinola (2026). These studies show that African English are not random but follow clear patterns shaped by multilingual life. Overall, they confirm that African English are real, systematic, and continue to grow across the continent.

2.1. Nigerian English

Nigerian English is a variety of English that developed through long contact between English and Nigeria's indigenous languages. It is not a mistaken form of English but a structured variety shaped by Nigeria's multilingual and multicultural environment. Over time, it has developed its own vocabulary, meanings, pronunciation patterns, and grammatical structures that reflect local communication needs. In discussions of the global spread of English, it is shown that in second-language contexts such as Nigeria, English naturally adapts to local linguistic and cultural realities, producing new meanings and usages. Nigerian English therefore emerged through the blending of English with indigenous languages, resulting in a distinct variety that carries features suited to everyday Nigerian communication.

Within this multilingual setting, Nigerian English functions as an important medium of communication across different language groups. David (2014) explains that it represents a range of language use in Nigeria and supports interaction among speakers of diverse indigenous languages. Its distinctiveness is also evident in its phonological, lexical, and

grammatical features, which separate it from other varieties of English, as highlighted by Nwoye (2023). These differences are largely shaped by indigenous language influence. Furthermore, Aboh and Uduk (2016) show that the pragmatic use of Nigerian English is closely connected to Nigeria's sociocultural context, which shapes how meanings are interpreted in interaction.In the same line, Adegbite (2017) views it as a functional variety shaped by historical and contemporary influences, with established norms of usage, spelling, and stylistic preferences that continue to evolve within Nigeria's sociolinguistic context. Due to the way English has been domesticated and applied to all of our conveniences, experiences, nuances, and sensibilities, the usage of internationally developed English in Nigeria reflects local worldviews, social life, culture, and religion in the Nigerian setting, is now referred to as localisation rather than the globalisation of English (Babatunde, 2026).

2.2 Categories of Lexico-Semantic Features of Nigerian English

Lexico-semantic features refer to the characteristics of words and meanings within a language. They encompass the relationships between words, such as similarity, opposition, and hierarchy, as well as how meanings can shift or overlap depending on context. These offer assistance in understanding the associations and refinements between diverse words and how they work together to communicate meaning. There are several categories of lexico-semantic features; however, this paper only looks at lexico-semantic, Coinages and Loan words. Figure 1 (adapted from Kupolati, Adebileje, & Adeleke, 2021) illustrates the broad categories of lexical variation in Nigerian English.

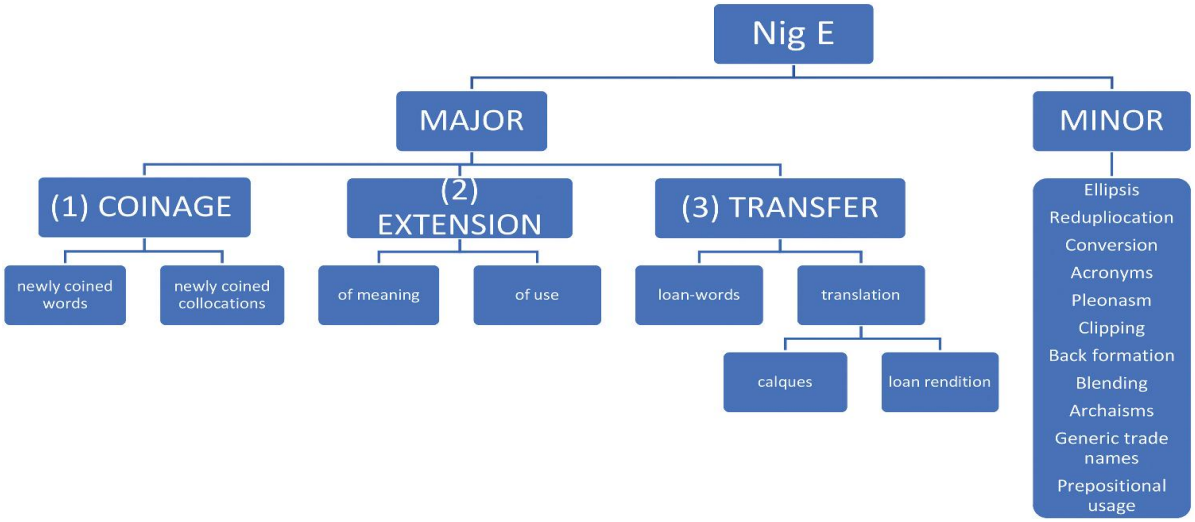


Figure 1. Broad categories of lexical variation in Nigerian English (adapted from Kupolati, Adebileje, & Adeleke, 2021).

The diagram classifies variations into major and minor processes. The major processes include coinage**,** extension**,** and transfer which account for newly coined words and collocations, extensions of meaning or use, and lexical transfer through borrowing and translation. The minor processes involve reduplication**,** conversion**,** acronyms**,** pleonasm**,** clipping**,** blending**,** and other creative word formations that reflect the dynamic nature of NE.

