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STRUCTURE AND USE OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS IN WRITTEN NIGERIAN ENGLISH

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By

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia in
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the loving memory of my Late father Alhaji Umaru Muhammadu Dudee, who could not live to see the end of this exercise. May his gentle soul rest in peace

Abstracts of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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UMAR ALIYU MUHAMMAD

July 2016

Chairman   :   Associate Professor Yap Ngee Thai, PhD
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There are idioms in Nigerian English which came about as a result of both cultural and linguistic influences of the users of English in Nigeria. A greater portion of the research conducted in English idioms are either on native speakers use and acquisition; or on non-native speakers use and acquisition of idioms in Standard English; but not on non-native speakers use and acquisition of idioms in non native varieties of English. In fact even studies Nigerian English have tended to discuss the variety holistically without any particular attention to idioms. Moreover, the existing corpora and idiom dictionaries of English do not feature idioms from L2 varieties of English. This research work is a modest attempt to address this dearth of research. The main aim is to identify, from a corpus of written materials, idioms in context in the variety of English in use in Nigeria with a view to understanding their unique structure/use and the contribution of indigenous languages to this.

The word sense disambiguation (WSD) by Hashimoto and Kawahara (2009) was adapted and used to identify idioms in sixty issues from two major newspaper titles in Nigeria – the *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard*. This source base was augmented by other sources like novels and articles written about idioms. A total of 2,212 idiom samples were identified. This number was converted to 1,415 idiom tokens by removing repetitions and conjugations.   To isolate the idioms unique to Nigerian English the tokens were checked in five English idiom dictionaries and two web corpora. After this checking it was concluded that the use and structure of 174 idioms were unique to Nigerian English.

With accommodation theory and Muysken's Quadrangled model providing the theoretical basis, the analysis of the result shows that the indigenous languages have contributed in shaping both the structure and use of idioms in Nigerian English. The usage pattern which shows that more idioms are used in the south of Nigeria than in the north can be explained by the accommodation principles of convergence, divergence and maintenance.   The unique structure of some idioms can be explained by

Muysken's quadrangled model of languages in contact. There are idioms that can be found across most varieties of English, there are also idioms that have been modified from their original forms as a result of the Nigerian linguistic environment. All these point to a vibrant and interesting circumstance in which much more insight can be gained in the study of Nigerian English.

This research work shows that there are actually idioms unique to Nigerian English and their number is substantial enough to warrant the publication of a dictionary of idioms in Nigerian English. The compilation of a corpus for Nigerian English is thus feasible especially with an expanded data base.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

STRUKTUR DAN PENGGUNAAN SIMPULAN BAHASA DALAM PENULISAN BAHASA INGGERIS NIGERIA

Oleh

UMAR ALIYU MUHAMMAD

Julai 2016

Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Yap Ngee Thai, PhD
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Terdapat simpulan bahasa dalam Bahasa Inggeris Nigeria yang wujud hasil daripada kedua-dua pengaruh budaya dan bahasa daripada pengguna bahasa Inggeris di Nigeria. Kebanyakan kajian yang dijalankan mengenai simpulan bahasa Bahasa Inggeris adalah sama ada pada penggunaan dan pemerolehan penutur asli; atau terhadap penggunaan dan pemerolehan bukan penutur asli pada simpulan Bahasa dalam Bahasa Inggeris Standard, tetapi bukan pada penggunaan dan pemerolehan bukan penutur asli dalam variasi Bahasa Inggeris bukan penutur asli. Malahan, kajian Bahasa Inggeris Nigeria cenderung untuk membincangkan variasi secara holistik tanpa memberi banyak perhatian kepada simpulan bahasa atendan. Tambahan lagi, korpora sedia ada dan kamus simpulan bahasa Bahasa Inggeris tidak mempunyai simpulan Bahasa dari variasi L2 Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini cuba untuk menangani kekurangan kajian sedia ada. Tujuan utama adalah untuk mengenal pasti daripada korpus bahan bertulis, simpulan bahasa dalam konteks variasi Bahasa Inggeris yang digunakan di Nigeria dengan tujuan untuk memahami struktur /penggunaannya unik dan sumbangan bahasa pribumi padanya.

Penyahtaksaan makna perkataan (WSD) daripada Hashimoto dan Kawahara (2009) telah diubahsuai dan digunakan dalam mengenal pasti simpulan Bahasa dalam enam puluh isu daripada dua tajuk akhbar utama di Nigeria –*Daily Trust* dan *Vanguard*. Sumber ini telah ditambah dengan sumber-sumber lain seperti novel dan artikel yang menulis mengenai simpulan bahasa. Sejumlah 2,212 sampel simpulan bahasa telah dikenal pasti. Jumlah ini telah ditukar kepada 1,415 token simpulan Bahasa dengan mengasingkan pengulangan dan konjugasi. Untuk mengasingkan simpulan bahasa unik kepada Bahasa Inggeris Nigeria, token diperiksa dalam lima kamus simpulan bahasa Bahasa Inggeris dan dua web korpora. Setelah pemeriksaan ini dapat disimpulkan bahawa penggunaan dan struktur 174 simpulan bahasa adalah unik kepada Bahasa Inggeris Nigeria.

Dengan teori akomodasi (*accommodation theory*) dan model Quadrangle Muysken sebagai asas teori, analisis hasil menunjukkan bahawa bahasa pribumi telah menumbang dalam membentuk kedua-dua struktur dan penggunaan simpulan bahasa dalam Bahasa Inggeris Nigeria. Corak penggunaan yang menunjukkan bahawa lebih banyak simpulan bahasa yang digunakan di selatan Nigeria daripada di utara dapat dijelaskan oleh prinsip akomodasi penumpuan (convergence), pencapahan (divergence) dan penyelenggaraan (maintenance). Struktur unik beberapa simpulan bahasa dapat dijelaskan oleh bahasa dalam hubungan dalam model Quadrangle Muysken. Terdapat simpulan bahasa yang boleh didapati dalam kebanyakan variasi Bahasa Inggeris, terdapat juga simpulan bahasa yang telah diubahsuai daripada bentuk asal mereka akibat persekitaran linguistik Nigeria. Semua ini menunjukkan kepada keadaan yang menarik di mana banyak lagi yang boleh dicapai dalam pengajian Bahasa Inggeris Nigeria.

Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa sebenarnya ada simpulan bahasa yang unik untuk Bahasa Inggeris Nigeria dan bilangannya cukup besar untuk mewajarkan penerbitan kamus simpulan bahasa bagi Bahasa Inggeris Nigeria. Penyusunan corpus untuk Bahasa Inggeris Nigeria adalah dengan itu boleh dilaksanakan terutamanya dengan pangkalan data yang lebih luas.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) were adhered to.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Term	meaning
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
cf	Compare
NigE	Nigerian English
NPE	Nigerian Pidgin English
SAT	Speech Accommodation Theory
CAT	Communication Accommodation Theory
LDA	Linear Discriminant Analysis
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
WSD	Word Sense Disambiguation
SAID	Syntactically Annotated Idiom Dataset
WAVE	West African Variety of English
SBE	Standard British English
BrE	British English
AmE	American English
ELF	English as Foreign Language
CICL	Contact Induced Language Change
BNC	British National Corpus
DTN	Daily Trust Newspaper
VNN	Vanguard Nigeria Newspaper
OTS	Other Sources
NP	Noun Phrase
VP	Verb Phrase
PP	Prepositional Phrase

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction

Idioms form an integral part of language. Their use and structure therefore reflect much the same principles as obtained in the language. According to Finnegan (2014) when we say language structure we are essentially talking about syntax, semantics and phonology of a language and when we say language use we are talking about the information structure and pragmatics in language, and of course this includes variations according to situations and social groups. Just like languages the ways idioms are used are constrained by the way they are constructed especially the rules that govern their permissible usage and the context in which they are used.

