# A Morpho-Semantic Analysis of Lexical Creativity of Political Speech of Nigeria's Independence Anniversary 2015

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## Abstract

*Language is used by human beings for communication. Since these human beings consists of different groups, characterized with frequent use of different linguistic behaviour and other extra-linguistic norms that guide their social interaction, it is usual and normal that lexical creativity should exist in the use of language in varied situations. This research examines the lexical creativity of political speech of Nigeria's independence anniversary of 2015 and it is approached from a morpho-semantic perspective. The data used in this work was got from President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 Independence Day speech using a purposive sampling method. A descriptive approach is employed in this work. The data comprises of words randomly selected from the speech*

*and they will form the corpus of the work. It was discovered that the speaker/writer employed so many morphological processes like acronyms, coinages, compounds borrowings etc as lexical creativity in order to drive home his point(s) on a memorable day like Independence Day celebration.*

**Keywords:** Morpho-semantic, Lexical Creativity, Morphology, Semantics

## Introduction

Lexical creativity refers to the ability of native speakers of a language to generate new meanings from existing words and to create new words and meanings in language by (carefully) manipulating the language. Lexical creativity is both a conscious and an unconscious act and most speakers being aware of this fact, may use it to achieve their communicative aim in a stylistic way. It is a semantic term that involves the manipulation of words in a language to serve a purpose. Lexical creativity depends on contextual factors like semantics, stylistics, textual and social environment in which they occur to thrive. Munat (2007) believes that lexical creativity is a feature of textuality. She says the emphasis is on context because novel coinages are only understandable within specific contexts. Finally she submits that these novel coinages are short lived because they do not make meaning outside their context of usage.

Morpho-semantic is a term that indicates the merging of two forms of language analysis (i.e Morphology and Semantics). While Morphology looks at the process of word formation via morphological processes in language, Semantics studies and

analyses meaning in language. Together, morpho-semantic analysis is simply the analysis of word formation with a given meaning at the end of the word formation process. It thrives on using morphological processes to achieve a meaning end in the creation and coining of new words in a language. Though lots of works have been done on lexical creativity and morpho-semantic analysis, this research aims at adding to the existing knowledge on the topic. This paper is divided into five sections. The first introduces the paper while sections two and three review some scholarly works on Semantics, Morphology and lexical creativity respectively. The fourth section represents the analytic core of the paper while the final section briefly summarizes and concludes the work.

**What is Semantics?**
Saeed (2007) defines Semantics as the study of meaning communicated through Language. This definition looks at the communicative value of meaning. It establishes the fact that there is meaning behind every word, phrase or sentence.

Crystal (2008) defines semantics as a major branch of linguistics developed to the study of meaning in language. Everything about semantics is meaning. It stands as a major pillar in the study and analysis of language. No two languages have the same structure and because of that meaning vary. His definition points to the fact that meaning is language dependent. He also agrees that meanings vary in language.

Example 1:
    (a) Switch on the light (SE)

    (b) On the light (NE)

(a) Beef (SE)

(b) Cow meat (NE)

Prasad (2009) defines semantics as the study of the meaning of words and phrases in a language. He further says that every language is the source of expression of meaningful ideas. Every idea must present a meaning in the language. His definition explores how words and phrases get their meaning by way of convention.

Example 2:
(a)Woman is  + adult                (b) Lion is    + animal
                    + female                               + four legged
                    + two legged                         +  carnivorous
                    + matured                             +  tail
                    + language                           + roar
                                                                + mane

## What is Morphology?

Umera-Okeke and Nwankwo (2009) defined morphology as the study of the basic building blocks of meaning in language. They went on further to say that it is the level of grammar that studies the ways morphemes organize themselves to form words. Morphology studies the ways morphemes organize themselves to form words. In other words, it studies the internal structure of words.

