



Corruption-Induced Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions in Yorùbá Literary and Routine Communication: A Stylistic Approach

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Abstract

Corruption is a semantically multi-faceted expression construed as appropriation and dishonest means of the acts of embezzlement, fraud, falsification, perversion, bribery and nepotism designed to gain some benefits for self. Corruption has pervaded social and political circles in Nigeria and, has acquired certain new idiomatic expressions found in literary and routine communication of the Yorùbá. The paper adopted Mukarovsky's theory of Standard Language mainly to explain the nature of the new idioms, to explicate the communicative and stylistic relevance of these idioms and to situate the social issues expressed through these idioms in Yorùbá discourse in selected literary works in Yorùbá. Linguistic metaphorisation strategy derived from nominalization, composition and phonaesthetic coinages was employed for data selection. Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expressions were selected from routine communication from four literary texts written by Olúyémisí Adébòwálé, Abégúndé Adédoyin, Lérè Adéyemí and Dayò Àkànmú with sufficient examples of usages of new idioms. The data revealed new idiomatic usages such as egúnjẹ (bribe), gbájú ẹ̀ (defraud him), ojèlú (corrupt politician), yàíyàúú (Internet fraud), jẹunsápò (eat into the pocket), géranmáwo (cut meat with the skin), etùtù (appeasement), etcetra. Data Analysis therefore illustrates the issue of corruption expressed and contextualized in bribery, Internet fraud, politiking, looting and contract splitting.

Keywords: Corruption, Idioms, Yoruba, Literary, Routine, Stylistics.

Introduction

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Corruption as a phenomenon is as old as humanity itself. Corrupt practices cuts across all areas of human endeavours. Today in Nigeria, corruption has permeated virtually all sectors of government and social domains. Due to its age long existence, its incursion is always linked to human vaulting ambition and unbridled aspiration to achieve the inconceivable within a short period of time. The history of corrupt practices in Nigeria goes back in time even before the corrupt laden second Republic, during the reign of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, and the subsequent military regimes which succeeded it. For instance, one of the hallmarks of corruption was noticed in the 40's, during colonial era, when Aníkúrá, a notorious armed robber tormented Lagos and its environs unchecked. The impunity with which Anikura operated was uncanny and its successes were undoubtedly linked to complicity of the then Royal Police Force. Anikura's robbery prowess, wanton gratification and connivance with the Nigeria police were vividly captured in the notable oríkì (panegyric) to eulogise him thus:

Aníkúrá
 Ògbójú olè tí n dàboro
 Àgbà olè abàsùn wọn gbòrò
 Jàgùdàkèékèkél'òlópàá Èkó n mú
 Aníkúrámbeníbè wọn ò lè mú u
 Bíwọn bàm' Aníkúrá
 Owónlá
 Aṣọnlá
 Níí fí dí baba wọn lènu
 Àyìnlábaálèjìbitì
 Àyìnlábaálèwàyó
 Ógbowó Ìjèbú
 Ó fí dèwùètùsílé

(Ọlájubù 1977:10) quoted in Ọlátúnjí, 1984)

Aníkúrá
 The great robber that shows off in fez cape
 The celebrity robber of a bottomless pouch
 Lagos police can only meddle with petty thieves
 Nobody dares arrest Aníkúrá of the untouchable mien
 If they arrest Aníkúrá
 Big sums of money, Big garments
 He deploys to seal their father's mouth
 Àyìnlá the enigmatic trail blazer in fraud
 Àyìnlá the taskmaster of dishonesty
 He filches Ìjèbú's money
 To acquire an expensive ẹ̀tù garment.

As noted in Olatunji (1984), Aníkúrá must have been delighted by the recognition of his dexterity in professional armed robbery then. This is due to the fact that there was no

evidence of him taking the Ràrà artist who composed the song to court. The song, nonetheless, became an instant hit and popular all over Yorubaland. The colonial government also did not ban the playing of the record though; it was capable of corrupting moral and destabilizing social order. This recourse to history establishes that corruption-induced expressions like *wàyó* (dishonesty) and *Jìbìtì* (fraud) in the excerpt above are age-long internalized social issues which are common in a society where corruption is endemic. It is against this background that this paper sets to examine and analyse corruption-induced expressions and its effects on the communicative performance of the Yoruba language speakers.

