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On metonymy and other forms of motivation for some Nigerian English expressions

Abstract: Nigerian English (NE) gradually developed on the basis of British English (BE) in the wake of the British colonization of West Africa. Numerous expressions in both varieties have the same or closely similar forms but different meanings. Such differences are often motivated by the cognitive mechanism of metonymy. They involve two distinct paths of conceptualization and categories of usage: (i) expressions that do not function as metonymic sources in BE give rise to metonymies in NE; (i) the same metonymic sources in BE and in NE provide access to different extensions of the same targets in NE. Apart from conceptual metonymy, many instances of NE usage reflect two other motivating factors: the impact of the local socio-cultural experience and of the West African linguistic substratum. All three forms of motivation are often present within a single expression.

Keywords: British English, culture, metonymy, motivation, Nigerian English.

1. Introduction

Basing on the methodological framework of the contemporary cognitive linguistics, which emphasizes the figurative character of concepts and the role of motivation in language, the paper conducts a comparative analysis of 39 expressions that have the same or closely similar forms but different meanings in British English (BE) and Nigerian English (NE). The analysis compares the meanings of the expressions and focuses on three forms of motivation present in the NE sense extensions: the underlying metonymic patterns, the local socio-cultural experience, and the impact of the West African linguistic substratum.

The body of the text is organized into six sections. Section 2 briefly introduces NE as an Outer Circle[1] variety of English. Section 3 presents the theoretical

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[1] The Inner Circle includes countries that speak English as a native or first language; the Outer Circle comprises countries where English is spoken as a second language – they are often former

framework of the analysis. It discusses briefly three forms of motivation present in NE expressions: conceptual metonymy, the socio-cultural context of Nigeria, and the influence of the West African linguistic substratum. Section 4 introduces the data, discusses the methodology, and analyses the selected examples of British and Nigerian lexical usage. Section 5 contains a summary and a further discussion of the analysed examples, focusing on the role of metonymy, the sociolinguistic status of the expressions, and the way in which they contribute to making NE an independent variety of English. Section 6 offers some concluding remarks.

2. Nigerian English

BE became influential in the southern part of Nigeria in the 19th century in the course of British colonization of West Africa, which had been ongoing for around three hundred years. It gradually developed into NE, which today "is an indigenised variety […] functioning as a second language within the Nigerian linguistic and socio-cultural setting" (Alo & Mesthrie, 2008, p. 323).

Differences between the two varieties are related to phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax, and pragmatics. Thus, for example, NE has many coinages, such as *African time* 'typically casual approach to punctuality' (Blench & Dendo, 2005, p. 1); verbs combine with different prepositions, for example *congratulate for* instead of *congratulate on*; progressive forms are used where BE uses stative forms, for example *Excuse me, sir, we are not hearing you!*; the form *Well-done!* is used to greet persons engaged in some activity (Okunrinmeta, 2014, p. 326).

The degree of approximation of NE to BE is different across different varieties of the language (Banjo, 1971). That is because NE functions as a link language for more than 500 indigenous languages spoken in the country (Bisong, 1995, p. 131). Unlike in Kenya, Tanzania, or some states of Southern Africa, where code mixing is common, its usage must reflect the "local English" patterns (Melchers & Shaw, 2003, pp. 158–159).

3. The theoretical framework: Motivation

Motivation is present whenever one aspect of human cognition, such as reasoning, categorizing, metaphor, metonymy, bodily experience, emotions, perception, socio-communicative interaction, language, or culture, exerts influence upon another aspect of cognition (Panther & Radden, 2011, pp. 1–2). Because language is linked to cognition more tightly than other systems, the influence of those systems on language – called linguistic motivation – determines the properties of linguistic signs (Panther & Radden, 2011, p. 8).

British colonies in Africa and Asia; countries where English is used as a foreign language, for example Japan or Saudi Arabia, make up the Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1985).

3.1. Metonymy

In metonymy, which motivates language and communication, the source provides mental access to the target within the same idealized cognitive model (ICM) (Radden & Kövecses, 1999, p. 21). For example, in the NE expression *upstairs* 'building with a second floor' (Blench & Dendo, 2005, p. 27), the underlying metonymy THE UPPER PART OF A BUILDING FOR THE WHOLE BUILDING highlights the interactional aspect of the place, that is, the need to use the stairs to access the rooms on top of the building.