The lexico-semantic features of Nigerian English reveal how the variety expands and adapts its vocabulary and meanings through coinage, semantic extension, and borrowing, reflecting the interaction between language, culture, and society. Coinage refers to the creation of new words or expressions to describe emerging realities, demonstrating the adaptability and vitality of language (Crystal, 2010). In Nigerian English, coinages such as chop money and waka function not only as lexical innovations but also as reflections of cultural values and social interaction (Adegbija, 1989). Coinage occurs through processes such as blending, clipping, and borrowing (Al-Salman and Haider (2021), and is often driven by socio-cultural change (Martin, 2020). Nigerian English displays numerous lexical innovations arising from the country's sociocultural and linguistic context including coinages and culturally grounded expressions that have become established in everyday usage (Adegbija 1989; Jowitt 1991). In addition, novel collocations such as long throat (greed), big eye (envy), and fall my hand (disappointment) illustrate semantic creativity (Udofot, 2004). Expressions like eat money, Ghana-must-go,

and toilet paper (bribe) further encode socio-political realities (Adedimeji, 2007). These patterns confirm that lexical innovation in Nigerian English is shaped by localisation and acculturation (Awonusi, 2004).

Semantic extension or shift involves the broadening or modification of a word's meaning to accommodate new contexts. It reflects cognitive and linguistic processes through which words acquire additional meanings (Dirk, 2015; Traugott, 2017). Such changes may arise from internal developments as well as from social and cultural influences (Traugott, 2017). In Nigerian English, many words extend beyond their Standard English meanings, illustrating semantic innovation (Jowitt, 1991). For example, rub minds means "to discuss," while fall my hand means "to disappoint." Similarly, bus may refer to any form of public transport. Semantic shift is therefore a reflection of cultural adaptation, where meanings evolve in response to societal needs (Garcia-Marchena 2020). These shifts highlight the flexibility of language and its responsiveness to changing communicative contexts.

Loanwords are lexical items borrowed from one language into another, usually as a result of cultural and linguistic contact. They are integrated into the receiving language, often undergoing phonological and structural modification (Durkin, 2009). Borrowing typically occurs in multilingual contexts and reflects interaction between speech communities (Thomason, 2001). It also signals cultural exchange and historical relationships (Haspelmath & Tadmor, 2009; Haspelmath, 2009). Scholars further emphasise that loanwords emerge through processes such as cultural contact and technological advancement (Jowitt, 2019). They also function as tools of linguistic innovation (Crystal, 2003) and adaptation (Haugen, 2009). Nigerian English incorporates numerous loanwords from indigenous languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa, including danfo, barbara, akamu, akpu, eba, egusi, and ogbono (Adegbija, 1989). These lexical items encode culturally specific meanings and fill lexical gaps. Loan blends, which combine English forms with Nigerian phonological patterns, further illustrate processes of nativisation (Jowitt, 1991). As noted by Adamo (2007), many of these borrowed forms are fully integrated into Nigerian English with meanings that lack direct equivalents in Standard English.

Beyond these processes, Nigerian lexis represents the broader vocabulary associated with Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin, shaped by the country's multilingual environment. Its development has been significantly reinforced by cultural platforms such as Nollywood. The rise of Nollywood, driven by economic and technological factors, enabled rapid and accessible film production (Haynes, 2000). Its narratives combine indigenous storytelling traditions with contemporary themes (Adesokan, 2009), thereby promoting local languages and expressions (Onuzulike, 2007). Nollywood also functions as a site for negotiating social and cultural identities (Abah, 2009), including representations of gender (Afolayan, 2014). Scholars further highlight its international reach and influence (Okome, 2007; Obayiuwana, 2016; Jedlowski, 2011). Through these channels, Nigerian lexis continues to expand and gain global visibility.

2.3 Theoretical Underpinning

This study adopts Labov's (2006) theory of language variation, which examines how language varies among different social groups and is influenced by factors such as age, ethnicity, and social class. Linguistic variation refers to differences in language use across regions, social contexts, or individual speakers (Heidary & Barzan, 2019). Labov's research highlights that linguistic variation is systematic and reflects social identities and community memberships. Language variation encompasses all aspects of language, including semantics, phonology, morphology, and syntax, and can occur both between speakers (interspeaker variation) and within a single speaker's usage (intraspeaker variation). It manifests in choices of words, pronunciation, and grammatical patterns, playing a crucial role in language change over time. Dialects, a form of language variety, include different languages, accents, registers, and styles, including the standard variety. Analyzing linguistic variation is essential for understanding language's role in shaping social identities and relationships. Variation theory, as described by Poplack (1993), employs techniques from various fields like linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and statistics to study language use in natural contexts. Techniques such as quantitative, qualitative, comparative, variational, discourse, sociolinguistic interviews, and ethnographic analysis provide insights into the dynamics of language use.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a content analysis research design, suitable for examining how Nollywood cinema influences the invention and evolution of lexico-semantic features in Nigerian English. This design enables a systematic analysis of language use, meanings, and semantic shifts as reflected in selected movies between 2015 and 2023. The study is underpinned by Labov's Variation Theory (1972)**,** which explains how language varies across social contexts and evolves over time.A total of eleven Nollywood movies were selected through a combination of purposive andconvenience sampling techniques**.** Purposive sampling was used to select movies that met specific criteria relevant to the study, including: (i) Nigerian origin, (ii) high audience reach or social media impact, (iii) production between 2015 and 2023, and (iv) dominant use of English or Nigerian English. Convenience sampling was applied to access movies that were readily available on streaming platforms. The selected movies are: Brotherhood (2022), Babymaker (2023), Battle on Buka Street (2022), Elevator Baby (2019), Gangs of Lagos (2023), Loving Amanda (2021), Omo Ghetto: The Saga (2020), Shantytown (2023), She Must Be Obeyed (2023), Wura (2023), and Wedding Party (2016). Data were obtained by watching the movies and extracting sixty (60) Nigerian English lexical items and expressions that showed signs of semantic invention, extension, shift, borrowing, or coinage. The words were documented and contextual usage analyzed qualitatively. To ensure clarity and accuracy, the Nigerian English meanings were compared with Standard British English meanings using dictionaries and existing literature. Words were then coded into four categories: semantic extension, semantic shift, loanwords, and coinages**.** To enhance validity, meanings were cross-checked using credible dictionaries. Ethical considerations were observed, as the data were sourced from publicly available materials strictly for academic purposes.