Idioms have fascinated linguists and psychologists for a very long time and have also generated interest in their study. The interest arises as a result of a) studying the dual nature of idioms – having both literal and figurative meaning, b) idioms being conventionalized expressions shared by a speech community – being chunks that are used as a unit, c) both the senses implied in an idiom having to be acquired or learned, d) idioms belonging to a special group of expressions.

Idioms exist in all human languages and because of the complexity of their uses, they are acquired even by L1 speakers at a later stage in language development – by age 6 (Levorato, Roch & Nesi, 2007). Idioms present unique problems to L2 learners (Prodromou, 2003) because of the cultural aspect of their uses; and some of the L2 learners even avoid them (Paradis, 1988; Kovecskes, 2006; Bortfeld, 2003; Andreou & Galatomos, 2008; He, 1989; Ayed. 2008) due to fact that wherever an idiom exists, a literal expression can be used that is not complex – cf the expression *kick the bucket* in its place 'die' can be used. An interesting fact according to Okoro (2013) is that while L1 speech tends to be highly idiomatic, L2 users prefer to express themselves literally and directly rather than express themselves idiomatically. Idioms, nonetheless, are important in that they provide spontaneity and freshness to both writing and speech. Their pragmatic functions of generating liveliness and avoiding unpleasantness are points to consider. Their mastery and use are a sign of proficiency in both L1 and L2 situations (Steinel, Hulstijn & Steinel, 2007), because people have natural disposition to speak idioms (Searle, 1975; Sinclair, 1991; Leung, 2008). Idioms are also considered as a main part of almost all types of discourse and can be found in all languages of the world (Tognuni – Bonelli, 2002; Cowie, 1998; Bolander, 1989). Idioms are vast in number (Kovecskes & Szabo, 1996) and an individual 'utters about twenty million idioms in a lifetime' (Pollio, et al, 1977:140).

In Nigeria the situation of language use is even more complex. Idiom use also reflects this complexity. With the multilingual nature of the country and the existence of a variety of English unique to the Nigerian geographical entity, there exist idioms unique to Nigerian English alongside the more general idioms of the English Language. This is not entirely unexpected because according to He (1989) the association between the figurative and literal meanings of idioms is culturally motivated. It is to be expected thus that some cultural expressions of the English people will lack substance among Nigerians with different cultural background and vice versa. These idioms that are unique to Nigerian English (henceforth NigE) cannot be found in any dictionary or corpora of the Standard English as used by native speakers, but they are used by Nigerian speakers of English. *Long leg* – having connections in high places, and *bad belle* – malice, are common idiomatic expressions in Nigeria. With Nigerians numbering 170 millions, travelling all over the world and communicating with the rest of their English speaking counterparts, the issue of international intelligibility arises. This study is aimed at examining how idiomatic expressions are used in the local context; examining the structure of idioms in Nigerian English alongside the mainstream English idioms and the effects in the use and construction of idioms in situations of contact with indigenous languages. The study uses written material from Nigerian sources. Using an idiom identification tool, it identifies idioms from printed materials comprising newspapers, documented works, textbooks, and novels published in English in Nigeria. Findings from the study and the analysis therein are of significance to English language learning in Nigeria especially that of idioms. This chapter is divided into sections that deal with the key terms in the study. The chapter also discusses the research questions, the problem statement, the limitation of the study, the definition of terms.

1.2   Definition of Idioms

In this section the definition of idioms will be considered from the perspective of its internal and external structure – showing the strengths and limitations of each approach. It will be concluded with a working definition that is pivotal to the way in which the term idiom is viewed in this work.

The definition of idioms has been as varied as the number of scholars that study them. Each of them attempts to define it from the perspectives of their interests, disciplines and or theoretical inclinations. From psychologists to syntacticians to lexicographers – the definitions given reflect the preoccupation of these experts.

A basic definition of an idiom is that of Ammer (2003) who defines an idiom as a group of two or more words which function as a unit but whose overall meaning is not a combination of the literal meanings of the individual words contained in the group. This is as simple enough as to exclude some vital properties of idioms.

Looking at idioms from their external forms Korkontzelos (2010) gives a number of features of idioms that allow for their identification and or definition. According to him idioms do not always follow the grammatical rules in a language. This can be seen in an instance like *by and large* where two lexical items with unequal grammatical weight occur and are joined by a coordinating conjunction. Furthermore, idioms have situatedness. They are context appropriate. They are used individually in specific time during a specific period, at specific place by people that have special property. This means each individual determines the type to use based on the variables listed above. There are idioms for summer, for wedding ceremonies, for market place, for office and business. Idioms also express some metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole and so on and they are not easily translatable among languages. This is because normally the sense implied by the idiom is the one that is translatable. Similar idioms may exist in two different languages but not in a word by word sequence. He concludes that idioms enjoy institutionalisation. They have been accepted as chunks or prefabricated units to be used in discourse and because of this conventionality, there are wrong, inappropriate and unacceptable uses of idioms.

Looking at their internal composition, he further posits that idioms have structural preference for items that colligates within them. In *Kick the bucket* for instance the content words *kick* and *bucket* cannot be substituted with their synonyms hit and pail. Thus hit the pail, kick the pail, hit the bucket are in no way idiomatic or replacements for *kick the bucket*.

Skandera (2003) discusses various approaches to idioms and arrives at the following definition as a basis for his investigation: An idiom is an institutionalised and conventionalized sequence of at least two words or free morphemes that is semantically restricted so that it functions as a single lexical unit, whose meaning – from a synchronic point of view – cannot or can only to a certain extent be deduced from the meanings of its constituents. (p. 60)

According to Nurnberg, Sag and Wasow (1994), idioms are characterised as having conventional meaning, figuration, inflexibility of form and proverbiality. Expressions like, *kick the bucket, let off steam, back to square one, spill the beans*, and *ring a bell* abound in English and are used and understood in the language. However, they range from the ones whose meaning is slightly deducible from their formation to those considered as opaque in terms of their transparency. This pervasiveness has led many experts to use several criteria to define idioms (cf, Moon, 1997; Andreou & Galantamous, 2008; Milosky, 1994). Grant & Bauer (2004) give three criteria for defining idioms as

i   Non-compositionality – this is the degree to which the meanings of idioms is not derivable from the individual meanings of its constituent parts. Idioms are believed to be wholly non-compositional (cf, Fernando & Flavell, 1981; Alexander, 1976; Katz & Postal, 1963; Makkai, 1975; and Weinrich, 1969); whereas some believe that they are partly compositional i.e. some degree of their meaning is derivable from the meanings of their

constituent parts (cf, Langacker, 1986; Gazder, et al, 1985; and Nunberg, 1978).

ii –   Institutionalisation – is the degree to which particular phrases are recognised, accepted and used in a particular speech community. Idioms are widely recognised as being familiar in the form they are (cf, Moon, 1998a).

iii -   Frozenness – is the degree to which idioms do not allow permutations, rearrangement and addition/deletion of elements. The above criterion cannot be applied to a lot of idioms which allow permutations e.g. *let the cat out of the bag*, which can be passivised (cf Wood, 1981; Carter, 1987; and Moon, 1998; Thuc & Carter, 2010).