Semantic Exploration of Corruption

Corruption is a phenomenon that has no uniform meaning. Its meaning is viewed from personal or consequential perspective. James Chen (2020) describes corruption as a dishonest behavior by those in position of power, such as managers or government officials. To him, corruption is the means of giving or accepting bribes or inappropriate gifts, double-dealing, under-the-table transactions, manipulating elections, diverting funds, laundering money and defrauding investors. Geddes and Grosser's (2010) Webster Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus gives the concept of corruption as the synonyms of putrescence, rottenness, adulteration, contamination, debasement, sinfulness, wickedness, bribery and dishonesty. All these manifest in human trait and in his daily activities. Ekso Toyo (2006) is of the view that corruption is an embodiment of fraud, embezzlement, falsification and perversion designed to gain some benefits for self or one's favourites.

Corruption – Induced Expression

The Yoruba language like other world languages possesses standard variety used in every formal conversation situation while it also retains the non-standard variety for phatic communion and other day-to-day interactions among the users. There are other forms of expressions which include jargons of various trades, sports and occupations. There are also the rich vocabularies of slang of imprecation, of ribaldry as well as the corruption-induced expressions derived from new Yoruba idioms.

New Yoruba idioms and idiomatic expression are contemporaneous and are part of modern communication employed to instruct, persuade, exhort, abuse, extol and entertain in all areas of life. For instance, new Yoruba idioms and idiomatic expressions are used by radio and television presenters who anchor different Yoruba programmes on radio and television. They are also employed by Yoruba newspapers journalists, musicians, politicians, commercial bus conductors, film producers, artisan, students and literary artistes (Akanmu, 2014). The expressive power of the new idioms makes them eligible to be accommodated into the lexicon of the Yoruba language. Unlike the traditional idioms, many of the new Yoruba idioms and idiomatic expressions originated from the youths, artisans, musicians, politicians and other users of the language who are versatile and conversant with the latest developments in technology, science, engineering, politics, trade and commerce (Akanmu 2019). As reiterated earlier, corruption-induced expressions derived from the new Yoruba idioms and idiomatic expressions are new expressions brought about by the endemic

corruption in the contemporary Yoruba society and by extension, Nigeria. Corruption is an age long phenomenon which has assumed hydra-headed dimensions in a pervasive manner and has permeated all aspects of the people's lives. It is notable and natural then that corruptions –induced expressions are bound to emerge from this type of society.

Method of Data Collection

Data for this paper were drawn from routine communications in Yoruba and four literary texts from Adébòwálé's play, '*O ŠèyíTán*' (1995); Lérè Adéyemí's novel, '*Àkùkọ Gàgàrà*' (2001); Adédoyin Abégúndé's drama text, '*Ìgbéyàwóku Òlá*' (2004) and Dayò Àkàn mú's anthology, '*Jongbo Òrò*' (2002) with sufficient examples of usages of corruption-induced expressions derived from the new Yoruba idioms and idiomatic expressions. Linguistic metaphorisation strategy derived from nominalization, composition and phonaesthetic coinages was employed for data selection. Data analysis, which was done mainly at stylistic and pragmatic levels, illustrated the issue of corruption expressed and contextualized in bribery, internet fraud, politics, looting and contract splitting.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of standard language by Jan Mukarovsky (1970) is considered as the most appropriate for this paper. The consideration of the model is based on the fact that it can be used to clarify the 'differential specifica' between the language of everyday usage and literary expressions. This will be gleaned from the explication and interpretation of the ingenious nature of corruption – induced expressions derived from the new idioms and idiomatic expressions.