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section assesses the lexico-extension, phrasal extension, coinages, and loan words in the selected Nigerian Movies. It presents the analysis and interpretation of the data derived from the selected movies.

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 Phrasal Extension in "Brotherhood"

Sample analysis one: Cashing out

Within the movie context, the phrase "cashing out" is informally used to convey the idea "to make money", as used by 'Akin'. He tries to connive with Izra, his friend and gang member, to discuss his plan to carry out a heist. This differs from its original meaning, which conveys the idea of "to withdraw" with banking. Within the contextual framework of the movie, Akin uses the phrase to indicate the idea of "selling something in exchange for money". He was selling his plan to carry out a heist that would profit him and his gang members involved. Semantically, this is an instance of a phrase extension.

Sample analysis two: Not everyone is an angel

The phrase "not everybody is an Angel" will be interpreted by a layman about the biblical celestial beings. However, in the context of the movie, the meaning attached to the lexical item "angel" refers to a virtuous person, someone who embodies moral goodness. Thus, this is an instance of a phrasal extension because the meaning of the expression extends from referring to a celestial being to a virtuous person. Also, the lexico-semantic extension process that occurs with the statement is a metaphorical extension because the lexical item conveys an abstract idea of a virtuous person.

Sample analysis three: Reduce the temperature

The literal meaning conveyed with this expression can be interpreted as reducing the amount of cold or heat. However, Goldie, Akin's girlfriend, clarified that the statement was used to subdue the heated argument between Akin and Izra after a successful heist. Thus, this expression presents itself as an instance of a phrasal extension. When someone is engaged in a heated argument with another person, a third party may tell the interlocutors to "cool down" or "calm down", which is the colloquial expression for the phrase "reduce the temperature". Both phrases, "cool down" and "reduce the temperature", retain the same meaning.

Sample analysis four: I want a face-to-face meeting

In the statement "I want face to face meeting", the phrase "face to face" can be interpreted by a layman as the front portion of the head. However, in the context of the movie, the meaning attached to the expression extends to "directly meeting someone in person". Semantically, this presents to us an instance of a phrasal extension in the sense that the meaning attached to the word "face", as a result of collocation, extends from meaning "the front portion of a head" to meaning "directly meeting someone in person". Also, the lexico-semantic process involved in the expression is narrowing because each component has been narrowed down from meaning the "front portion of the face" to "a physical meeting between two or more persons".

Sample analysis five: when are you guys going to do the do

In this sentence, the lexical extension occurs in the word "the do". The meaning of the expression is known to the audience when her friend, Nassa, professes to her that she intends to undergo the natural process of childbirth with her male best friend, Mofe. It changes the meaning of the expression from meaning "an act" to meaning "have sex". The expression "the do" is an instance of a phrasal extension.

4.1.2. Lexical Extension in "Babymaker

Sample analysis six: We can strike the money

The literal meaning of "strike" is "to hit an object or person or "to defeat," however, in the context of the movie, the word "strike" figuratively represents the idea of winning, and this is attributed to the context that surrounds its usage in the movie by Akin, the protagonist. Semantically, this is an instance of a lexical extension.

Sample analysis seven: You smell like Jollof-rice

The item of interest in the statement "you smell like Jollof-rice" is the word "Jollof-rice", which refers to an African dish prepared with rice, tomatoes, and various ingredients. However, within the context of the movie, the meaning attached to the expression connotes a strong good odour. Thus, this is a lexical extension since the expression's meaning changes from "African dish" to "nice body odour".

4.1.3. Phrasal Extension in Baby Maker

Sample analysis eight: We move

"We Move" is an informal expression in Nigerian English (NigE). The typology of the change lies in the contextual use of the phrase, which goes beyond the literal meaning. The above expression presents itself as a phrasal extension because the meaning attached to the phrase changes from the meaning "movement" in its literal sense it suggests or expresses the idea of "encouragement". Also, the lexico-semantic process involved in this change is extended in connotation since the phrase does not convey its inherent meaning of performing. However, it conveys Nigerians' cultural and emotional appeal for resilience, determination, and motivation, as used by Mofe to convey such sense after he thought his chance to get a part in a movie had been shattered.

Sample analysis nine: Lock up

Mofe issued this instruction to his roommate concerning a personal issue he had discussed with him, which was not in support of a decision he had made. In this case, the phrasal extension is from the simple imperative "Just lock up" to "Please be quiet". This phrasal extension changes the meaning from "to lock something up to "to be quiet". It is an example of how the meaning of a phrase can change based on the context in which it is used, and in the movie, it is used in the context of an argument. Semantically, this is an instance of a phrasal extension, and the lexico-semantic process involved in the expression is narrowing since, in the context of the movies, it has reduced the broader sense of the word "lock" to meaning "be silent".

Sample analysis ten: I am looking forward to having a side hustle

Originally, this trendy expression "side hustle" is used to convey the idea of "securing a secondary job", but it is used in the context of the movie to indicate a character's desire to start a personal entrepreneurial venture of his. So, the term

is used here to mean one's own business and not a secondary job one takes from another employee. Thus, this is a form of phrasal extension. It conveys the idea of taking up a secondary job from an employee and starting up a personal business, which is dependent on the context.