Some ICMs are complex enough to include various sub-models. In such cases, the same source can provide access to more than one target extension within the same ICM. For example, the expression *paper* 'substance manufactured from wood fibre' can stand for a printed publication, an examination sheet, a document, or an essay. All these things can be viewed as parts of 'Paper ICM' because they are all made from the substance.[2]

Thanks to metonymy, various stereotypical, ideal, typical, basic, important, etc. elements are given priority over their opposites. The following fragment of Larry King's interview with the Mexican-American actor Anthony Quinn well illustrates it:

Anthony Quinn: I *grew up* on the east side of Los Angeles.
Larry King: *Very poor kid?*

Mr King's question reflects a cultural stereotype of the east side of the City of Los Angeles as a poor area (Krišković & Tominac, 2009, pp. 63–64). Metonymy is thus also "more or less strongly determined by a given culture" (Radden & Kövecses, 1999, p. 48).

Some expressions are based on more than a single metonymic mapping. For example, as Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez & Díez Velasco (2003, pp. 514–516) discuss, the verb in the expression *His sister heads the policy unit* involves two metonymies: HEAD FOR LEADER / AGENT FOR ACTION OF LEADING. Barcelona (2002, pp. 220–221) argues that some category-related concepts involve higher-order metonymies. Thus, in the expression *That graduate student is an Aristotle*, the proper name is the source of the metonymy PERSON FOR DEFINING PROPERTY – Aristotle is commonly regarded as a philosophical genius. Because Aristotle represents the whole class of philosophical geniuses, he also serves as the source of the higher-level metonymy STEREOTYPICAL MEMBER FOR CATEGORY.

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[2] Earlier definition by Croft (1993, p. 348), which describes metonymy as the process of domain highlighting that occurs within a domain matrix consisting of several subdomains, also captures this aspect of the mechanism.

3.2. The socio-cultural context of Nigeria and the West African linguistic substratum

NE "bears ties with the social structure and worth arrangement of society" – it reflects the local social roles and status, sexual attitudes, and age (Ogunjobi & Akindutire, 2020, p. 6). It also gives expression to the local economic and political experience. For example, in the compound *cash-madam* 'large-scale woman trader, generally in the south' (Blench & Dendo, 2005, p. 5), money is foregrounded as the major factor in business – the vehicle *cash* accesses the activity and its scale.

NE also reflects the semantic orientation of the local substratum languages. For example, the *hand* includes the arm; the word *leg* refers to 'leg, ankle, foot' – both senses developed as a result of adaptation to patterns common in various West African languages (Blench & Dendo, 2005, p. 15). This form of motivation reflects the role of NE as a link language for many smaller local languages.

4. The data, the methodology, and the analysis

The data analysed below were selected on the basis of "lexical approach" or "lexical method" (Kövecses, Ambrus, Hegedűs, Imai, & Sobczak, 2019, pp. 149–152). They were gathered from three monolingual dictionaries and two papers. The BE meanings of the expressions and most examples of their contextual use were drawn from the on-line *Cambridge English dictionary: Meanings & definitions*. They were also discussed with native speakers of British English during personal communication. Unless otherwise indicated, the NE examples are based on *Dictionary of Nigerian English* (2005), which takes into account newspaper articles, notices, and overheard speech so as to illustrate the contextual use of the expressions (Blench & Dendo, 2005, p. iii). One example was back-translated from Nigerian Pidgin (NP) on the basis of *The Nigerian Pidgin English dictionary created by you for you!* – some expressions are used in both in NE and NP. Several expressions were found in papers by Adeyanju (2009) and Okunrinmeta (2014). Examples of contextual use, provided for all BE and most of those NE expressions that are used in a stable way, come from the same sources.

The analysed examples are divided into the following two categories postulated as the organizing principle of usage differences between BE and NE:

(i)   expressions that are not metonymic sources in BE function as such in NE – the subsection is labelled 'Metonymic sources only in NE';
(ii) the same metonymic sources in BE and in NE provide access to different extensions of the same targets in NE – the subsection is labelled 'Same metonymic sources in BE and in NE – different extensions of same targets in NE'.

In each of the categories, the examples are discussed against the background of the ICMs proposed by Radden & Kövecses (1999) and listed in the original order. A brief description of each of them is provided in the first of the respective subsections. Within each subcategory, the examples of expressions are given in alphabetical order.