Standard Language Vs Literary Language

According to Mukarovsky (1970), Standard Language (SL) is the language of ordinary conversation. Its main concern is to forge understanding between the speaker and the audience in order to strengthen effective communication (Crystal, 1997: 68). Language of everyday discourse is informal and devoid of embellishment. It does not draw attention to itself neither is it open to provocative questions of its actual meaning. It is used on radio, during political debate, for campaigns and used in preaching in the church and mosque. Its priority is effective communication which calls for employment of words and phrases that can be easily comprehended. Therefore, to complement undistorted communication in standard language, language use must conform to the entire linguistic norms. Hypotheses crucial to the standard language are 'backgrounding' and automatization illustrated by the example below:

Òkèpòpó!
Òkèpòpó ló ñ lọ!
Òkèpòpó nì yí!

Òkèpòpó!
It is going to Òkèpòpó!
Here is Òkèpòpó bus!

The content of the above example is derived from the activities of the bus conductors in one of the popular bus stops - Òkèpópó – on Lagos Island. It is obvious that no single element needs further explanation as regards the intended meaning. Whereas, Literary Language (LL) is the language of literature, it is also referred to as poetic language because of the application of embellished language and its unique nature; it is exceptionally different from Standard Language (SL). It cannot be called a brand of the standard because it has at its disposal, varying lexicon, syntax and all forms of the given language. It is rather ‘a stylistic variation of the standard language’ as confirmed by (Ọlátẹ́jú, 1998). In literary language, the intentional violation of the norms of the standard language is what makes possible the poetic language. The hallmarks of literary language are foregrounding and de-automatisation which are used to explain the excerpts below:

Òkè pòpó ẹmẹjeejìkómáájó
Òkè pòpó ẹmẹjeejìkó má sòrò
K’ókè pòpó ẹmẹjeejìkó ma dansia

The two *Òkè pòpó* of yours should dance unabated
 And those *Òkè pòpó* of yours must communicate pleasure
 Let the two *Òkè pòpó* of yours dance provocatively

Unlike the previous example under SL, here ‘*Òkè pòpó*’ has been de-automatized or foregrounded to have a new meaning – ‘delightful or provocative breasts’ which is different from its original meaning in the earlier example that refers to ‘a popular location’ or ‘a bus stop’ on Lagos Island. Without the earlier example, there can never be this present one, because ‘*Òkè pòpó*’ in the earlier example serves as the background to understanding the present one. Although, foregrounding is logically prohibited in the standard language, this is not to say that it is not possible in SL. Mukarovsky notes the possibility of SL in journalistic language where it can be used as subordinate to communicate or to draw the readers’ attention to the issue at hand or the item of information articulated. The above therefore serves as background for the explanation of the new idioms and idiomatic expressions that are foregrounded in the selected corruption – induced expressions analysed in this paper.

Linguistic Strategies for the Formation of New Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

Word formation is a universal phenomenon. According to Bámgbóşé (1975), it is a universal linguistic concept that is concerned with the study of patterns in which a language forms new lexical items. Formations of corruption-induced expressions in this paper are noted through the following linguistic strategies:

Nominalization

Nominalization is the tested means for generating new expressions in virtually every language of the world. Ruvet (1973:172) views it as the derivation of a noun phrase from an underlying clause or sentence or the process of forming a noun from other word classes. Below are some examples of new idioms and idiomatic expressions created from the linguistic process of nominalization.

Idioms	Formation	Literal meaning	Idiomatic meaning
Aláṣàkaṣà	Oní+àṣà+kí+àṣà Pre+n+neg.mrk+n (owner-of-bad-culture)	Aláṣàkaṣà Owner of bad culture	Onísòkúṣò (User of bawdy expression)
Elébbòlò	Oní+ebòlò Pre+n	Elébbòlò Seller of Ebòlò vegetable	A prostitute
Ọlòṣẹkọṣẹ	Oní+ọṣẹ+kí+ọṣẹ Pre+n+negmrk+n	Ọlòṣẹkọṣẹ Possession of bad soap	Olórfburúkú (An unfortunate person)