4.1.4 Lexical Extension in "Elevator baby

Sample analysis eleven: Chop my money

The informal expression or word "chop my money", as used in the movie, conveys the idea of spending. The initial meaning attached to the word "chop" means "to cut", but In Nigeria, English, the word "chop" is used to convey the idea of eating or food. When it collocates with the above expression, it expresses the idea of spending something of value, such as money. So, within the context of the movie, the expression is used to convey the idea of spending something of value. Semantically, "chop" is an instance of a lexical extension because the initial meaning attached to it ", to eat", has been altered to mean "to spend", and this is attributed to its collocation with the expression "my money". Therefore, the process of semantic change involved in this statement is broadening because the expression "chop" has been extended to not only mean "to cut" or "to cause something to end" but also to mean "to spend."

Sample analysis twelve: Are you coming from Heaven?

This question was issued to Taju, by his boss at work when he was instructed via phone to leave his current location and fix the problem with the sudden power failure within his company's premises. However, in response to the instruction, Taju gave a mendacious account of his whereabouts, suggesting that it would take an hour or two before he reached the work premises. So, the lexical item "heaven" is used here to convey the idea or sense of a "long-distance location" and not to convey the sense of "a celestial sphere". Semantically, the word "heaven" depicts an instance of a lexical extension since it changes from meaning "a celestial sphere" to meaning "a long-distance location", and the process of semantic extension involved with the use of the expression is a metaphorical extension because the word depicts the idea of a far location.

Sample analysis thirteen: Ginger

The idea of the expression "ginger" extends from the meaning "a spicy root of a tropical plant" to mean "encouragement", thereby presenting itself as an instance of a lexical extension. Also, the process of semantic extension involved in the statement is in two ways: extension in a part of speech and extension in connotation. This is because the word "ginger" is originally a noun. However, it is used in the form of a verb within the context of the movie to mean something different, and it is also considered as an extension in connotation because it carries the emotional and cultural meaning that Nigerians associate with its use, which is "encouragement" or "motivation".

4.1.5 Phrasal Extension in "Elevator Baby"

Sample analysis fourteen: Mother of the Year

In the phrase "Mother of the Year". The literal meaning of this phrase is "the best mother in a particular year", but it is used in the movie as "a mother who is not good at parenting". So, the change from "mother of the year" to "a bad mother" is the phrasal change in this sentence. The semantic process involved in this expression is an antiphrasis because the statement is used ironically to mean the opposite of its literal sense, a "bad mother".

4.1.6 Phrasal extension in "Battle on the Buka Street

Sample analysis fifteen: Chewing gum

Initially, "chewing gum" denotes a soft, rubbery substance solely intended for chewing. However, within the context of the movie Yejide she used the word about her rival, (Awele) to steal her customers from her business. Therefore, this presents itself as an instance of phrasal extension because it expresses Awele's trickery in stealing her competitors' buyers.

Sample analysis sixteen: When did you change your song?

Awele's mother, on her sick bed, advised her daughter to let go of any resentment towards her step-sister despite the longstanding rivalry rooted in the conflict between their mothers. Awele described her mother's change in advice as a "song," indicating a change in perspective. Rather than encouraging revenge, Awele's mother opted for reconciliation, showcasing a phrasal extension and a metaphorical extension in semantics.

Sample analysis seventeen Bursting my head

The term "Bursting my head" is a Nigerian word commonly employed to express a feeling of astonishment or mind-blowing. In the movie, the head of youth in the Ottawa community becomes enamoured with Ifunaya, Awele's eldest daughter. He uses this expression while trying to win her affections. To a layperson, the phrase may be interpreted literally as what it implies, but this is not the case. Semantically, this is an example of a phrasal extension.

Sample analysis eighteen Back to sender

The phrase "back to sender" was used by Awele while suggesting to her sick mother that she recommend a native doctor who can assist in obtaining a magical amulet that can easily be employed to hurt her step-sister. The phrase has been extended to signify a sorcerer's amulet or what Nigerians will call "jazz". Semantically, this is a phrasal and metaphorical extension because the expression serves as a metaphor for a sorcerer's amulet, spell or incantation, not what the expression means.

Sample analysis nineteen sick in the mouth

Awele's mother uttered the statement above after her mother directed her granddaughter to insult her father verbally. As perceived in the movie, the phrase has been extended to mean the ill statements Awele's daughter utters. Semantically, the "sick in the mouth" is a metaphor for Awele's daughter's badmouthing, and this is an instance of a phrase extension.

Sample analysis twenty Next punch

As the name implies, the phrase "next punch" can be interpreted by a layman as a physical strike or hit on something. However, in the movie context, the phrase depicts Awele's sister, Yejide, planning to decrease the number of Awele's buyers in her business. This, semantically, presents itself as an instance of a phrase extension.

Sample analysis twenty-one: Put the body for the ground

The phrase "put body for the ground" depicts the idea of one's willingness to take the essential step in achieving a goal, and in the case of the movie, the goal is to be married. Jemima expresses her view concerning her relationship status with her friend, Sista, clarifying the reason for her single status. In the movie, the viewers learn that she has a significant other who has yet to propose to her, and until he proposes to her, she will remain unmarried. Semantically, the expression is an instance of a phrasal extension.