Experts have sought to define idioms in terms of their semantic transparency. This indicates how easy it is to interpret a multi-word sequence on the basis of its component words. On the other hand, semantic non-transparency/opaqueness shows that the meaning of a multi word sequence as a whole contradicts the interpretation of its constituent parts. In other words the constituents of an idiomatic expression do not combine their individual meanings in order to reveal the meaning as a whole (Howarth, 1998; Hsu, 2014; Wray, 2002).

Idioms have been called 'multiword units' (Grant & Bauer, 2004), metaphors (Toris, 2011; Gibbs, 1993), phrasemes (Howarth, 1998), fixed expressions (Moon, 1997; Carter, 1998) and formulaic expressions (Wray, 2002). All of these properties of idioms are a reflection of how the experts attempt to study or explain the word idiom.

Many multiword units are considered as proverbs, restricted collocations, phrasal verbs, fixed phrases, pure idioms, figurative idioms, and binomial expressions. They all have fixed word sequences and display some aspect of structures formulaic (Hsu, 2014). Similarly, lexical bundles (Hyland, 2008; Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2003, 2004), and collocations (Howarth, 1998; Altenberg, 1998) are also a part of formulaic language, since they recur highly and frequently as word combinations.

Howarth (1998) also offered a yardstick for classifying multi-word units. This uses a framework of the idiomaticity contained in them on a continuum - from being least to most idiomatic.   When the yardstick is applied we have categories of formulaic expressions based on the level of idiomaticity contained in them. These range from free combinations which are least idiomatic and they give the literal meanings of their components.   They also allow for substitution.   They have the highest degree of flexibility and are transparent semantically (e.g. city hall, town hall, assembly hall). Others are called restricted collocations. These are word sequences in which there is a degree of permission for substitutions in some instances but with restrictions on some other instances or lexical items. Precisely, at least one of the words bears a non-literal meaning while the rest or at least one word is used with its literal sense, but the whole sequence still remains transparent (e.g., *catch some fun*, *from door to door*). There are also figurative idioms, which are metaphorical in their meanings as a whole and whose

figurative meanings are different from their literal meanings. A sense of them is perceivable from the whole expression (e.g., *in the doghouse*, *a dog in the manger*). The last category with the most idiomaticity is that of pure idioms. These need to be explained and learned as whole units because there is very little connection between them and the meanings of their individual units (e.g., *by and large*, *red herring*).

Idioms are also considered as multiword expressions (MWE). This approach is especially popular with computational linguists. In natural language processing idioms belong to a loose knit group that includes metaphors, clichés, and jargons (Fazly, Stevenson and Cook, 2009; Sag *et al*, 2002; Odijk, 2004).

There is no unified phenomenon to describe when it comes to idioms, but rather a complex of features that interact in various, often untidy, ways and represent a broad continuum between non-compositional and compositional groups of words (Moon 1998). Any correct delineation of any structure deemed as idiomatic is a statement about its idiomaticity i.e. 'its degree of belonging to the class of idiomatic constructions' (Langlotz, 2006:5). According to Langlozt (2006), 'only the sum of all dimensions of the definitions of idioms provides' an all embracing 'picture of the specific idiomatic nature of a construction.'

From the above we can see that idioms can have both grammatical and or pragmatic functions. Let us now expand this notion by looking at the structure and use of idioms. Based on their structure within the sentence idioms serve as subjects or objects of clauses as such are nominal in nature (e.g. A *red herring* was found during the investigation, Riding motorcycle is *a piece of cake*). Idioms also serve as verbs/predicates (e.g. I *smell a rat* in your actions. John *bailed out* of the marriage with Jane. He *kicked the bucket*). Idioms serve as complements within the clause. In this wise they serve as either adjectives or prepositions (e.g. He is *wet behind the ears*. He is *at the helm* now). Idioms also serve as adjuncts within the clause. In this respect they serve as adverbs (e.g. He came *out of the blue*) (*Cambridge Idioms Dictionary*, 2010). The above are the major grammatical units within the clause but of course idioms can serve as binomials, or as exclamations or as idiomatic compounds. All these depend on the circumstance of use.

The functions of idiomatic expressions have also been a source for defining idioms – that is to say definition according to use. Idioms are an integral part of both written and spoken language and are found in use in all contexts of language use i.e. in formal discourse, in ordinary conversations, in professional contexts, with friends, and with strangers (Drew and Holt, 1995). Their functions according to Fernando (1996) can be ideational, interpersonal and relational. The table below shows the classification in details

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Table 1.1: Functional classifications of idioms

Idiom type	Function	Examples
ideational	they convey packages of information about particular actions, events as well as their attributes and circumstances in the world	*Spill the beans, a red herring, have one's heart in one's mouth, down in the dumps*
interpersonal	they fulfil an interactive function, they are rich in evaluative and additional information	*Let's face it, come off it*
relational	They make the semantic unity of a discourse explicit and strengthen its coherence and cohesion	*No wonder! In a jiffy*

Adapted from Fernando (1996)

Idioms are also cultural icons in that they help to portray the culture of its users. According to He (1989c:142) idiomaticity is fundamentally an issue of cultural awareness. The user typically is aware that a given expression is conventional. He is aware that together with its non-literal meaning it symbolises an established, important and cultural concept. The user is also aware in what contexts of cultural experiences and with what cultural contextual knowledge the expression is understood. Thus wherever the culture is different even if the same language is being used, different idioms exist. A typical example is the cultural difference between the Americans and the British. Although they speak the same language because they live in different environments even their use of similar idioms is culturally delineated. The idiom *a drop in the ocean* is British; the Americans call it *a drop in the bucket* (*Cambridge idiom dictionary, 2010*). This therefore means that even where varieties of a language exist, that is also reflected in the types of idioms used. This leads to the conclusion that specific idioms exist for specific varieties of a language. For instance in Nigerian English, the idiom *put to bed* means to give birth whereas in British English it means to lead a child to sleep (Kperogi, 2010). The table below shows that as many varieties as exist in a language, as many idioms as there will be that will be unique to each variety. Having this kind of circumstance does not preclude the existence of idioms common to all varieties of the same language just like other language elements. Thus as we have British English, American English, Australian English etc we also have idioms unique to these varieties just as we have idioms common to all of them.