The discussion explains the meaning and structure of the metonymic mappings. Wherever applicable, it also discusses the other two types of motivation – the role of the Nigerian socio-cultural context and the possible influence of the West African linguistic substratum.

4.1. Metonymic sources only in NE

Expressions that serve as metonymic sources only in NE function against the background of the following ICMs: Thing-and-Part, Constitution, Event, Category-and-Member, Action, Containment, Causation, and Location.

4.1.1. Thing-and-Part ICM

The whole-part relation, which foregrounds the contiguity of things and their parts, is one of the basic patterns of human cognition. Parts are inferred from wholes and wholes are inferred from parts both in physical and perceived contiguity.

In BE *coast* refers to the land adjacent to the sea – *They live on the east coast of Scotland*. In NE the noun refers to 'urban areas' – *He has gone to coast*[3] 'He has gone (from his home village) to work in the modern urban sector'. The NE meaning is more specific and based on the metonymy WHOLE FOR PART. It reflects the importance of the region in the country's history – in the colonial times Nigeria was urbanized mainly on the coast, where trading ports, such as Calabar or Port Harcourt, came into being.

The BE meaning of the noun *flood* is any event of a large quantity of water coming over some area – *After the flood it took weeks for the water level to go down*. In NE the noun refers to the 'season when river overflows into the bush (roughly August to October)', used mainly in the Niger Delta region. The underlying mapping is PART FOR WHOLE. The usage is motivated by the impact of the local climate on human life.

The BE meaning of *yard* is a unit of measure of 3 feet or approximately 91.4 cm – *The field is 50 yards long*. In NE the noun refers to a 'length of cloth' – *I went to market to buy some yards* 'I went to the market to buy some lengths of cloth'. The Nigerian usage is based on the metonymy UNIT OF MEASURE FOR MATERIAL, which can be regarded as a form of the more general relation PART FOR WHOLE.

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[3] The expression is common in the Delta region of Nigeria. The omission of *the* before the noun *coast* is a feature of NE grammar – it is an instance of "a local, or unsystematic, use of articles" (Melchers & Shaw, 2003, p. 158). Similar omissions are present in some other examples discussed below.

In BE the noun *passport* refers to an official document with personal information and a photograph that allows one to travel to foreign countries and to prove their identity – *I have a British passport*. In NE the expression also means a 'passport photo' – *Bring me one passport* 'Bring me one passport photo'. The Nigerian usage is based on the metonymy WHOLE FOR PART.

4.1.2. Constitution ICM

Materials constitute things. As a result, substances can be perceived as objects and conceptualized as bounded count nouns; objects can be perceived as substances.

BE uses the compound *coal-tar* only to name a sticky, black substance having industrial use in the process of manufacturing various chemical products – *It is only a product of coal tar*. In NE the noun acquired the meaning 'asphalt road' – *Now we have reached the coal-tar again* 'Now we have reached the asphalt road again'. It is based on the metonymy THE MATERIAL USED IN THE ROAD SURFACE FOR THE ROAD.

4.1.3. Event ICM

Events can be perceived in terms of the reversible thing-part relation. Conceptualized as wholes, they can refer to their parts, that is, initial, central, and final subevents. The parts can also refer to events as wholes.

In BE the verb *join* means connecting two things – *A long suspension bridge joins the islands* – or becoming a part of some activity, group, or organization – *You should consider joining the club*. The NE sense 'get on board transport' – *Where will you join taxi?* 'Where will you board the taxi?' means becoming a passenger or one of the passengers of a taxi that is already occupied and highlights the end of the boarding scenario. The usage is based on the metonymy FINAL SUBEVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT.

The expression *on fire* is used in BE to refer to the condition of a place or a building burning – *Bombs were falling and the city was on fire*. The NE sense is 'be cooking' – *The food is on fire* 'The food is cooking'. The underlying metonymy CENTRAL SUBEVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT may be further motivated by real life activity of preparing food over open fire.

The BE expression *on the seat* is literal – *You will find the gift on the seat behind you.* The NE sense of *on seat* 'present in office' (Okunrinmeta, 2014, p. 324) – *He is on seat* 'He is present in the office' – is figurative and differs from the BE usage also because it omits the definite article. It is based on the metonymy CENTRAL SUBEVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT.