Fromkin et al (2011) in agreeing with the above definition says that it is the study of the internal structure of words and of the rules by which words are formed. This definition by Fromkin et al (2011) shows that words have internal structures, which is rule-

governed. This means that sounds/syllables are not haphazardly put to form words. They follow certain rules (rules of word formation).
 Example 3:
  (a) Mis + information = misinformation
  (b) Dis + unity = disunity
  (c) Pro + evolution = pro evolution
  (e) Multi + medial + multi-media
  (d) Out + dated = outdated


  Language is a perpetual creation that would extend itself to its extreme limits to discover new resonances within itself. The term lexical creativity has many lexical meanings attached to it. In the lexical approach to linguistic creativity, the focus is on the ability of speakers to create and name novel concepts either by creating completely new lexical items, or by using existing lexical items in a novel way.
  The creative force of language is situated in the ability of the speakers/writers to convey new meanings, either  by combining old words  in new ways, or by changing the meaning of old words by procedures such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche or irony or by morphological processes obtained in the language. The creative potential of language is facilitated by polysemy (i.e. the ability of words to have more than one meaning); where a given word can be used in a new context and still be understood. Most theories of language production are based on the idea that speakers retrieve or select existing conventional elements from the mental lexicon (which is regarded as the basics of linguistic creativity) and then combine them to express their intended meaning(s) (which can be regarded as the process of linguistic creativity). Munat (2007) defines lexical

creativity as the coining of new lexical items and the creative manipulation of existing words and expressions in a language in order to extend their meanings. It depends on contextual factors such as textual, stylistic, semantics and social environment in which they occur.

Lexical creativity has been observed to employ the morphological processes of language to create new meanings in language or change existing meanings of words. The human language is flexible and dynamic, so, the speakers of the language tend to follow this pattern. Lexical creativity can be analyzed using morphological processes. The speakers employ these processes unconsciously and sometimes consciously to drive home their points. For the purpose of this research, only the morphological processes observed in the lexical creativity of the data will be discussed. They include:

**Coinages**
A coinage is described as the invention of totally new words or terms from existing one (s). Akmajian et al (2008), states that speakers coin a new word by inventing a new sound sequence and paring it with a new meaning. Coinages take the form of either the word (s) assuming an extended meaning (s) or a new meaning. Akabuike (2015) defined coinage as the creation of a new name not by any derivational process but by the brand name of the product.

Example 4:
(a) Coca Cola
(b) Close Up
(c) Omo
(d) Indomie

**Acronyms**

Acronym is the process of word formation in which words are formed from the initial letters of words or phrases. According to Pushpinder and Jindal (2012) an acronym is formed by joining together the initial letters (or sometimes a little larger parts) of other words and is pronounced as a word.

Example 5:

(a) NATO = North Atlantic Treaty organization
(b) AIDS = Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

Akabuike (2015), reports that there are two types of acronyms. She says there are  acronyms pronounced as words.

(c) ECOWAS = Economic Community Of West African States
(d) ANIDS = Anambra Integrated Development Strategy

and acronyms pronounced as a sequence of letters (alphabetism).

(e) ATM = Automated Teller Machine
(f) IMF = International Monetary Fund

Prasad (2009) goes further to mention a third type of acronym. He says they are

acronyms formed from letters taken from the same word.

(g) TB = Tuberculosis
(h) TV = Television

**Compounding**

Marchand (1969) and Adams (1970) cited in Chukwu (2007) defined compounding as a process whereby two or more words combine into a morphological unit, i.e. the combination of two or

more free forms, or words that have an otherwise independent existence.

Example 6:
(a) Bookcase
(b) Fingerprints

Pushpinder and Jindal (2012), say that compounds are formed by joining two or more bases. These bases according to them, are, in some cases, separated by a hyphen, while in other cases, the hyphen appears to have disappeared with the passage of time.

(c) Paper-back (Paperback)
(d) Girl-friend (Girlfriend)

Prasad (2009) reports that compounds are formed by joining two root to make it longer.

(e) Book-review
(f) Sociolinguistics

and by juxtaposing two or more root elements.
(g) Aircraft
(h) Textbook

Akabuike (2015), names four types of compounds. The first is the endocentric compound in which the two roots are semantically transparent. The first element according to her, serves as the modifier while the second element, is the head.
(i) Football
(j) Steamboat

The second is the exocentric compound which she says, is not easily understood because one cannot tell among the constituent elements which is the head and which is the modifier. She says that the meaning in such compounds can only be interpreted metaphorically.

    (k) Scapegoat
    (l) Pickpocket

The third is the Dvanda or Copulative compound whose constituent elements name separate entities and none of these entities is a hyponym. These compounds are built from parts of the lexical items.