Table 1.2: Idioms across varieties of English

idiom	meaning	Used mostly by
Fair dinkum	Acceptable behaviour	Australians
Done like a dinner	defeated	Canadians
The dirty end of a stick	The difficult and unpleasant part	South Africans
In the dock	Under investigation	The British
Whistle Dixie	Engage in fantasies	Americans

Source: The Oxford Dictionary of Idioms

In view of the above it is safe to conclude that there idioms unique to all known varieties of English. In this regard therefore there are idioms unique to the Nigerian English (Adeyanju, 2009).

Apart from being purveyors of cultural traditions idioms have other mundane day to day uses and purposes of use. Havrilla (2009) categorises such uses from general to specific – for communication; to avoid responsibility; for economy; to avoid information processing overload; and to minimise the risk of mismatch between speakers' linguistic capability and the information to be processed.

Idioms also have a use for researchers who may want to conduct studies in them as another language source. The study of idiom has for long been an integral part of lexicography, but in the last two decades semanticists, cognitivists and syntacticians have made the study of idioms a part of their preoccupations (Everaert, et al, 1995).

In all the definitions discussed above, idioms are not defined in a way to include all possible formations that can be called idiomatic (Grant & Bauer, 2004). It is also not possible to consider all the gamut of features discussed about idioms in this study. Since idioms have not been well documented in Nigerian English, we there is a need to have a definition that allows idioms to be identified when they are used in Nigerian English. Fernando and Flavell's (1981:17) definition is most suitable for this purpose. They define the idiom as a unit whose meaning is not the result of the compositional function of its constituents and which is institutionalised, transformationally deficient and constitutes set expressions in a language. The above definition has covered all the nuances and shades of appearances of idioms in a language. Grant and Bauer (2004:39), and Moon (1998b:79) have added to this when they define an idiom as a multiword unit whose meaning is not derivable from the individual meanings of its constituent parts and which has both literal and figurative meaning. Idioms are also fixed and institutionalised. A synergy of the two definitions above should provide an acceptable definition. In this work an idiom is considered to have a number of features. One of such features is figuration. This means that one or more of its constituents must have both a literal and figurative meaning. Another feature is compositionality i.e. a combination of the meanings of its individual components is not necessarily the meaning of the idiom in which they occur. Other features are frozenness (being fixed and prefabricated chunks that do not always allow modification); institutionalisation (the fact of being accepted for use across the society over time); multiword composition (be composed of two or more independent morphemes and be a minimum of a phrase) and Semantic restriction which means that idioms must be sequences of at least two words or free morphemes that is semantically restricted so that it functions as a single lexical unit,

The above features must not all be present in a sequence before it is deemed as an idiom. The above definition excludes proverbs, which according to Cooper (1998) contain folk wisdom in which one is advised to follow or not to follow a course of action (e.g. let sleeping dogs lie); compound words, wise sayings, witticisms, foreign/non-Nigerian expressions, jargons and clichés.

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Finally, it can be seen that defining idioms is quite problematic and to overcome this problem one needs to just consider the features that are shared by majority of the items that can be called idioms.

1.3   Nigerian English

The case for the existence of a distinct variety of English in use in Nigeria has been has been made by several local and foreign experts of varieties of English. In this section, that case - for the existence of a Nigerian variety of English - will be strengthened. This will be done by a discussion of the historical evolution of the use of English in Nigeria and its current hegemony brought about by the language situation in Nigeria. The differences between Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin English will be discussed with a view to showing that they are different.

Mukherjee and Gries (2009) suggest that the English language has undergone 'complex process of acculturation' in many colonial and post colonial contexts, and many former British colonies like Nigeria have retained English as a medium of both national and international communication even after independence. This process has led to the emergence of national varieties like Nigerian English, which reflects their own experiences, yearnings and the multilingual nature of such varieties.

In Kachru's (1985) classification of the users of English around the world into three concentric circles: the inner circle, comprising native speakers; the outer circle, made up of second language users; and the expanding circle, made up of speakers of English as a foreign language, is an implicit recognition of varieties of English, which sometimes have resulted into nativised varieties of English (Adegbija, 1989:165). These native varieties may be longstanding enough to be thought as adequate and stable enough to be institutionalised and regarded as varieties of English in their own right (Quirk, *et al*, 1972: 27-28). The Nigerian English is no less stable and valid than any other variety elsewhere (Adetugbo, 1984: 17)

This is not surprising because any language removed from its native environment is likely to undergo severe changes in direct proportion to the degree of its psychological and sociological separation from its native speakers. That an internal norm in English language in Nigeria has developed is evident from the fact that numerous structures which would be totally unintelligible to native speakers of English are used officially at the highest level of government in Nigeria (Bamiro, 1991:7).

In his models of English McArthur (1992) recognises NigE as being part of the circle of World Englishes. He discussed the two models of World Englishes approaches in existence – the chronological model which takes care of varieties like old English, Middle English; and the biological model which caters for language families. He suggested a third way – the geopolitical model which accounts for new Englishes. It is from the last model that he developed his world circle of Englishes.

The term, "Nigerian English", (NigE) can be broadly defined as "the variety of English spoken and used by Nigerians" (Adeniyi, 2006: 25). It is characterised by a lot of borrowings, nativisation and coinages especially from the indigenous languages for instance in the examples, *put sand in someone's garri* – 'put someone in trouble', *guard one's loins* – 'cover one's weakness or track' and *accept kola* – 'take bribe', the underlined elements act the way they act only in Nigerian English (Igboanusi, 1997). This indicates some form of domestication. Akere (2006: 9) describes this domestication as 'the transformation of English as an alien medium, to make it respond to local imagery, figures of speech, sound patterns and the general cultural milieu of the region.' This robust, dynamic and creative variety has helped Nigerians to express their world view in a more international medium of communication i.e. the English language.

According to Ubahakwe (1980) the notion of a Nigerian variety of English is more controversial than the question of a falling or rising standard in English. Does this variant of English known as 'Standard Nigerian English' really exist in Nigeria? Reactions to this question range from outright denial to scepticism or total acceptance. But he believes that there is no room for any controversy because the 'risk' of a new dialect of a language is an inevitable consequence of any second language situation. He reminds the sceptics who deny the existence of a 'NigE' of the three basic factors that commonly lead to the evolution of dialects, namely: space, time, and social differentiation. He believes that the real issue with 'NigE' is no longer its presence but its development.

The question of what NigE is and what it is not has divided scholars into two camps: the deviationist school and the variationist school. The deviationist school maintains that Nigerian English does not exist and what is referred to by the term is just motley of errors underpinning the superficial mastery of the Standard British English (SBE) by Nigerians (Quirk, 1988:231). Quirk (1988: 234) does not believe that the varieties of English are adequately described at various linguistic levels and, therefore, they cannot be used as pedagogically acceptable (or ontologically recognizable) models. His major points cannot be accepted in terms of the sociolinguistic reality of world Englishes, and they cannot be supported by the linguistic history of the spread of other major languages of the world (Kachru, 1986). The variationist school on the other hand considers Nigerian English as a normal evolution of a language variation whose origin lies elsewhere but which has to serve the cultural and social needs of a linguistically diversified group (Bamgbose, 1983:2).