Sample analysis: twenty-two Dead father

The phrase "dead father" is a phrase used to depict the idea of a father who abandoned his wife and children. From the context of the movie, Fola is presented to the viewers as the dead father because of his misdeeds. Semantically, this is a phrasal extension.

4.1.7. Lexical extension in "Shanty Town."

Sample analysis twenty-three Protection

The term "protection" means "safeguarding", but in the context of the movies", it connotes the use of a supernatural element deployed to protect oneself against attacks. It does not translate to the diverse physical means of guarding oneself from potential harm that could be inflicted on an individual. Semantically, the idea of protection, within the context of the movies, changes the path from safeguarding to the supernatural means of protection, indicating a lexical extension and a form of metaphorical extension since the idea of protection is extended beyond its conventional meaning.

Sample analysis twenty-four: I recharge you

In the movie, "recharge" is used instead of "hit" when Colorado compellingly directs Ene to enter his van hesitantly. The expression "I go recharge you" has undergone an extension. The word "recharge," which typically means to replenish or renew, is now used metaphorically to convey the action of physically hitting someone.

Sample analysis twenty-five my body is peppery me

Colorado uses the above expression to express the idea of being upset. This statement was issued to one of the aspiring candidates of the Lagos governorship election, chief Fernández. Semantically, the word "peppery" indicates the state of feeling upset.

4.1.8 Lexical extension in "Gang of Lagos"

Sample analysis twenty-seven Jungle

In the movie, the word "jungle" depicts the state of lawlessness in the city of Isale Eko. Obalola uses expression through the third person narrative to portray the lawless nature of the city. In semantic terms, this is a lexical extension because the literal meaning attributed to the word "jungle" is an underdeveloped, humid forest. However, it is extended to depict a lawless city.

4.1.9 Phrasal extension in "Gang of lagos"

Sample analysis twenty-six Six feet under the ground

In simple terms, someone might interpret "six feet under the ground" as a vertical depth of 6 feet. However, in the movies, the context makes it clear that this phrase symbolizes death. Alaye Bam Bam, in the movie, presents two paths to success in Isale Eko: one involves facing mortality, and the other entails assuming a position of power in the town. Semantically, this is an instance of a phrasal extension.

4.1.10 Phrasal extension in "Loving Amanda"

Sample analysis Twenty-seven lost sheep

The expression "lost sheep" is a biblical word for sinners. In the movie, this expression was used by a female pastor as she narrates to the church of her transfiguration through Christ Jesus. In semantic terms, the expression is an instance of phrasal extension because the meaning of lost sheep does not imply what it means in the literal sense but in a biblical perspective.

Sample analysis twenty-eight entering my eyes

The phrase "entering my eyes" represents the idea of being captivated by the beauty of someone or something. Moreover, it does not mean what it implies in the literal sense, which is "to attract one's attention by making eye contact with them". This presents itself as a form of phrasal extension.

Sample analysis twenty-nine Sharp mouth

In this context, having a "sharp mouth" means that someone is quick-witted or tends to speak directly or sarcastically. It suggests a proficiency in verbal communication that can be incisive. Amanda's ex-boyfriend used this expression when he seized his former girlfriend. Observing her sharp verbal skills, he remarked that she had attained a heightened level of quick-wittedness. The use of "sharp mouth" involves a phrasal extension, and in this context, "sharp," which typically refers to a physical quality, is extended to describe someone's verbal cleverness. The extension occurs as the word "sharp" takes on a new meaning related to wit and verbal agility rather than its original physical sharpness in that perspective.

Sample analysis thirty must be sick upstairs.

The expression "sick upstairs", in the context of the movies, suggests difficulties or distress in one's thoughts or emotions. At that moment, Amanda addressed her manager for exhibiting socially inappropriate behaviour. Also, if

someone uses this phrase in a literal context, it could refer to a physical illness or discomfort related to the upper part of the body. However, it is only a common or specific term with additional context. Therefore, the expression "sick upstairs" is a form of an extension.

Sample analysis Thirty-one Factory Reset

As a technological term, factory reset is the process of restoring a device to its original manufacturer settings, removing all user data, apps, and personal configurations. However, within the movie's context, a character uses the expression to vividly illustrate and comically explain when she told her younger sister about the slap that is coming her way, which will lead to her brain entering a factory reset. The character's reason in the movie was to teach her younger sister a moral lesson. In semantic terms, the phrase "factory reset" is an extension because the meaning of the expression extends beyond its technological confines to mean resetting or restoring someone's moral behaviour to teach them a moral lesson.

4.1.11 Lexical extension in "She must be obeyed."

Sample analysis thirty-two Witch

In the movie, SHE was labelled a "witch," a term that some might misconstrue as a literal mystical being causing chaos. However, X-cite used it to convey that SHE is deceitful and wicked rather than implying supernatural attributes. In semantic terms, this is an instance of a lexical extension.

Sample analysis: Thirty-three gassed

The word "gassed", as used by the character of SHE'S PA, means "to be excited" and not, in scientific terms, a flammable gaseous hydrocarbon or hydrocarbon mixture. In semantic terms, using "gassed" to mean excited represents a semantic extension known as amendment or innovation. In this case, the word has taken on a new meaning or usage that might not be found in traditional dictionaries but has emerged within a specific community.