Finally, the central BE sense of the verb *wash* is cleaning with water or some other substance – *Wash your hands before dinner, please*. The NE extension 'develop film' – *So far they didn't wash it* 'They haven't developed it yet' is

figurative. Focusing on the stage when the image has already appeared, but the applied chemicals have to be removed by washing so as to prevent changes, the expression is based on the metonymy FINAL SUBEVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT.

4.1.4. Category-and-Member ICM

Categories and their members can be perceived as things and, consequently, as part-whole structures. The relation is bidirectional – whole categories can provide metonymic access to their members and members can provide access to whole categories.

Novel and *Omo* refer in BE to a book-length story – *His latest novel is selling really well* – and washing powder or liquid identified by the given brand name. Their NE senses 'reading matter of almost any type except the Bible and newspapers' and 'any soap powder' are more inclusive and based on the metonymy MEMBER FOR CATEGORY. The second expression is a brand name that has become a generic term or an eponym as a result of the product once dominating the Nigerian market.

4.1.5. Action ICM

Actions typically involve diverse participants, such as agents, instruments, means, objects, procedures, results, times, etc. These elements can serve as metonymic vehicles that provide access to actions, less frequently to one another.

Gist functions in BE only as a noun and refers to essential points or sense of some issue – *We got the gist, but not every word*. Its NE sense, which originated in student slang (Obasi, 2022, p. 690), is 'tell someone the news or the gossip' – *She gisted me fully* 'She told me the whole news / gossip'. It is based on the metonymy MEANS FOR ACTION, which motivates the noun-to-verb conversion.

In BE the expression *senior* is related to older age and is used as a noun – *Seniors are entitled to a reduction of about 10%* , or as an adjective – *The more senior students are given extra responsibilities*. In NE it functions as a verb and means 'be older than' – *He seniors me* 'He is older than me'. The NE usage, a case of adjective-to-verb conversion, is based on the metonymy RELATION FOR ACTION.

Finally, in NE the adjective *sharp* can be converted into a verb – *He was sharping the knife*. The usage is based on the metonymy RESULT FOR ACTION.

4.1.6. Containment ICM

The relation between contents and container is basic and well-entrenched in human experience. It motivates complementary metonymies, in which containers provide access to contents and contents to containers.

In BE *gallon* means a unit of measure equal to 4 quarts or 4,546 litres – *How much does a gallon of petrol cost?* In NE it acquired the sense of a 4-litre container for oil, which to some extent preserves the original meaning of gallon in BE. The new sense was based on the metonymy VOLUME FOR CONTAINER.[4] It was later generalized to 'any plastic or other container in the shape of a jerry-can" – *She took a gallon containing kerosene...* 'She took a plastic container with kerosene…' The generalization was possible thanks to a higher-level metonymic mapping MEMBER FOR CATEGORY.

4.1.7. Causation ICM

Causes and effects are strongly correlated in human experience (Norrick, 1981, p. 41). As a result, they motivate complementary metonymies – causes access effects and effects access causes.

In BE *civilisation* refers to any type of organized human society – *Widespread use of the Internet may change the modern civilization.* In NE the expression acquired the sense 'colonial and postcolonial era' – *Since we had civilisation* 'Since we lived in the colonial and postcolonial era'. It is based on the mapping EFFECT FOR CAUSE. The motivation is local and reflects the role of colonization in the country's history.

The noun *feeding* means in BE providing food to a child or an animal – *She has a midnight feeding, then sleeps until morning*. The NE sense is 'money for food when away' – *What of my feeding?* 'What money will I get to buy food?' It is based on the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE.

In BE the adjective *heavy* refers to physical weights.[5] The NE meaning is 'pregnant' – *My wife is heavy* 'My wife is pregnant'. The NE extension involves the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE.

Finally, in BE *lean* describes the condition of having little flesh – *She has a lean figure*. Its NE sense 'thin, but with implication that leanness is caused by troubles' goes beyond the strictly physical leanness of the BE usage because "being thin does not have a positive cultural value in West Africa" (Blench & Dendo, 2005, p. 15). It is also based on the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE.