There, of course, have been claims and counterclaims as to whether a variety of English distinct from the mainstream British English exists and is spoken or used in Nigeria. In their quest to prove that a Nigerian variety of English exists in Nigeria, many scholars have written papers and published books (Banjo, 1971; Banjo, 1995; Jibril, 1982; Akere, 1982; Eka, 1985; Odumuh, 1990; Jowitt, 1991; Bamgbose, 1995; Udofot, 1997; 2004; Adetugbo, 1979; Adegbija, 2004; Ekpe 2006; and Ekpe, 2007). In fact Ekpe (2011) even believes that standard and non standard varieties of English exist in Nigeria. To Jowitt (1991:35) the question of whether a Nigerian English exists should be a non-issue especially with the overwhelming evidences that exist to support the claim for the existence of one. The greater need is to get away from the over-flogged issues of

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standard vs. non-standard, international vs. internal, and to concentrate on the interesting task of specifying, describing, analysing the forms of Nigerian English, data for which can be consciously or unconsciously supplied by a vast number of the Nigerians one simply happens to come in contact with.

Ajani (2007) has also proved that a Nigerian Variety of English indeed exists in Nigeria. Walsh (1967) was among the first to draw attention to the existence of a variety of English as spoken in Nigeria. It is however legitimate to claim as Bamgbose (1983:2) does, that NigE is

> a conglomeration of legitimate variants of English in Nigeria, which retain intelligibility, reflect a common Nigerian culture or perception of the world, has a mother tongue influence and a common socio-political environment.

The standard NigE is used in the formal contexts and is generally used by western style educated Nigerians. The non standard variety is the pidginised version of English and is used mostly in informal context by majority of illiterate and semi-literate Nigerians as a lingua franca among the many speakers of indigenous languages. The NigE is different in many respects from the Nigerian Pidgin English (henceforth NPE) but the latter exacts some influence on the former (Kperogi, 2012). A lot of terms and expressions in the NigE can trace their origins in NPE. The NPE derisively called 'broken English' is another variety of English that is more popular internationally than the NigE and has been studied more by both foreign and local experts. It is different from the NigE in respects of its evolution. The evolution of the NPE preceded that of the NigE. It started as a combination of Portuguese and Dutch with indigenous languages. When the English people replaced the Portuguese as overlords NPE converged with English language and evolved to be as it is today (Egbokhare, 2003). The NigE on the other hand evolved after the colonialists had left and Nigeria became independent. The NPE also has a different structural arrangement almost alien to English language and does not follow any known grammatical rule of English. It would have been easily explained if the difference is that of relexification but it cuts across all levels of language. According to Ugot and Ogundipe (2011) the NPE is viewed as a language of its own in the southern Nigerian states of Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa and Cross River. They maintain that NPE has some key structural features – like absence of grammatical categories of gender, case, person, number, mood and voice. There is also the absence of the copula. There is a reduced inflection and a lot usage of reduplication. Table 1.3 below gives examples of some words and sentences from NPE from Ugot (2009).

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Table 1.3: Examples from Nigerian Pidgin English

Example	Meaning in English	Process involved
Im buk	His/her book	Absence of gender
Na mi	It is me	Lack of copula
Sofri sofri	easy	Reduplication
Koro koro	plain	Reduplication
Kpoto kpoto	Mud	Reduplication
Kata kata	Trouble, chaos	Reduplication
Ah dey	I am around	Reduced inflection

NigE on the hand is far closer to the native English and observes some variances that are occasioned by contact of people with a variety of world view. All of them claim to be forms of English but NigE is closer to the native variety. Further more in terms of usage NPE is mostly used in informal context. It is also predominantly used in Southern Nigeria, with a larger concentration in the Niger Delta region. This according to both Elugbe (1995) and Egbokhare (2003) is because the Niger Delta is a linguistically diverse area, where 25 languages are spoken in close proximity to one another and with no obvious dominant language the NPE fills the void of inter-ethnic communication. The NigE on the other hand has a national spread. The NPE is hardly used/ understood in the Northern part of the country even by educated users (Olushola, 2013). In terms institutionalisation, the NPE is not officially recognised. It is not used in any formal context. It is not in any government business especially at national level. Although according to Elugbe (1995) NPE has become one of the mostly widely spoken languages in the 90s and is the native language and mother tongue of a large population in the Warri-Sapele axis, it is neither recognised as a language nor given any role in national development and integration.

Peter and Wolf (2007) maintained that the ability to differentiate both form is mostly to do with an individual's degree of education and linguistic skills and this is true of most educated southerners. In the north the story is different.

1.3.1 The language situation of Nigeria

What a language is or not is premised on a number of factors - the historical and structural circumstances for its maintenance and use, the social circumstances of its institutionalization, the symbolic value attached to it and its users, and the support systems available for its development, enrichment and promotion (Dendrinos, Karavanta & Mitsikopoulou, 2008).

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The *Ethnologue* lists Nigeria as having 522 languages. But as Blench (1992) show a lot of these languages are dialects of other languages that had grown apart so much that they share very few items. He gave the number as 470. Whatever the number, these multitudes of languages spoken in an area 923,768kms wide present a highly multilingual setting. The country Nigeria was not historically a single unit. It was formed according to colonial conveniences. It used to be comprised of disparate ancient kingdoms – the Hausa city states, the Fulani Dynasty, the Kanem-Bornu kingdom in the North; the Bini kingdom, the Oyo kingdom etc in the South (Akere, 2006). These entities had different languages they used for both intra and inter-regional communication. The coming of the British colonialists made English the official language of colonial administration. The country was divided geographically into the Southern and the Northern Protectorates. In 1914, the two were merged to form Nigeria. At independence English was the central language, but there were regional lingua francas. In the North, Hausa was the dominant language. In the Southwest, Yoruba was the dominant language and in the East, Igbo was the dominant language. Majority of Hausa speakers are Muslims and majority of Igbo speakers are Christians. However, Yoruba speakers are divided among Muslims, Christians and pagans (Taiwo, 2009; Ayeomoni, 2012). This multilingual setting influenced English language usage as code-mixing and code-switching freely occurred. With educated speakers becoming more proficient, it was only natural for a variety of English unique to Nigeria to emerge (Hickey, 2004:p506). Before independence the colonial administration forced speakers of indigenous languages to use the English language but paid lip service to the development of indigenous languages especially in the south (Kirk-Greene, 1971). The Christian missionaries however were interested in local languages and even wrote primers for some local languages to enable them to preach the Gospel. Their efforts were however resisted in Muslim dominated areas. Thus English language made little in road in such areas. At independence, the leaders who took over leadership decided to maintain the status quo, but then there were government efforts at regional level to develop the regional lingua franca (Olushola, 2013). The mutual distrust and fear of dominance among the various different speakers of indigenous languages, made the ascendancy of English language, even after independence, possible and the language situation much less different from the time of the colonialists (Jowitt, 1997). In fact then English language had acquired a status symbol i.e. language of the educated and the enlightened (Akinniso, 1994). Before independence, Europeans taught students to speak English language. Therefore the language use pattern of the first set of Nigerian speakers of English language was much more similar to that of their European teachers. After independence however, the task of English language teaching was taken over by second language speakers. But due both political and social reasons expatriate English teachers continued to dominate Northern Nigerian schools longer than they did in the south even after independence (Kirk-Greene, 1971). As time went on, the task of teaching fell on those who never had any contact with the native speakers. The speech pattern became reflective of this phenomenon and there were many borrowings from the vernacular to English language. Such expressions, like '*take in*' to conceive, were a direct result of this borrowing from Igbo language (Esimaje, 2011). This meant that apart from the normal language use of both the vernacular and English, elements of the vernacular could be found freely in English. This kind of situation led to diglossia at national level and triglossia at regional level (Gramley, 2001). Diglossia in this context is a situation in which the vernacular and English were used in complementary roles – English functioning as a language being used in formal / public situations and as the written language; whereas the vernacular functioned as the low language being used in informal

and oral communication. Triglossia on the other hand occurs in a situation where there is a higher language (in our own case English), intermediate language for regional communication (in our own case, Hausa in the North, Yoruba in the Southwest and NPE in the South East) and lower languages for community informal communications.