Phrasal extension in "Omo Ghetto"

Sample analysis thirty-five Ride My Horse

In the above expression, the word "horse" is metaphorically extended to mean royalty or a title and nothing related to an animal, as shown in the movie. So, in full, the phrase "ride my horse" depicts the act of unofficially appointing oneself or another to assume a role. In the movie, Imole, this expression is used to represent the character Tequila's betrayal as he is made the new king by self-appointment.

Sample analysis thirty-six Protect Your Eggs.

The phrase "protect your eggs" means safeguarding or ensuring the safety of actual eggs, typically in a physical or literal sense, such as placing them in a secure container or handling them carefully. However, while advising Tito after securing a scholarship, Maje, formerly known as Edafe, told him to "protect your eggs". In the context provided, the idea of the expression extensions from mewing safeguarding the safety of eggs to meaning safeguarding valuable or important assets, plans, or potential opportunities

4.1.12 Phrasal extension in "Wura"

Sample analysis thirty- seven Take a Break

The phrase "take a break" is commonly understood as temporarily stepping away from an activity. Within the context of the movie "Wura", after Dimeji is issued a death threat to quit his love affair with Tumi, he informs Tumi that both of them need to "take a break". Normally, the expression can easily be understood or interpreted in a relationship as temporarily staying away from your significant other. However, most times, it leads to a permanent separation between lovers, which calls for questioning regarding the actual meaning of the expression. As shown in the movie, Dimeji and Tumi end their love affair when the former declares they should "take a break" from the relationship. Semantically, in the

context provided, where "take a break" is used to signal the end of a romantic relationship, it involves a lexico-semantic extension.

Sample analysis thirty -eight Straight from the Horse Mouth

The phrase "straight from the horse's mouth" denotatively this phrase means when information is directly from the horse's mouth, but it has been extended from its actual meaning to refer to when information is directly from an authoritative source rather than through rumours or second-hand accounts. However, in the movie "Wura", the meaning originally given to this expression using conventionality seems far from it. The mansion is considered the most prestigious and famous in Iperindo, and only a commoner is allowed in if given permission. In the scene, Ewa and Friends-For-Life approached Paulina to discuss the frivolous activities they indulged in at Wura's as well as the splendour of the mansion. Upon receiving the information, Paulina reacted by using the expression to comment and appraise her friends for experiencing the pinnacle of enjoyment at Wura's, a place considered for a long time to be sacred by the commoners of Iperindo.

Sample analysis thirty-nine Breakfast in bed

The phrase "Breakfast in bed" means enjoying a meal, typically breakfast, while comfortably lying in bed, often considered a special and indulgent treat. However, in the context of the movie, Femi made use of his expression in response to being probed on the reason for his sadness shortly after he ended his long-term homosexual relationship with Lolu. The extension, from "breakfast" to a morning meal served in bed to a breakup in a relationship, involves a form of lexico-semantic extension.

Sample analysis forty Very Good Friends

On a literal note, the expression "very good friends" can be interpreted, to mean a strong and close friendship where trust, mutual understanding, and support are prominent. However,

within the movie's context, the character of Friends-For-Life comically used the expression to describe the love affair of both Dimeiji and Tumi in a discussion with a close friend of his. Semantically, "very good friends" is an extension because it is extended to describe a romantic relationship, departing from its conventional meaning of a strong and close platonic friendship.

Sample analysis forty-one Chewing Gum Girlfriends

The above expression does not have a standard or widely recognised meaning. However, the character of Friends-For-Life used the expression as an insulative response to Pauline's offer for him to settle down with a wife in the community of Iperindo. He used the expression to describe the majority of the single women in Iperindo as Chewing gum girlfriends, which can translated to meaning prostitutes. Semantically, the context provided, where the expression "chewing gum girlfriends" is used to describe single women in Iperindo insultingly

Sample analysis forty-two Gutter Mouth

The expression "gutter mouth" denotes speaking to an entity in a derogatory and belittling manner. Mide was described by his lover, Paulina, as having a "gutter mouth" because of his consistency in belittling Demeji's social and financial status.

Sample analysis of forty-three Child of Lucifer

The expression "child of Lucifer" does not denote the biblical figure, the Devil. However, Omolara uses it f to express the idea of one who is unruly in behaviour. Also, within the movie context, Mide is described by his mother as the "child of Lucifer" as she finds out that he is involved in a crime case. Semantically, the extension in the phrase is an instance of an extension because the meaning is metaphorically extended to mean an unruly individual.

Sample analysis forty-four: He is a Bloody Cockroach.

A cockroach is a winged insect with a flattened body, long antennae, and a hard exoskeleton. However, within the movie context, Paulina described an ex-convict as a "bloody cockroach" since he consistently tried to clear his name on a

crime he believed not to have committed. So, the word cockroach was used to express the notion of resilience. Semantically, the phrase "bloody cockroach" is an extension since the extension moves from a winged insect with a flattened body to the idea of resilience.

Sample analysis of forty-five Real Monster

The phrase "a real monster" means an oddly looking evil-like creature. However, the monster that Paulina referred to in the movie was none other than her supposed father's killer, who persistently denies the allegations issued at him regarding the death of Pa Kuti. Kazeem was described as a monster because he was convicted for the death of Pa Kuti. In the context where the phrase "a real monster" is used to describe Kazeem, who was accused of killing Pa Kuti, it involves a lexico-semantic change. In this case, "a real monster" is extended to describe Kazeem as an evil-like creature due to the serious accusations against him.

Sample analysis forty-six People with a Heartbeat

The phrase "people with a heartbeat" originally refers to individuals with actively pumping hearts. However, in the movies, Cobra employs this expression to convey his emotion to his wife. Semantically, the meaning extended from physiological to emotional resonance. Semantically, in the context described, the phrase "people with a heartbeat" extends from its original physiological meaning to convey an emotional response.