4.1.8. Location ICM

Locality includes "geographically defined areas like continents and valleys, politically defined areas like countries and towns, and architectonically defined areas like museums and kitchens" – individuals, groups, and institutions placed in those areas can function as elements of reversible metonymic relations (Norrick, 1981, p. 60).

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[4] The word *gallon* comes from Old Frech *jail* 'bowl' via Medieval Latin *galleta* 'bucket, pail' and possibly Gaullish *galla* 'vessel' (Etymonline, 2024).

[5] The senses of difficulty and intensity are based on metaphor.

In BE the expression *hometown* refers to a town or city one is from – *I consider New York my hometown*. In NE it means 'association of expatriates from a particular area or tribe, formed to promote development in their area of origin'. In addition to the sense of location, the use of the word *home* reflects the positive emotional attitude that fosters the idea of cooperation between the people. The usage is based on the metonymy PLACE FOR INHABITANTS.

4.2. Same metonymic sources in BE and in NE – different extensions of same targets in NE

Expressions that serve as metonymic sources both in BE and NE function against the background of the following ICMs: Constitution, Event, Category-and-Member, Action, and Causation.

4.2.1. Constitution ICM

The noun *foam* refers in BE to a soft material used to fill various objects. Its contextual use can be illustrated by the utterance *Therefore, foams and fabrics are available*. In NE the noun acquired a specific meaning 'foam rubber mattress' – *I will go to the market to buy foam* 'I will go to the market to buy a foam rubber mattress'. Both usages are based on the metonymy MATERIAL FOR OBJECT.

In BE *glass* indicates a hard brittle substance or various objects made of it, such as containers or spectacles – *I'll get you a clean glass*. In the more extended NE usage, the noun refers to a 'window, especially car-window' – *Roll down the glass!* 'Roll down the car window!' The established BE metonymy MATERIAL FOR OBJECT thus involves an additional target extension in NE.

The noun *nylons* refers in BE to women's stockings made of nylon – *I finally found some nylons that would last.* In NE it acquired the meaning of a 'plastic bag'[6] – *Sarah always likes to steal my nylon*[7] 'Sarah always likes to steal my plastic bag' (Naijalingo, 2024). Both usages are based on the metonymy MATERIAL FOR OBJECT.

BE uses *rubber* to refer to a tough elastic substance or various objects made of it, such as erasers or waterproof shoes – *You should wear your rubbers in the rain*. In NE the expression also means 'any strip of elastic material, such as the flexible strips used to attach loads to a bicycle' – *Use roba [rubber] to fix it to the bicycle* 'Use rubber to fix it to the bicycle'. The two usages are again based on the metonymy MATERIAL FOR OBJECT.

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[6] As Blench & Dendo (2005, p. 18) discuss, in the Port Harcourt area *nylon* has now been replaced by *waterproof*. The new expression is based on the metonymy property for category and is also used in NP.

[7] The expression can be used in a singular form because it is not a summation plural.

4.2.2. Event ICM

In BE the verb *hear* means receiving information – *I haven't heard the news*, or trying a case in a law court – *The case will be heard by the High Court*. The NE sense 'understand a language' – *I hear Yoruba* 'I understand Yoruba' – profiles the auditory aspect of linguistic communication, but backgrounds the aspects of comprehension and speaking. All three senses are based on the metonymy INITIAL SUBEVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT. The NE usage is additionally motivated by conceptual patterns present in the West African linguistic substratum[8] (Obasi, 2022, p. 82; Odebunmi , 2010, pp. 275–276), for which NE functions as a link language.

The BE sense of *put to bed* is causing somebody to fall asleep – *He's yawning, so put him to bed*. The expression represents the beginning of the scenario and is based on the metonymy INITIAL SUBEVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT. In NE *put to bed* means 'give birth (to)' – *She put to bed a bouncing baby boy.* The usage foregrounds the end of the delivery scenario and is thus based on the contrastive metonymy FINAL SUBEVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT.

4.2.3. Action ICM

In BE the verbs *back* and *eye* refer, respectively, to going back – *She saw me and backed suddenly*, and to observing or watching – *I could see her eyeing my lunch*. In the NE usage they acquired the respective senses 'carry baby on the back; turn one's back on' and 'seduce' (Adeyanju, 2009, p. 14). Both expressions involve noun-to-verb conversion. The first of them can be used in the context *In America they don't back their babies as we do here* 'In America they don't carry their babies on the backs as we do here'. The usage is motivated by the common African practice of carrying one's offspring on the back. Though different, all BE and NE senses involve the conversion-related metonymy BODY PART FOR ACTION.