Phona-esthetic Coinage

According to Ọlátẹ́jú (1989; 132), idioms in this category are called phona-esthetic idioms because they evolve from phona-esthetic coinages. Idioms of this nature refer to words or expressions which by the virtue of their sound composition imitate or suggest their meaning. Naturally, they are idiophonic or onomatopoeic and they exhibit close relationship with the sound component of the word and its meaning. They are mostly made up of one word. The following are examples of such coinages:

Idioms	Formation	Literal meaning	Idiomatic meaning
Gòḍbe	Phonaesthetic	A Hausa expression for tomorrow	Confusion/chaos
Ọròbò	Phonaesthetic	Coined from its big/heavy sound	Big/obese/large size

Composition

Composition is another word-formation strategy in Yorùbá studies. According to Bámgbóṣé (1994), composition is primarily the forming of a single word from an entire sentence. The native speaker can capture the importance of the original sentence and thus derive a concept of the meaning of the word. For instance, ‘Àfúnnpè’ constricting the mouth in order to pronounce’ is created from ‘A máa ńfúnnpè é’ - we habitually constrict our mouth to pronounce it – and it is used in line with the linguistic term ‘fricative’. Awóbùlúyì (1992) on the other hand, sees composition as a technique in which new terms are created in the language by combining some of its morphemes, words and phrases. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that composition is a process that assigns an already existing word to a new word class or syntactic category. Examples of composition abound in new idioms and idiomatic expressions. Consider the following:

Idioms	Formation	Literal meaning	Idiomatic meaning
Ólọ́yún ó pọnmọ	Ó+ńi+oyún+ó+pọn+ọmọ She+is+pregnant+and+stillbacks+a+child	She is pregnant and still backs a child	Obese/passenger with load
Mámugàrí	Má+mu+gàrí+ Do+not+drink+cassava+flakes	Don't drink gari	Hand-cuff
Abọ́máfọ́	A+bọ́+má+fọ́ That+which+fell+but+did+not+break	Unbreakable	An overcomer

The foregoing are created from sentences such as:

- Ó lóyún ópọnmọ
(she is pregnant and backs a child)
- Má mu gàrí
(don't drink cassava flakes)
- Óbọ̀sùgbọ̀n kòfọ̀
(it/he/she fell but did not break)

All the above sentences can be interpreted idiomatically as 'obese/over-load passenger', 'hand-cuff' and 'to overcome disastrous experience/trouble' respectively.

Analysis of Corruption-Induced Expressions

Apart from the routine conversion, the four selected texts from which corruption-induced expressions were extracted are 'Ó Šẹ̀yí tán!' by Olúyémisí Adébòwálé, 'Ìgbéyàwó ku Òlá', by Abéégúndé Adédoyin, 'Àkùkọ̀ Gàgàrà' by Lèrè Adéyemí and 'Jongbo Òrọ̀' by Dayò Àkànmú. In 'O šẹ̀yí Tán !', 'a play written by Olúyémisí Adébòwálé, the word 'Ègúnjẹ', a corruption – induced expression derived from the new Yorùbá idioms and idiomatic expression is used as allusion to the corrupt nature of the Nigerian system and her people. For instance; in Àjàyí's office, Fálàná derisively accused Àjàyí for supplying sub-standard furniture and refused to sit down even when he politely offers him a sit. In the end, Àjàyí remarked thus:

Ègúnjẹ

Àjàyí: Šénítorípémonímogba contract furniture
yẹn lẹ̀ fi wá n complain? Quality tíowó tókù
gbénimo bèàwọ̀n carpenters látibá mi ẹ̀ é,
kì íṣe favourite mi rárá.Ègúnjẹ tóba country
jéló jẹ̀ ki quality ẹ̀ low.

Àjàyí: Are you complaining because I got the contract to supply the set of
furniture? I prevailed upon the carpenters to
Produce the furniture quality that is commensurate with the
Amount made available. I'm constrained.

Ègúnjẹ (bribery), the bane in the country, is the cause.