The Nigerian English started at regional level and then became national with gradual national intermingling of citizens at the centre. There were what Ezejideaku and Ugwu (2009) called 'ethnic varieties' of English. These according to them (p.2) resulted from interactions between English and the different vernacular languages – giving rise to Hausa English, Igbo English and Yoruba English. It was then possible to identify a Yoruba or Hausa speaker of English without a single word of either Yoruba or Hausa uttered. At independence the situation was the same, the regions were still run much the same way as the colonial administration, but after the first military coup of 1966, the military sought to unite the country by setting up a strong central government. This made it possible for much interaction between the 'ethnic varieties of English' and thus led to the emergence of standard Nigerian English.

Another factor was that teachers of English were now indigenes and contact with native speakers became less and less (Omodiaogbe, 1992). Other languages continued to play their normal role, but because majority of Nigerians had not gone to any formal school and could not speak even the Standard English, NPE came to their rescue and fulfilled the need for a medium of interregional and inter-ethnic communication.

The situation is much the same today, except now you have speakers who have never had any contact with any native speaker. Majority of speakers learn the NPE in informal contexts even before they go to school. That is why it has a lot of influence on the evolution of the standard Nigerian English (Peter & Wolf, 2007). The NigE is thus an adaptation from both local and English languages. According to Crystal (2003: p.146), most of these adaptations relate to the vocabulary in the form of new words, word formations, collocations and idiomatic phrases.

1.3.2   The Place of English in Nigeria

English language is one of the colonial legacies bequeathed to Nigeria by its former colonial master the Great Britain. In fact, Nigeria is the creation of the British colonial expansion. Its boundaries were mostly determined by colonial cartographers in order to enhance administrative convenience. Nigeria is a multilingual nation. Blench (1992) reports about 470 distinct languages and there are perhaps more ethnic groups than he has reported because the *Ethnologue* documents 527 languages. None of these various groupings, each with its own cultural and linguistic identity, were ever consulted before the creation of the Nigerian state (Odumuh, 1987). The colonial government just merged them into protectorates and divisions without consideration for their ethnic and cultural contiguousness. This created social divisions and rivalries among the various ethnic groups. Because of these tribal and ethnic

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rivalries, there is often a greater acceptance of English as a central language of communication than any indigenous language because of it being a less emotionally charged language (Jowitt, 1997: 55). The divisions and inter-ethnic rivalries have greatly ensured the ascendancy of English language in Nigeria such that even after independence from Britain, English still enjoys the position it occupies in the Nigerian society. It was and is still difficult for Nigerians to adopt a national indigenous language. The adoption of a national language for Nigeria from among its numerous indigenous languages has been quite volatile. There have been countless debates in conferences, seminars, workshops and even on the floors of houses of assembly, yet the choice of any one of the three major languages as the official language has been quite difficult if not impossible. This as Myers-Scotton (1993a:27-28) notes is a dilemma right across Africa. More so in Nigeria for the simple reasons that firstly, no single group has both the population size and political ascendency over the others to make its language the natural choice. Secondly, because a dominant language means dominant power and in Africa a language defines a people, not one of the three major ethnic groups is willing to see the other achieve ascendency (Eze, 1997).

It is this seeming intractability in choosing one single indigenous language as the official language that has made it possible for English to continue to exist as the main official language of education and administration in Nigeria, even after colonialism has been dismantled. Thus English is considered to be acceptable as an official language by many because of its neutrality of not belonging to any ethnic group. Its ascendency is not however an immediate threat to the major ethnic groups because they enjoy regional relevance. The problem is with the minority languages and this is not necessarily created by English language. English thus continues to enjoy the status of being one of the official languages in Nigeria. It is also the language of government, business and education - a language you need to be fluent in to have any hopes of a good career. English language enjoys this role because it is the only official language with no tribal base. English is also the main language of TV, Radio, Newspapers, and Publishing. In spite of all these English is still a second language to Nigerians and majority of them learned it in a formal context because first they learned their L1 at home and begin to learn English in primary or nursery schools (Ayeomoni, 2012). There is, however, a tendency in Nigeria and for NigE – which traditionally is an L2 – to be acquired as a first language by the children of the elite (Schneider, 2007). Ogunsanya (2009) concurs by claiming that NigE is emerging as a first language among the elite children in the Lagos metropolis. That is why research in second language learning and English as a Second Language (ESL) is very much relevant to English in Nigeria.

The use to which we put a language, the linguistic environment within which a language is used, the individuals using a language and their linguistic backgrounds, all contribute to the creation of a distinct variety in any one language in popular use. In the case of English in Nigeria, Kachru (1986) places it in what he terms 'outer circle'. According to Kachru (2009: p.128), there are circles within which varieties of English can be elicited. The first circle is what he calls the inner circle. This comprises countries where English is spoken as a native language – for instance Britain, USA, Australia, etc. The second is the outer circle where English is spoken as a second language and this comprises countries like Nigeria, Malaysia, India, Singapore, etc. The third circle is the expanding circle, where English is used as a foreign language, (Japan, Egypt, China, and

Korea). Kachru's model provides justification for the existence of nationality based varieties of English.

Many researchers have done much on the identification of Nigerian English and published in academic journals. A further call for the codification of Nigerian English has been made in many published textbooks. Some like Banjo (1971) even try to show that there are varieties within the Nigerian English. Banjo actually identified four varieties of Nigerian English. The first variety is characterised by wholesale transfer of phonological, syntactic and lexical features of mother tongue to English language. This variety is not socially acceptable by the educated elite, nor is it internationally intelligible. The second variety is close to the Standard British English in syntax but it is strongly marked phonologically and lexically. It is socially acceptable but has low international intelligibility. The third variety is close to the Standard British English in syntax and semantics, similar in phonology but strongly marked in phonetic features with some lexical uniqueities. It is socially acceptable and internationally intelligible. The last variety is identical to the Standard British English in syntax, semantics, phonetics and phonology. It is not always socially acceptable (because it is seen as a form of showing off) but it is internationally intelligible.