Sample analysis forty-seven in our Darkest Hour

In a literal sense, the darkest hour refers to the time of day when it is dark, usually midnight. However, the way the phrase is used in the movie, through Aunty Labake, refers to the challenging times in a broader sense. In the movie, Aunty Labake described the death of her son as her "darkest hour". Semantically, in this context, the phrase "in our darkest hour" describes challenging times.

Sample analysis forty-eight Use <u>your Upper</u>

The term “Upper” holds various meanings based on context. It may denote higher or elevated positions, describe the top portion of clothing, or refer to upstream river locations. However, in the movie scene where Labake and her son argue, Labake advises her to "use his upper" when she veers off-topic, suggesting her son should think more clearly. The word "upper", originally associated with physical elevation or top parts, has expanded to include a figurative sense, indicating the act of thinking or reasoning properly in the given movie's dialogue.

4.2 Loanwords in the “Wedding Party”

Sample analysis forty-nine: ‘Owanbe’

This term originated in Nigeria, specifically within the Yoruba culture, and has gained widespread usage in Nigerian English. It is a word derived from the Yoruba language, where "Owan" means "it is here", and "be" is a suffix that can be interpreted as "at" or "to". Together, "Owanbe" loosely translates to "it is here" or "it is happening", indicating an event or a gathering that is currently taking place or about to take place. The term "Owanbe" is commonly used to refer to lavish social gatherings or parties typically characterized by colourful attires, sumptuous feasts, lively music, and energetic dancing. These events are often hosted to celebrate milestones such as weddings, birthdays, graduations, anniversaries, and other significant achievements.

Sample analysis fifty: ‘Egunje’

The word originates from the Yoruba, meaning "bribe" or "extortion money." However, its usage has outshined its linguistic origins and has become a widely recognised term in Nigerian English. The term "egunje" reflects the socio-political landscape of Nigeria, where corruption and bribery have been persistent issues for decades. The word emerged as a colloquial expression to describe the practice of giving or taking bribes, often in exchange for preferential treatment, avoiding bureaucratic processes, or avoiding legal consequences.

Sample analysis fifty-one: 'Asooke'

This is a type of traditional handwoven fabric originating from the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria. The term "asooke" itself comes from the Yoruba language, where "aso" means cloth and "oke" means to be worn. As a loanword, "asooke" has been borrowed from Yoruba into English to specifically refer to this type of fabric. It is commonly used in Nigeria and other parts of West Africa and has gained recognition in the global fashion industry.

Sample analysis fifty-two: 'Asoebi'

This word is another term borrowed from the Yoruba language and commonly used in Nigeria. It refers to group members, such as family members, friends, or associates, wearing matching or coordinated outfits for a particular event or occasion. The term "asoebi" is a combination of "aso" (cloth) and "ebi" (family), reflecting its cultural significance in Nigerian social gatherings. It has been adopted into Nigerian English and describes this communal dressing practice.

Sample analysis fifty-three: 'Oga'

This a term borrowed from Nigerian Pidgin English, a Creole language spoken in Nigeria. In Nigerian Pidgin English, "oga" typically refers to someone in a position of authority or a boss. The term is commonly used to address or refer to employers, supervisors, or individuals perceived to have power or influence in a particular context. While it originates from Nigerian Pidgin English, "oga" has been adopted into broader Nigerian English usage and is understood by speakers of various Nigerian languages.

Sample analysis fifty-four: 'Agbada'

This is traditional attire worn by men in some parts of West Africa, particularly Nigeria. It is a flowing robe that is usually heavily embroidered and often worn on special occasions such as weddings, festivals, or important ceremonies. Agbada consists of three pieces: a large flowing outer robe, a long-sleeved shirt, and trousers. The outfit is typically made from luxurious fabrics like silk, cotton, or brocade, and the embroidery often reflects the wearer's status or cultural heritage. Agbada is a symbol of cultural pride, elegance and sophistication.

Sample analysis fifty-five: 'Amebo'

It is a Nigerian slang term for someone who gossips or enjoys spreading rumours and secrets about others. The term is often used to describe individuals who like to eavesdrop on conversations and then spread the information they gather, sometimes maliciously or sensationalised. Being called an amebo is generally considered negative, implying being nosy or intrusive into others' affairs.

Sample analysis fifty-six: 'Shakara'

This is a Nigerian slang term that refers to showing off or putting on airs. It is often used to describe someone who behaves boastfully or arrogantly, especially to impress others or gain attention. Shakara can involve flashy or exaggeratedly flaunting one's wealth, status, or physical appearance. It can also refer to acting aloof or uninterested to attract admiration or desire from others. However, shakara is not always negative and can be seen as a form of confidence or self-assurance when done in moderation.

Sample analysis fifty-seven: 'Iyawo' This is a Yoruba term that translates to "bride" in English. In Nigerian culture, particularly among the Yoruba ethnic group, the term "iyawo" refers to a woman who is about to get married or has recently gotten married. The bride is a central figure in traditional Nigerian weddings, and much attention is given to her throughout the wedding festivities. During the wedding ceremony, the iyawo plays a significant role, participating in rituals and ceremonies that symbolise her union with her spouse. The term "iyawo" is used to honour and celebrate the bride's importance in the wedding proceedings, and it carries cultural and emotional significance within Nigerian communities.