In the above, the use of ègúnjẹ, a corruption –induced expression, is a phona-esthetic coinage from an existing Yoruba word àgúnmu (a traditional herbal powder) used to derive the new Yoruba idiom for *bribery, inducement or palm-greasing*. Its use is to make the readers situate the source of the low quality of the products in the country to corruption. Going by Àjàyí's defense, he was incapacitated to supply sets of high quality furniture because of insufficient fund due to the bribe given to those who facilitated the contract. If he failed to offer ègúnjẹ, he would not get another contract offer. Ègúnjẹ, a corruption-induced

expression has become a household expression and has functionally been incorporated into the lexicon of the language and it features in people's daily conversation.

In *Ìgbéyàwó ku Ọ̀la*, a play by Abéégúndé Adédoyin, there is also the use of a corruption –induced expression ‘ègúnjẹ’ where a character called Owóníyì enters a particular office to see Gbádébo boss and is told to offer bribe (ègúnjẹ) before he could be allowed to see the person:

Owóníyì: È má bínú àwọn ọ̀gá ni mi fẹ́ rí
Gbádébo: Mo tigbó, ẹ̀yin nàà mọ̀ ilú tí a
wà yí, ẹ̀nuòfifokí dúnàmùnàmù,
ègúnjẹ ló layé
Owóníyì: Don't be angry, I came to see your boss.
Gbádébo: I have heard. I am sure you are aware that
in this country, nothing goes for nothing,
ègúnjẹ is the order of the day.

Ègúnjẹ, in its literal sense means something that is pounded and eaten. It is a phono-aesthetic coinage or corrupt coinage of *àgúnmu* which is a traditional herbal powder. Unlike *àgúnmu* which in the standard language, *ègúnjẹ* is otherwise creatively coined and used to exhibit the corrupt tendency of some Nigerians who smartly used the expression in their various offices or business for self gratification. The act of living beyond one's income has brought about the expression ‘ègúnjẹ’ in the above excerpt. Ègúnjẹ can be idiomatically or connotatively interpreted as bribery and corruption.

Gbájúẹ̀

‘Gbájúẹ̀’ is another corruption –induced expression. It is used in Léré Adéyemi's ‘*Àkùkọ̀ Gàgàrà*’ to illustrate fraudulent and corrupt tendency of a town called Ètànłókù. In the text, Àlào brusquely refused efforts and attempts of suitors from Ètànłókù who propose to Fadékémi, his daughter, based on the fact that majority of the young men from the town are fraudulent and corrupt. He breaks the silence on the issues when Fadékémi's mother, who is also from Ètànłókù, continues to disturb him and seeks to know why he does not want to allow Fadékémi to get betrothed to men from Ètànłókù:

... Igbómímu àti gbájúẹ̀ tí wọ̀n n pèní
419 tí jàràbà àwọn ará ilú Ètànłókù

... marijuana and fraud otherwise called 419 have become a way of life
of the people of Ètànłókù

(*Àkùkọ̀ Gàgàrà*)

‘Gbájúẹ̀’ is a verbal expression which literally means ‘slap him/slap his face’. ‘Gbájúẹ̀’ could have been connected with an old expression ‘*gbájú igan*’ used around 1960 and 1970 to refer to magicians who deceptively robbed people of their belongings at motor parks and other locations. They later observe the shocking effects and the excruciating pains suffered by the ones whose faces were slapped. It is akin to the same feeling felt by a

defrauded person. Obviously, ‘gbájúè’ (fraudster) is someone who inflicts pains on another person through fraudulent acts. Today, apart from its use in the text and reflected in the excerpt above, ‘gbájúè’ has become a household expression among the Yorùbás because of the pervasive influence of corruption in Nigeria. It is now an appellation used for people who are involved in criminal acts such as fraud, embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds.