The verb *gas*, again derived by conversion, means in BE being overcome or poisoned by gas – *Hundreds of thousands of soldiers were gassed in the First World War.* Its NE meaning is 'defile the air' – *He has gassed* 'He has farted'. Both senses are based on the metonymy SUBSTANCE FOR ACTION PERFORMED WITH THE AID OF THAT SUBSTANCE.

In BE the verb *clean off* refers to removing dirt – *I'll clean the stains off your trousers*. Its NE sense is 'erase' – *Clean off that writing!* 'Erase that writing!' Both usages are cases of adjective-to-verb conversion based on the metonymy RESULT FOR ACTION.

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[8] Similar motivation seems to apply in the case of the NE usage of *hear* to refer to sensing or smelling, for example in the context *I hear the food on fire* 'I can smell the food cooking' (Blench & Dendo, 2005, p. 12).

4.2.4. Causation ICM

Bread refers in BE to money or income – *I earn my bread digging coal*. In NE it has a narrowed reference to 'one Naira', which is one unit of Nigerian currency – *Give me ten bread!* 'Give me ten Naira!'. Both the BE sense and the NE extension are based on the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE – having bread, a basic food staple, is the effect of having money as a cause that facilitates its acquisition.

The noun *going* indicates in BE the condition of the ground for walking or riding – *The going is described as good to soft*, or speed of travelling – *The traffic was terrible, so it was slow going*. Its NE sense 'motor-cycle taxi' – *I must get a going* 'I must get a motor-cycle taxi' – is a loan translation of the word *achaba* used in Hausa, one of the indigenous languages of Nigeria. All three senses are based on the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE.

The compound *go-slow* refers in BE to a slowed tempo of factory work, which aims at reducing output, usually as a form of protest – *I refer to the recent power workers' go-slow*. The NE sense is any 'traffic jam', but especially the one in Lagos – *They were caught in a go-slow* 'They were caught in a traffic jam'. Both senses are again based on the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE.

In the BE usage *grasscutter* refers to a lawn mower – *Learn to operate the new grasscutter*. Its NE meaning is 'cane rat'. The metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE motivates both senses of the compound expression.

In BE the expression *hold the walking stick* means keeping the stick in a particular position so as to be able to manipulate it in a given way – *Always hold your walking stick on the strong side*. The NE sense of the expression is 'become very old' (Okunrinmeta, 2014, p. 323) – *Ezer holds the walking stick* 'Ezer is very old'. Both usages are figurative, but based on contrastive metonymies: CAUSE FOR EFFECT in BE and EFFECT FOR CAUSE in NE.

The BE sense of *hot drink* is a non-alcoholic drink that can make one feel hot, such as tea or cocoa – *A hot drink will keep you warm on a cold day*. In NE the expression refers to a 'hard liquor' and is often abbreviated to *hot* (Okinrunmeta, 2014, p. 323) – the consumption causes the effect of burning sensation in the mouth. Both senses thus involve the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE.

In BE the noun *money* may refer to expected profit – *There's money in sport these days*. Its NE meaning is 'cost' – *Your money is ...* 'It costs …'. Both senses are based on the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE – money is used to calculate profit in economic exchange and the cost of the goods that one acquires.

The BE meaning of the compound *road-safety* is a set of regulations and practices whose aim is to ensure safety on the roads – *Considerations of road safety give me a reason to signal before turning off a road in a car*. It NE it also refers to 'a special unit intended to enforce road-safety regulations' – *If road safety stops you, you must be on seat-belt* 'If a special unit […] stops you, you must be wearing your seat-belt'. Both senses involve the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE.

Finally, the BE sense of *share* is distributing money or other goods – *Will you share your sandwich with me?* Its NE sense is 'deal (cards)' – having the cards together with other players is the outcome of dealing them. Both usages are based on the metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE.

5. Summary and discussion

Eight ICMs form the conceptual background for the 39 metonymy-based expressions whose NE usage differs from the BE usage. They include the following relations: Thing-and-Part, Constitution, Event, Category-and-Member, Action, Containment, Causation, and Location.