    (m) Arab-Israeli
    (n) Peace-Treaty

The fourth is the appositional compound where the hyponymy is bidirectional. That is the meaning of the compound can be understood from either of the elements that constitute it.

    (o) Maidservant
    (p) Bittersweet

**Borrowing / Loan words**
      Borrowing or loan words is an important source of new words in a language. According to Nnamdi-Eruchalu (2012) it is common for languages of the world to borrow from another to enrich its vocabulary. Akabuike (2015) says it is another way of expanding the vocabulary of a language and it is a consequence of cultural contact between two language communities. She affirms that borrowing in among languages is bidirectional. An example of a language with visible borrowings and loan words is the English

language. English language has adopted a vast number of icon words from other languages.

Example 7:
(a) Chest (Latin)
(b) Anonymous (Greek)
(c) Feast (French)
(d) Armada (Spanish)

**Clippings**
Pushpinder and Jindal (2012) define clippings as the shortened form of a word by subtracting one or more syllables from the word. They say that this shortening sometimes occurs at the beginning of a word, at the end of a word or at both ends of a word. Prasad (2009) says in clippings, a word is made smaller without any change in its meaning or grammatical class.

Example 8:
(a) Memorandum = memo
(b) Photograph = photo
(c) Appollinaris = polly
(d) Telephone = phone

Akabuike (2015) opines that clipping is a process of reducing a word to one of its parts or shortening a polysyllabic word in a more or less arbitrary fashion, yet, retaining its meaning. She divides clipping into three types. The first she calls back-clipping or apocopation, where the beginning of the word is retained and the end is removed.

(e) Advertisement = advert
(f) Examination = exam

The second is the fore-clipping or aphaeresis, where the end of a word is retained and the beginning is removed.

    (g) Caravan = van
    (h) University = varsity

The third is the middle-clipping or synocope , where both the beginning and the end of a word is removed and only the middle part is retained.

    (i) Refrigerator = fridge
    (j) Influenza = flu

## Derivational morphemes

    Derivational morphemes are morphemes that change the meaning or the word class of a word. This means that derivational morphemes generates or creates new words either by changing the class of word or by forming new words entirely. According to Akabuike (2015), this change can be achieved by the addition of a derivational bound morpheme (she says that derivational morphemes are bound morphemes). Finally she asserts that derivational morphemes are open-ended because they are infinite and can transverse words. Example 9:

 (a) Sing (verb) sing + -er = singer (Noun)
 (b) Child (noun) child + -ish = childish (Adjective)

 (c) Glory (noun) glory + -fy = glorify (Verb)
 (d) Teach (verb) speak + -er = teacher (Noun)

## Inflectional morphemes

    Inflectional morphemes are bound morphemes. They are grammatical markers and indicators. They are not used to produce

new words but to indicate aspects of the grammatical function of words. Inflectional morphemes modify the grammatical class of words by triggering a change in number, person, gender, tense etc and they deal with the inflectional forms of various lexemes in a language. According to Akabuike (2015), inflectional morphemes do not change the grammatical class of the root to which they are attached. She further posits that inflectional morphemes are used to show grammatical relationship between parts of different sentences and that they are all suffixes. She finally identifies eight inflectional morphemes.

Example 10:
(a) -s = noun plural
(b)-s = noun possessive
(c)-s =verb present tense (third person singular)
(d)-ing = verb present continuous tense
(e) -ed = verb simple past tense
(f) -en = verb past perfect participle
(g) -er =adjective comparative
(h) -est = adjective superlative

## A Morpho-Semantic Analysis of Lexical Creativity of Political Speech of Nigeria's Independence Anniversary 2015

Lexical creativity is a conscious and an unconscious act. In most cases the speaker may not be aware of this act but it takes a morpho-semantic analysis by way of the identification of morphological processes to bring to light the lexical creativity inherent in a speech. This section focuses on the method of data

collection and it aims to analyze this independence anniversary speech 2015. The morphological processes that resulted to the lexical creativity in the speech will be analyzed alongside possible reasons for this lexical creativity.