Ọ̀jẹ̀lú

The use of the corruption-induced expression ‘Ọ̀jẹ̀lú’ as word that describe corruption in political arena is captured in Àkànmú’s *Jongbo Ọ̀rọ̀* in the extract below:

... Ọ̀ṣẹ̀lúniwọ̀n niàb’*ọ̀jẹ̀lú*?
 Nítorí olẹ̀tí wọ̀n ọ̀jàlú,
 Wọ̀n fi Bíbẹ̀lìbúraèkélásán
 Káyé le ròpéwọ̀n dàtúnbí,
 Wọ̀n lo Àlùkùràánì, nígbàagba
 Irọ̀funfunbáláúniwọ̀n n pa kiri

... Are they politicians or fraudsters?
 Because of their plan to loot the country’s treasury
 They falsely swore with the Bible
 For people to think they are born-again
 They take oaths on Quran on several occasions.
 It is blatant lies that they peddle around

In the above excerpt, the corruption-induced expression -*Ọ̀jẹ̀lú* – has literal and idiomatic interpretations. Its literal meaning refers to politician while its idiomatic meaning is used pejoratively to point to corrupt politicians as ‘looters’. *Ọ̀jẹ̀lú* (Ọ̀-jẹ̀-ìlú – one who swindles the populace), juxtaposes with Ọ̀ṣẹ̀lú (one-who-rules or administers the town-politician). The words shared derivational similarities and at the same time, they are semantically different and opposite. Before now, in the socio-political history of Nigeria, ‘Ọ̀ṣẹ̀lú’ was the accurate expression used for the political leaders or politicians who are selfless and who abide by the normal democratic tenets that brought about meaningful development and dividends of democracy to the country and the citizens. Today, as reflected in the above text, ‘*Ọ̀jẹ̀lú*’ which can be interpreted as corrupt or fraudulent politicians, is coined and used to describe fraudulent politicians who have derailed from the political principle of services to the people and have instead resulted to looting the country’s treasury for their selfish agenda.

Ètùtù

Apart from the corruption-induced expressions in the selected texts, there are also others that are utilised in routine communication and day to day conversation of people on radio, musical rendition and other areas of human endeavour. For instance, ‘Ètùtù’, a corruption – induced expression is frequently used between the drivers, bus conductors and

policemen. The excerpt below is a reply from a bus driver to the police man who asked the driver to produce his vehicle particulars:

Ògá, motiṣètùtùláàárò

(Sir, I had made atonement in the morning)

‘Ètùtù’ is a Yoruba word for sacrifice or atonement. In its original sense, *ètùtù* (atonement) is used by someone instructed by Ifá oracle to appease the gods with certain sacrificial items in order to overcome misfortune. ‘Ètùtù’, as used in the above metaphorically connotes bribery, though not in the real cultural sense of the word. But there is similarity of purpose here. The traditional ‘ètùtù’ is offered for the grace granted by the gods or to avert misfortune, while the ‘ètùtù’ (bribery) in the context above is used as inducement offered to avoid being delayed unnecessarily by the police man on duty and thus avert the day’s misfortune or loss of revenue. The users took advantage of the state of lawlessness in the country and quickly coined a term that could be easily decoded. After all, the policeman is very much aware that most of the commercial drivers do not have adequate particulars. Eventually, our driver provided *ètùtù* (bribe) instead of the vehicle particulars. It should be stressed here that, the term *ètùtù* (atonement) as used in this context calls attention to itself and also produces effects which ordinary language cannot produce. The effects are what Mukarovsky (1970) calls ‘defamiliarization’ or ‘enstrangement’. One does not expect the use of the term ‘ètùtù’ (atonement) in the context shown above because the policeman on duty is not a deity and the object of atonement (money) is not the usual objects for offering penance to the gods either. It takes someone who is well versed in the Yoruba culture to comprehend the expression in the context such as the one above.