 Out of the two postulated categories of usage, the first one – 'Metonymic sources only in NE' – is present within all eight ICMs, but Event ICM and Action ICM contain more mappings than other ICMs. The second category – 'Same metonymic sources in BE and in NE – different extensions of same targets in NE' - functions within four ICMs. Action ICM and Causation ICM involve more mappings than the remaining two ICMs.

Causation ICM serves as a framework for the largest number of metonymies – 14 out of 39, which amounts to c. 36%. A possible motivation for the preponderance is the fact that the cause-effect relation is one of the most common aspects of human experience. The next two most frequently used frameworks are Action ICM and Event ICM – with 7 (c. 18%) and 6 mappings (c. 15%) respectively, which is roughly half of the level of the Causation ICM. At the same time, 20 out 39 mappings belong to the first category of usage, which is 'Metonymic sources only in NE'; 19 mappings belong to the second category of usage, which is 'Same metonymic sources in BE and in NE – different extensions of same targets in NE'. Thus, both categories evenly illustrate the scale of conceptual difference between BE and NE.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, some expressions are stable both in formal and colloquial usage, for example *put to bed*, *go-slow*, and *on seat* (Adeyanju, 2009, pp. 12, 15). With full social and linguistic acceptability, they can become a part of Standard Nigerian English (SNE). Other expressions, such *eye a person*, appear mainly in colloquial contexts (Adeyanju, 2009, pp. 13–14). All of them, however, reflect what Hymes (1997, p. 12) calls the "social import of meaning".

Differences from the BE standard in both categories are a result of cultural transfer – the new lexical-semantic extensions help the Nigerian speakers adjust to the local experience – and the contact between BE and the indigenous languages of Nigeria (Adegbija, 2004, p. 24). In other words, the "vocabulary items have undergone modification or semantic change […] in order to accommodate and cater for the communicative needs of the language users" (Esther, 2016, p. 70).

The scope of the differences between BE and NE is evidence for the fact that English is now "highly domesticated in Nigeria" (Adetuji & Adeniran, 2017, p. 8). Domestication connotes "home– grown", "made native", and "adapted and tamed"

to suit the country's environment (Adegbija, 2004, p. 20 cit. in Eze & Igwenyi, 2016, p. 111). That is why Ubahakwe (2006) claims that the status of NE is as "a dialect subset comparable to the American, Australian, British, Canadian and Rhodesian subset" (cit. in Obiegbu, 2016, p. 76). In a similar way, Awonusi (2002 cit. in Obiegbu, 2016, p. 76) "concludes that the English language in Nigeria 'has come of age'."

Finally, as the studies of Afrikaans Dutch (Dirven, 1994) and American English (Baugh & Cable, 1983) show, a language becomes an independent variety also in the sense of conceptual patterns that its lexicon reflects. That is why Odebunmi (2010) argues for language-and-culture-specific metaphors in NE. Since conceptual metonymy plays a productive role in language-and-culture-specific lexical extension, it also contributes to making NE a separate variety of English.

6. Conclusions

The above-discussed examples of NE usage are motivated by the culture-specific experience of body parts, car traffic, colonial history, geographical locations, money, politics, weather, etc. They developed because they were adequate for the representation of "the Nigerian worldview and the socio-cultural background of the interlocutors" (Abdullahi-Idiagbon & Olanyi, 2011, p. 80; Ogunjobi & Akindutire, 2020, pp. 5–6; Orimogunje & Oluremi, 2013, p. 266). Some of them also reflect the patterns of the West African linguistic substratum (Bamgbose, 1992, p. 152; Melchers & Shaw, 2003, p. 155). As Jowitt (1991, pp. ix-x) argues, these lexical 'Nigerianisms' should be regarded as good evidence of acculturation of "Nigerian English as English that has England as its first mother and Nigeria as its second", as well as of the fact that English is no longer "the exclusive 'possession' of the people who were its first 'owner'" (Orimogunje & Oluremi, 2013, p. 265).

Metonymy is a common conceptual mechanism not only in the Inner Circle varieties of English. The frequency and scope of its use in NE, together with the presence of unexpected sources and target extensions, shows that metonymy may also be a major strategy of lexical extension in the Outer Circle varieties of English. If the assumption is confirmed by the analyses of lexicons of other African and Asian Englishes, it will further validate the idea of metonymy being a pervasive conceptual phenomenon.

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