**Methodology**

The data for this study was got from the independence anniversary speech of 2015 by President Muhammadu Buhari using the purposive sampling method. Barbie (1990) opines that purposive sampling is selecting a sample on the basis of your knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of your research aims. This means that the population is non-randomly selected based on a particular characteristic (Frey et al 2000). MacNealy (1999) cited in Idika (2016) says that the individual characteristics are selected to answer necessary questions about a certain matter or product. A descriptive approach was used in this research because Linguistics takes a descriptive approach to language. It tries to explain things the way they actually are and not as we wish them to be. When language is studied descriptively, it tries to find the unconscious rules people follow when they say or write things.

**Data analysis and Presentation**

The following are examples of morphological processes as used in the speech to create lexical creativity.

**1.     Coinages**

The following coinages were used in the speech:

Shackles of colonialism (paragraph 1, lines 3and 4)
Solid minerals (paragraph 2, line10 and 11)

Entrenched government (paragraph 5, lines 22 and 23)
Free and fair election (paragraph 5, line 23)
Deeper roots (paragraph 5, lines 23 and 24)
Untold consequences (paragraph 5, line 26)
My countrymen and women (paragraph 7, line 32)
Medium-term (paragraph 8, line 37)
Long-term (paragraph 8, line 37)
G-7 (paragraph 9, line 43)

Friendly presidents (paragraph 9, lines 43 and 44)
International coalition (paragraph 9, line 44)
Gallant armed forces (paragraph 10, line 46)
Severely weakened (paragraph 10, line 47)
Infrastructural capabilities (paragraph 10, line 48)
Boko haram (paragraph 10, line 48) (loan coinage)
Shameless attacks (paragraph 11, line 50)
Soft targets (paragraph 11, line 50)
Cowardice and desperation (paragraph 11, line 51)
Tighten vigilance (paragraph 11, line 52)
Long sessions (paragraph 12, line 54)
Nation's power supply (paragraph 12, lines 55 and 56)
Most cost-effective way (paragraph 12, line 56)
Moderately encouraging (paragraph 13, lines 57 and 58)
Partial production (paragraph 15, line 66)
Sordid business (paragraph 15, line 67)
Dubious transactions (paragraph 15, line 68)
Complete audit (paragraph 16, line 69)
Revenue generating agencies (paragraph 16, line 70)
Prudent house-keeping (paragraph 16, line 71)
Sharp decline (paragraph 16, line 72)

Joda transition committee (paragraph 19, line 90)
Burden of governance (paragraph 19, line 94)
Lawless habits (paragraph 21, line 104)
Public office (paragraph 21, line 105)
Public trust (paragraph 21, line 105)

## 2.   Acronyms

Some acronyms were used in the speech.
Acronyms pronounced as sequence of letters (alphabetism)
IDP: Internally Displaced Persons (paragraph 11, line 51)
NNPC: Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (Paragraph 16, line 69)
CBN: Central Bank of Nigeria (paragraph 16, line 70).
FIRS: Federal Inland Revenue Service (paragraph 16, line 70)
NCC: National Communications Commission (paragraph 16, line 70)
APC: All Progressives Congress (paragraph 17, line 77).

## 3.   Compounding

Compounding was visible in the speech. Some examples include
(a)   Endocentric compounds:
Public + office = public office (paragraph 21, line 105)

      Motor + parks = motor parks (paragraph 21, line 106)
(b)   Exocentric compounds:
Nation + hood = nationhood (paragraph 1, line 4)
Coast + line = coastline (paragraph 2, line 10)
None + the + less = nonetheless (paragraph 4, line 19)
Digging + in = digging-in (paragraph 5, line 25)
There + by = thereby (paragraph 5, line 26)
 Stake + holders = stakeholders (paragraph 8, line 36)

Mean + time = meantime (paragraph 13, line 57)
Any + way = anyway (paragraph 20, line 95).

### 4.      Borrowing/Loan words

It was observed that borrowed words featured in the speech. Such borrowings came from two languages namely, French and Latin. They have been tabulated for easier comprehension. They include:

(a) French loan words

| French | English | Line |
|--------|---------|------|
| Liberte` | Liberty/liberated | 3 |
| Nacion | Nation | 12 |
| Unite | Unity | 14 |
| Cuntre`e | Country | 17 |
| Governer | Government | 23 |
| Vertu | Virtue | 97 |

(b) Latin loan words

| Latin | English | Line |
|-------|---------|------|
| Colere | Colonization | 4 |
| Martius | March | 39 |
| Vigilantem | Vigilance | 52 |

### 5.      Clippings

Clippings were used but they were not too visible in the speech. However it was   observed that the use of clippings was strategic in the speech.