Yàúyàúú

‘Yàúyàúú’ is another corruption-induced expression that is very common in the language of everyday usage. For instance, a presenter, Oláwálé Babalólá of 107.5 FM (Radio Lagos) on a programme called ‘*Ọmọ Ilé Olórin*’ narrated the experience of his encounter with some ‘area boys’ (social miscreants) who pleaded for money at a wedding reception thus:

Èyin yàtòs’áwọ̀nọ̀mọ̀yàúyàúú

Tó ñyabébàlóníyanya

You are different from the Yahoo boys
(Internet fraudsters) who spend extravagantly

In the above, ‘yàúyàúú’ is a loan-word taken from internet related activities which are provided by ‘yahoo’, a site for sending and retrieving information on the internet. It is derived from the new idioms and recreated through full reduplication-‘yahoo’ (yàúyàúú) to mean ‘an Internet fraudster’. The word ‘yàúú’ is similar in sound with its English equivalent ‘yahoo’. ‘Yahoo’, to Yoruba perception, sounds very cacophonous. Hence, its pejorative use to refer to Internet fraudsters as persons of rough, noisy and rude personalities. ‘Yauu’ or Internet fraud which is akin to fraudulent life or doubtful personality is antithetical to ‘omoluabi’ personality held in high esteem in Yoruba or other cultures across the world. To show that corruption-induced expressions can be adaptable to things that are alien to Yoruba

culture, expression such as ‘yàúyàúú’ featured in the above excerpt was coined. Today, the expression ‘Internet fraud’ has no other name in Yoruba society than ‘yàúyàúú’. This assertion is corroborated by the researcher’s experience in a conversation between a taxi driver and a passenger at Agbowó in Ìbàdàn, where the taxi driver exhibited his knowledge of the term ‘internet fraud’ thus:

... gbogbotùtì lótibàjètán, àwọ̀nọ̀mọ̀ tójáde
Unifásitikòrìsẹ̀sẹ̀. Gbogbowọ̀n lótidi yàúyàúú.
Kín ló n jéyàúyàúúgan-an? Ọ̀nàìjanilólèlórí
Kòmpùtá...

...all the roads are in bad state, the University
graduates are unemployed. They have all
become *Internet fraudsters*. What is the
exact meaning of internet fraud?
An act of defrauding on the computer...

The use of the expression ‘yàúyàúú’ in contexts above makes interpretations very easy. This is because; it is through the context that we are able to comprehend the meaning as a condemnable corrupt act in a society which many of the unemployed graduates see as the shortcut to livelihood.

Géranmáwo‘

‘*Àgémáwo*’ is another example of corruption-induced expressions used in routine communication especially, by those who eat at road-side or make shift restaurants. It is always common in those places to hear customers making such request in the excerpt below:

Àgémáwọ̀nimofé
(I prefer a – meat- cut-with-the-skin)

The use of ‘*àgémáwo*’ which literally means ‘a meat cut with the skin’ in the context above, can be interpreted connotatively as a preferred or choice meat. Whenever such a request is made, the food vendor knows she has to supply the combination of meat and skin. In another context, ‘*àgémáwo*’ is used by Adébáyọ̀ Fálékè, a news-caster on 105.5 FM radio stations, Ibadan, to admonish the entire civil servants in Oyo State thus:

Èjòwọ̀gbogbo èyin ọ̀sìsẹ̀jọ̀ba tófẹ̀rinrinàjò
lójóJímòtòní, ẹ̀ mágéranmáwo’fún ‘jọ̀ba,
ẹ̀dúrókíàkókòàtilọ̀sílé tókí ẹ̀ tógbéra sọ

We advise all government workers planning to embark
on a journey this Friday, not to act in way akin to cutting meat with the
skin in various government offices. Please ensure normal closing
schedule before going away.

Unlike the previous examples, the expression *géranmáwo* (cut meat with its skin) as used in the above context has nothing to do with the issue of ‘preferred choice meat’. Here, it

can be interpreted to mean corruption/cheating/deceit/insincerity on the part of those workers who are of the habit of leaving their offices before the closing time.