4.3 Coinages in "Wedding Party"

Sample analysis fifty-eight: 'Yoruba demon' this represents a coined term that creatively combines two distinct elements: "Yoruba," referring to the ethnic group in Nigeria, and "demon," typically associated with negative senses. The emergence of this phrase reflects a form of linguistic innovation within Nigerian slang and popular culture. The term

"Yoruba demon" is often used humorously to describe men, particularly of Yoruba descent, who are perceived as charming, charismatic, and adept at romantic pursuits but also notorious for being unfaithful or deceitful in relationships. It has gained prominence through social media, where memes, jokes, and discussions about "Yoruba demons" abound, contributing to its widespread recognition within Nigerian and diaspora communities.

The "Yoruba demon" coinage demonstrates the fusion of cultural and linguistic elements. It taps into stereotypes and perceptions associated with Yoruba culture, particularly notions of charm and charisma, while also playing on the idea of demons as deceptive or manipulative figures. This amalgamation creates a humorous and culturally specific concept that resonates with many Nigerians and reflects the dynamic nature of language and culture.

Sample analysis fifty-nine: 'Afterglow' refers to the lingering positive feelings or emotions experienced after a particularly enjoyable or fulfilling event. This term encapsulates the contentment, satisfaction, and happiness that persists after moments of joy or achievement. It is like the emotional residue left behind, reminding individuals of the happiness they experienced during the event.

Sample analysis sixty: 'Afterparty' combines "after" and "party" to create a new term that describes a specific type of social gathering. The prefix "after-" indicates that the event occurs after another event, while "party" refers to a social gathering or celebration. By merging these two words, a new term, "afterparty," is created to signify a gathering following a main event. It implies an informal or intimate continuation of the festivities, often involving a select group of people who want to extend the enjoyment of the initial event. In essence, "afterparty" is a coinage word because it combines existing elements of language in an unexplored way to convey a distinct concept or experience. It serves as a convenient and descriptive term for post-event gatherings, capturing the idea of an additional celebration or continuation of associating after the main event has concluded.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examines the evolution of Nigerian English through lexico-semantic features as presented in Nollywood movies. The findings reveal a dynamic linguistic landscape where English adapts to Nigeria's unique sociocultural context, facilitated by lexical and phrasal extensions, coinages, and loanwords. These linguistic processes reflect the creative and functional ways in which English is localized, contributing to the distinct identity of Nigerian English.

The selected Nollywood movies show how words and phrases can acquire meanings that reflect particular cultural and communicative contexts. For instance, "cashing out" is used beyond its conventional financial sense to refer more broadly to making money, while "reduce the temperature" is used metaphorically to mean calming down. These examples illustrate how meaning can be extended or reinterpreted through contextual use. Such changes are recognised in studies of semantic change, where shifts in meaning are associated with patterns of language use and changing social contexts. Traugott (2017) identifies broadening as a major type of semantic change, through which words may acquire wider ranges of meaning over time. In Nigerian English, such extensions may reflect the social and cultural contexts in which the variety is used, allowing existing words to serve new communicative purposes. This adaptive capacity enriches Nigerian English, making it more relatable and reflective of the nation's cultural nuances.

Coinages in Nollywood movies highlight how Nigerian English responds to societal shifts by generating new terms. Expressions like "Yoruba demon" encapsulate complex cultural and social narratives, blending humor and critique within a linguistic framework. Al-Salman and Haider (2021) define coinage as a linguistic process that meets the demands of a changing society, emphasizing its role in expanding a language's lexicon. Crystal (2010) concurs, noting that neologisms are crucial for capturing novel experiences, particularly in rapidly evolving environments. These coinages show the vitality of Nigerian English, reflecting societal attitudes toward relationships, social behavior, and evolving cultural identities. Babatunde's (2026) study aligns with this finding, revealing that children contribute to the ongoing development of Nigerian English through lexical coinages.

The incorporation of loanwords from indigenous languages into Nigerian English, such as owanbe (Yoruba for a celebratory gathering) and egunje (bribe), signifies the deep cultural integration within Nigeria's multilingual landscape. Thomason (2001) highlights loanwords as linguistic evidence of prolonged cultural contact and adaptation, while

Haspelmath (2009) emphasizes their role in demonstrating the interconnectedness of linguistic and social identities. These borrowings enrich Nigerian English by embedding local cultural references, thereby strengthening its unique identity within the broader spectrum of World English.

The findings demonstrate that Nollywood is more than a cinematic mediumit is a linguistic incubator that reflects and shapes Nigerian English. Through lexical innovation, semantic redefinition, and cultural borrowing, Nollywood movies reveal the evolving identity of English in Nigeria. This continuous adaptation highlights the dynamic interplay between language and culture, positioning Nigerian English as a legitimate, evolving variety of English that resonates with the country's diverse sociolinguistic realities.

6. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that Nollywood plays a significant role in shaping the lexico-semantic development of Nigerian English. The analysis of selected movies revealed that semantic shift, coinage, and loanwords are central to how Nigerian English evolves, reflecting Nigeria's cultural values, societal experiences, and multilingual identity. Nollywood serves not only as a platform for entertainment but also as a linguistic space where English is indigenized to suit local realities. Through creative language use, Nollywood continues to strengthen Nigerian English as a distinct and legitimate variety within the global English family. Future studies should extend beyond lexico-semantics to examine phonological, morphological, and pragmatic influences of Nollywood on Nigerian English to provide a more holistic linguistic account.

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