(a)      Back Clipping:
    Gas = Gasoline (paragraph 2, line 10)
    Petrol = (paragraph 13 line 58)

## 6. Derivational Morphemes

The process of affixation was observed in the speech. Some of these processes will be tabulated in order to bring out the clarity of the analysis

| s/n | Line | Prefix | Root | Suffix S1 | Suffix S2 | Suffix S3 | Word |
|-----|------|--------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|
| 1 | 5 | - | Great | ness | - | - | Greatness |
| 2 | 48 | Infra | structure | al | - | - | Infrastructural |
| 3 | 48 | - | Capable | ity | ies | - | Capabilities |
| 4 | 63 | In | efficient | cy | - | - | Inefficiency |
| 5 | 77 | Mis | manage | ed | - | - | Mismanaged |
| 6 | 81 | De | generate | ing | - | - | degenerating |
| 7 | 82 | Un | Rest | - | - | - | Unrest |
| 8 | 84 | - | Live | li | hood | | Livelihood |
| 9 | 88 | - | Method | ic | al | Ly | Methodically |
| 10 | 105 | Un | ruly | - | - | - | Unruly |

## 7.    Inflectional Morphemes

Inflectional morphemes were used to show number, possession, tense and comparatives.

(a)    Number

-s (noun plural) = Nigerian<u>s</u> (paragraph 1, line 1)

Problem<u>s</u> (paragraph 2, line 6)

Nation<u>s</u>    (paragraph 9, line 42)

(b)    Possession

–'s (noun possessive) = One's (paragraph 5 line 24)

Nation's (paragraph 12, line 55)

(b)     Tense

-s (verb present tense) =    Its (paragraph 14, line 63),

Ours (paragraph 7, line 33)

–ed (verb simple past tense) = Liberat<u>ed</u> (paragraph 1, line 3)

Instruct<u>ed</u> (paragraph 11, line 52)

–en (verb past perfect participle) = to tight<u>en</u> (paragraph11, 52)

have tak<u>en</u> (paragraph 14, line 62)

–ing (verb present continuous) = Exporting (paragraph 15, line 67)

Degenerating (paragraph 18, line 81)

(c)     Comparatives

–er (adjective comparative) = Great<u>er</u> (paragraph 4, line 17)

–est (adjective superlative) = Saf<u>est</u> (paragraph 12, line 56).


From the data above, it is evident that lexical creativity abounds in the speech. The data also reveals that lexical creativity depends on morphological processes to thrive and that it is both a conscious act and an unconscious act. There are so many reasons why speakers employ lexical creativity in their speeches. Some of the reasons observed were to emphasize salient points, to express an opinion, for stylistic purposes, for effective communication, to appeal to the conscience of the audience and to showcase their linguistic competence of the language. However the case may be, lexical creativity drives to one aim, which is to communicate to the audience using linguistic tools that will carry the message and drive home the message.

From the data above it was also observed that lexical creativity varies from speaker to speaker (or writer to writer) and that the morphological processes involved will depend on the lexical creativity of the speaker. While the lexical creativity varies, the morphological processes are constant. One speaker may say

"fellow Nigerians," another may say "my countrymen and women," yet another may say "fellow citizens." It all depends on the lexical creativity of the speaker and what he intends to say.

**Conclusion**

This study presents an analysis of lexical creativity in the independence anniversary speech of 2015. It aims at analyzing the speech based on the lexical creativity of the speaker from a morpho-semantic point of view using morphological processes. Haven analyzed the data collected, it was discovered that lexical creativity was inherent in the speech. For example shackles of colonialism, medium-term, moderately encouraging and power supply are examples of coinages from the speech. Also nationhood, digging-in, meantime and stakeholders are example of exocentric compounding from the speech. Among the reasons for lexical creativity in speeches are the stylistic purposes which they help the speaker to achieve. It was also observed that people usually employ lexical creativity consciously or unconsciously in order to drive home their message (s) in a speech. More researches are needed in order to either support or refute the findings of this research, maybe using other data collection procedures.

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