Jẹunsápò

'*Jẹunsápò*' (eat into the pocket) is another corruption-induced expression used in '*Ọmọ Gómìnà*' (Governor's Child), a film produced and directed by Anta Láníyan. In the film, a character called Oşùqlálé uses the expression, in a discussion with his friend Akínbò, to portray fraudulent and corrupt lifestyle of the Nigerian politicians thus:

- Akínbò: Oşùqlálé, ò jé o rántí san owóegbé
tìrẹfúnakòwéegbékí o tókúrò nínú ìpàdé?
- Oşùqlálé: Kíni ò ñ sọnígboroenuyí? Níboni
otifékí n rówó? Àfi bíenipéàwọn
olóşèlútíkógbogboowóilúnílẹ̀tán,
wọn kàn *njẹunsápò*ni
- Akínbò: Oşùqlálé, did you remember to pay dues to the secretary before
you left the meeting?
- Oşùqlálé: What exactly are you saying? Where do
you expect me to get money? It is like
the politicians have packed all the money
in circulation. They are just enriching
their pockets.

In the above, '*Jẹunsápò*' which literally means 'eat into the pocket' can be interpreted as self-gratification. This interpretation is arrived at because of the penchant for diverting public funds for personal use by political office holders in Nigeria. Expressions of this nature are fore-grounded and their meanings cannot be derived from each of their lexical components. They are also not allowed in standard Yoruba because they are semantically deviant except those that have been exhaustively used and gradually found their ways into the lexicon of the language.

Gbémọ̀ra/Gbémimọ̀ra

'*Gbémimọ̀ra/gbémọ̀ra*' is another corruption-induced expression that can be seen in day to day conversation of the Yoruba people. In 2007, Músíliyù Ọbaníkòró, a gubernatorial candidate for people Democratic Party (PDP) used the expression in Lagos Island during his campaign:

Èyin ọmọbíbínlúÈkóàti èyin
olùgbé Ìpínlẹ̀Èkó, ẹ má jẹkíawọn
aráibígbé e yínmọ̀rabíitiàtijọ...
ẹlétànniwọn, ọ̀rọ̀ ẹ̀tàn lówàniẹnu
wọn.

(Ray power, March 2007)

I appeal to the indigenes of Lagos State and the Entire Lagosians. Don't allow those people to swindle you like they did in the past... they beguile; the words of their mouth are treachery.

In the above, '*gbé e yínmóra*' used in this context is an existing words which literally means 'to cuddle you' or 'to embrace you'. Now, it has acquired new meaning. Its idiomatic meaning is 'to swindle or to deceive someone. Linguistically, its coinage is through composition or sentence reduction. Ọbaníkòró exposed his fellow contestants from the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) as beguilers and serial liars and he wanted the good people of Lagos State not to cast their votes for them. This gives vent to the expression 'ẹ má jẹkíwọ̀n *gbé e yínmóra*' (don't allow them to deceive you). The new meaning given to this expression is suggestive of its intention; to patronise. The expression itself has been elevated to become poetic language.

Inferences

It can be inferred from the data analysed so far, that corruption –induced expressions derived from the new Yoruba idioms and idiomatic expression have been and continued to be used to express different views, opinions and ideas to capture different areas of human endeavours. It is obvious that issues of corruption are addressed generally in all the analysed data and contextualized in contract splitting, looting, bribery, internet fraud and discordant politics. It is also established that corruption-induced expressions are used to engender desirable communication.

Conclusion

In this paper, the major preoccupation is corruption –induced expressions with a view to establishing their communicative and stylistic effects in Yoruba literary and routine communication. The paper equally discussed issues expressed through corruption-induced expressions, their structure and formation. Standard language (SL) model was adopted because of its capacity to explain deviant and ingenious nature of corruption-induced expressions. The concept of 'differential specifica' between the language of everyday usage and literary language was also enunciated. It was clearly revealed in the paper that Yorùbá language has adequate mechanism, like every other language of the world, to borrow from and nativise the components of the contact language as well as realign and stretch the structures of the original language to extend its frontier of usage. These coping strategies were found to be deposited in the existing word-formation structure of the Yorùbá language through which the corruption-induced expressions emanated. The uniqueness of these new idioms is how they are used to highlight new normal in the language use to show fraudulent practices and disorientation of the society.

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