English will continue to enjoy its current status in Nigeria because of both local and international reasons. It is no doubt evolving into a variety in Nigeria. Wherever varieties exist, they exist with all their language elements and components. It is therefore possible if there is a NigE then there will be idioms unique to that variety, as idioms form an integral part of the language.

1.4   Justification of the study

There is a rich literature on Nigerian English however unlike in the standard variety very little attention has been devoted to the study of idiomatic expressions as used in Nigeria. The discussions on idioms in the mainstream research on idioms are not sufficiently enough to cater for idioms in nationality induced varieties like the NigE.

Furthermore, most of the works on Nigerian English assume a holistic approach while discussing it. In other words they discussed all aspects of Nigerian English in one fell swoop. Such discussions are deficient in rendering detailed account of individual aspects of the variety.   Many levels of Nigerian English were conflated and discussed simultaneously and this deprived them the opportunity to be discussed in detail. Some attempts have been made to discuss the phonology of Nigerian English because that is where the greatest and the most noticeable differences exist with the standard variety. However, no similar attention has been paid to any discussion of the structure and use of idiomatic expressions.

There is a need for extensive formal work to address the above issues. This work is therefore justifiable because it will now provide this opportunity for an extensive

discussion of idioms not only in NigE but also on idioms with a view to determining the thing that is Nigerian about them.

Finally, this kind of task is needed because no inventory of idioms in NigE exists. The opportunity to generate a corpus of idioms in Nigerian English is one that worthy of scholarly consideration.

1.5   Statement of the Problem

The idioms in Nigerian English came about as a result of both cultural and linguistic influences of the users of English in Nigeria. They also came about as a result of loss of direct contact with native speakers occasioned by independence in 1960. All the research conducted in English idioms are either on native speakers use and acquisition; or on non-native speakers use and acquisition of idioms in Standard English; but not on non-native speakers use and acquisition of idioms in non native varieties of English – especially nationality driven varieties of English. In fact even studies by users of this variety have tended to discuss the variety as a whole without much attention to the idioms that may exist therein. Since researchers have spent time to prove how and in what way the Nigerian English is different from the standard British English, an equal amount of time should be spent on discussing idioms in NigE as has been spent in the discussion of idioms in the standard variety. A common assumption is that contact-induced change is inevitable under conditions of intense contact, especially where there is very widespread multilingualism in a speech community. Social factors tend to easily override linguistic factors. For instance, typological distance between source language and receiving language affects the likelihood that structure will be changed. The more similar systems, the easier it is for a feature in one language to diffuse from one to the other (Thomason, 2001; Traffers-Daller & Mougeon, 2005; Rendon, 2008). And with enough intense contact, any feature can be transferred from any language to any other language, no matter how typologically different the two languages are (Thomason, 2001). There is a need thus to consider both the social and linguistic factors that come into play in respect of idioms.

All the existing corpora and idiom dictionaries of English do not feature idioms from L2 varieties of English. With the existence of idioms in Nigerian English unique to Nigerians there is the issue of international mutual intelligibility between native speakers and non-native speakers and between non-native speakers and non-native speakers when they use such idioms.

There is a need to carry out research to address the problems given above because as has been shown earlier, mastery of the use of idioms is an indication of proficiency in a particular language

1.6   Objectives of the study

In discussing the use and structure of idiomatic expression in Nigerian English the study is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To describe the idioms, their structure and use in Nigerian English

- To determine contact induced changes in idioms and idiomatic expressions use in Nigerian English

- To investigate the development of Nigerian English idioms as a process of language accommodation. In order to achieve the above objectives the following questions will be answered through the course of this research exercise.

1.6.1 Research Questions

1.   What is the structure of idioms in Nigerian English?
2.   How are the idioms used in the Nigerian context?
3.   What are the effects of contact with indigenous languages on English language and the effects of English on them in respect of idioms?

1.7   Theoretical Framework

From the onset it has to be understood what interpretation one has on the concept of theories and theorising. This will explain the choice and appropriateness of the theories to be used. A theory is a set of fully developed concepts related through statements of relationship, the concepts taken together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena. A theory should provide more than understanding or paint a vivid picture. It should enable users to explain and predict events; thereby providing guides to action. Theorising is the building of a theory or extending and broadening one in a process of comparing constructs and their relationships against data during the research act to determine how well such constructs stand up to careful scrutiny (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The thrust of this work is on the structure and use of idioms in Nigerian English. and the influence of the indigenous languages on the two above. The accommodation theory provides a framework for the understanding of idiom use; and a model of language contact by Muysken provides the theoretical basis from which the structure of idioms in Nigerian English is considered both also provide a basis for explaining the influence of the indigenous languages on idioms and idiom use in Nigerian English.

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The Muysken model, also known as the quadrangled model (Muysken, 2013), is hinged on a number of social (the prestige of both L1 and L2), psycholinguistic, and linguistic factors that regulate the outcomes of contact in bilingual circumstances. It is mainly concerned with the linguistic inputs to language contact and the role they play in determining the outcomes of such a contact. According to Borges (2013) language contact refers to the influence exerted by one linguistic system on another. This may take the form of either the addition or altered distribution of a linguistic feature which is the result of direct transfer, i.e. borrowing, of a feature from language one language to another, or indirect transfer through pressures exerted across linguistic systems, respectively. Muysken's (2013) quadrangled model has four possible orientations for contact outcomes: those oriented to an L1, those which are a compromise between two languages, those that are oriented towards an L2, and those based on (psycho) linguistic universals. He argues that such a model allows for comparison of language interaction across sub-disciplines, better organization and classification of contact phenomena within sub-disciplines, and the comparable study of other factors (such as typological distance, proficiency, contact intensity and prestige/status) which operate in phenomena of different orientations. Essentially the main elements of the model are the bilinguals and the bilingual "optimization strategies" at their disposal. Such strategies are heavier reliance on L1 knowledge, while others are heavier reliance on the L2 usage, and still others are accommodations between L1 and L2, or even innovations that reflect neither L1 nor L2 features i.e. universal principles (Muysken, 2013). The contact phenomena therefore proceed from the interaction of these four types of contributions. Muysken (2013) explains that the optimisation strategies used by bilinguals can be represented as poles in a square as adapted and indicated below

L1   L1/L2

Universal Principles   L2
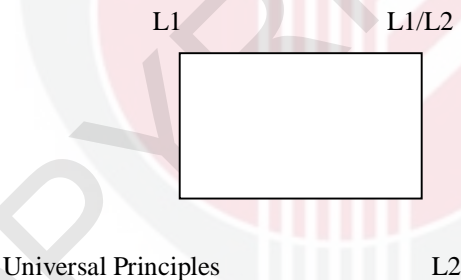
Figure 1.1: Quadrangled model

The prestige of the L1 and low proficiency in the L2 lead to choices in the upper left-hand corner, while the prestige of the L2 and high proficiency in the L2 lead to choices in the lower right-hand corner. The similarity in lexicon and grammar, as well as low normativity, lead to choices in the upper right-hand corner, while such universal principles as political distance and sociolinguistic purism, as well as typological and lexical distance and a short period of contact lead to choices in the lower left-hand corner. This is not an assignment of weights of significance among the poles because different circumstances require different approaches. Idiom use provides an opportunity for the strategies above to be explored. Moreover Muysken himself asserts that more explicit information is needed about which factors constitute necessary and sufficient conditions for a particular outcome. Winford (2013) also asserts that in Muysken's quadrangled

model, there is no real attempt to spell out precisely how the bilingual optimisation strategies come into play in actual situations of language contact. The model is explored more deeply in the subsequent chapter.

The accommodation theory on the other hand started historically as speech accommodation theory (SAT) in the early 1970s as devised by social psychologist Howard Giles. The consideration of the importance of nonverbal components of communication made the experts in this field to change SAT to communication accommodation theory (CAT). In fact CAT is called just accommodation theory. According to Giles and Ogay (2007, p. 16), communication accommodation theory (CAT) explores the different ways in which language users accommodate their communication, their motivations for doing so, and the consequences such an accommodation engender. It seeks to explain the effects linguistics has on interactions between individuals (Gallois et al., 2005). Speakers use linguistic strategies to gain approval or to show distinctiveness in their interaction with others (Gudykunst, Lee, Nishida, & Ogawa, 2005, p. 14). The first component to the theory is the socio-historical context in which an interaction takes place (Gallois et al., 2005). Before an interaction occurs between two parties, there are pre-established relations between the individuals and the groups to which they belong (Gudykunst et al., 2005). Specifically, communicators' social belonging is made up of societal and cultural norms and values (Gallois et al., 2005). The socio-historical context influences communicators' orientation to the upcoming interaction, as the larger social groups to which they are members influence how they will approach the interaction (Gallois et al., 2005). Convergence and divergence were the original accommodation tactics recognized by the theory. Convergence is an act to achieve closeness in an interaction through linguistic tactics such as alterations in one's vocabulary use, speech rate and pauses. Conversely, divergence deploys these same tactics, but they are used to establish distance. Idioms are explored to show that there are convergent and divergent tactics used by people with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The accommodation theory and Muysken's model share the consideration that the socio-cultural set up of a community determines its communication strategies. This notion is put into use in explaining the idioms unique to Nigerian English. CAT is also explored further in the review of literature.

1.8   Conceptual Framework

In this work the understanding of a conceptual framework is in line with Miles & Huberman (1994). They state that a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs or variables – and the presumed relationships among them. According to them frameworks can contain only rudiments or be elaborate, be theory-based/driven or 'commonsensical', descriptive or causal. Smith & Keith (1971) on the other hand posit that conceptual frameworks can evolve and develop out of fieldwork. What then does the framework do for the researcher? It specifies who and what will or will not be studied. It assumes some relationships whether logical or empirical

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This work is a discussion of both a product – idiom, and a process – idiom use. Samples and circumstances come from the written discourse of Nigerian English. The justification for the choice of the written discourse is given in chapter three below.

Idioms in this study are divided into three. There are those idioms that are common to most varieties of native speakers of English and can be found in dictionaries of idioms. There are idioms that are modified as a result of both contact and accommodation and their structure and use is transformed. The third category of idioms is that of idioms unique to Nigeria and which are incorporated in the variety of English used. This category comes about as a result of contact with indigenous language and accommodation strategies. These three categories strengthen the claim that there is indeed a Nigerian variety of English. This it is hoped will lead to a robust institutionalisation of the variety and the debunking of the fear for the loss of international mutual intelligibility. Only the third category is completely unintelligible to users of other varieties of English. Contact with indigenous languages and accommodation affect both the structure and use of idioms. One then has the modified idioms and the idioms unique to Nigerian English. Some idioms are unaffected by both contact and accommodation and therefore they remain the way they are and are used as they are being used in the L1 variety. A combination of these idioms gives credence to the claim of the existence of a Nigerian English. This is how the whole work is conceived and it can graphically be represented as in the diagram below.
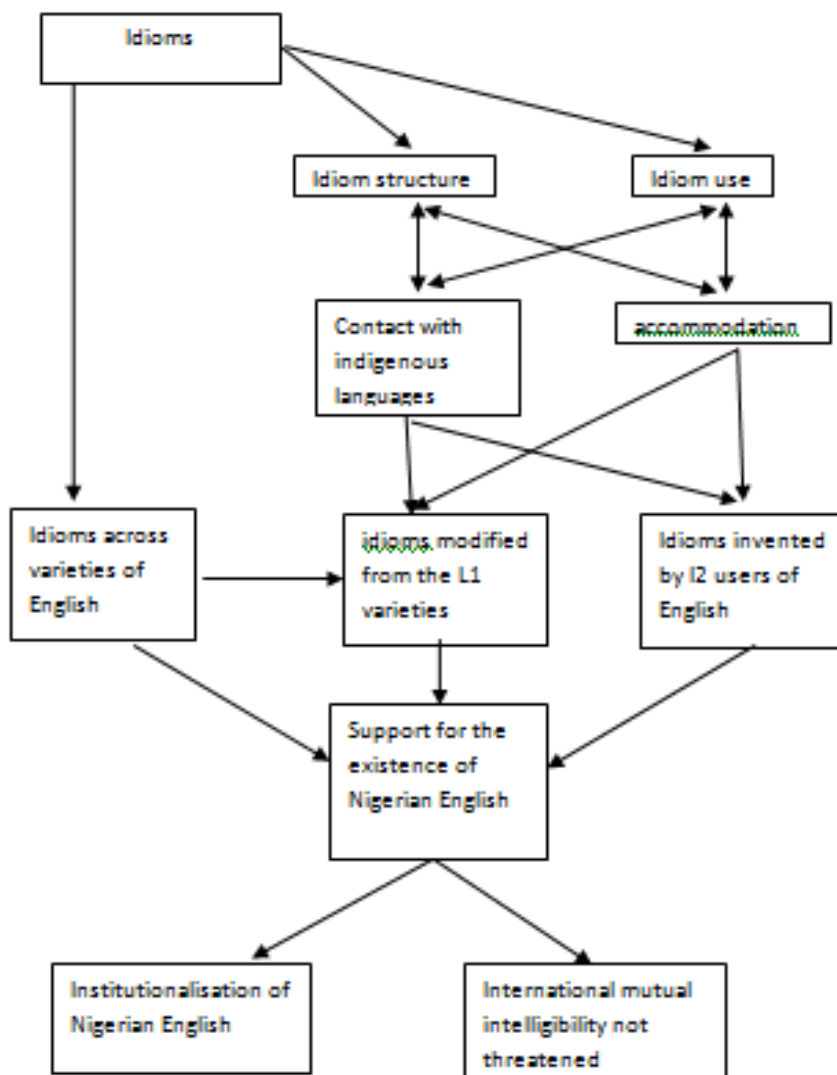
Figure. 1.2.: Conceptual Framework

1.9   Summary of the chapter

In the above discussion a number of issues related to the title have been outlined. An attempt has been made to tie them all to the main thrust of the research work i.e. the discussion of the use and structure of idiomatic expressions in Nigerian English. There is evidence in the literature to suggest the existence of a Nigerian English as a variety of English. Proving the existence of Nigerian English is one of the themes of this research but for idioms in Nigerian English to exist the existence of the Nigerian English itself has got to be established first.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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