

## **IDIOMATIC VARIATION IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH: IMPLICATIONS FOR STANDARDIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION**

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**ABSTRACT.** *A global phenomenon that involves language use, which has not been given sufficient attention by researchers, is idiomatic variation. In this study, we provide a classification of idioms in Nigerian English based on factors of stability in both formal and colloquial usage, length of usage, and international intelligibility. We also examine the implications of idiomatic variation for standardization in the context of globalization. Against the backdrop of the debate on whether or not the native speakers' English should be the sole medium of international communication, this study attempts to explain the reasons why different varieties of English should be accorded recognition and allowed to function as media of international communication provided they meet the condition of international intelligibility. In addition to a general discussion of idiomatic variation in Nigerian English, the study provides real examples of idioms in different contexts of communicative performance targeted at global/transnational audience with a view to addressing the subject of "contending with globalization in World Englishes".*

*Keywords:* idiomatic variation, Nigerian English, standardization, international communication, idiom, globalization.

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## **VARIACIÓN IDIOMÁTICA EN EL INGLÉS NIGERIANO: IMPLICACIONES PARA LA ESTANDARIZACIÓN EN EL CONTEXTO DE LA GLOBALIZACIÓN**

**RESUMEN.** *Un fenómeno global que afecta al uso del lenguaje y al que los investigadores no han prestado suficiente atención es la variación idiomática. En este estudio, damos una clasificación de frases hechas en inglés nigeriano basadas en factores de estabilidad tanto en el uso formal como en el coloquial, en el alcance de su uso, y en su inteligibilidad a nivel internacional. También examinamos las implicaciones de la variación idiomática para su normalización en el contexto de la globalización. Frente al debate sobre si el inglés de los hablantes nativos debería ser o no el único medio de comunicación internacional, este estudio intenta explicar las razones por las que diferentes variedades del inglés deberían ser reconocidas y permitidas para servir como medios de comunicación internacional siempre que cumplan con la condición de ser comprensibles a nivel internacional. Además de una discusión general sobre la variación idiomática en inglés nigeriano, el estudio proporciona ejemplos reales de frases hechas en diferentes contextos de actuación comunicativa dirigida a un público global/transnacional con miras a abordar el tema “enfrentarse a la globalización en los ingleses del mundo”.*

*Palabras clave:* variación idiomática, inglés nigeriano, estandarización, comunicación internacional, frase hecha, globalización.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to examine the implications of Nigerian English idioms for standardization in the context of globalization. The study focuses on idiomatic variation – an aspect of Nigerian English that has not been exhaustively addressed by researchers. Idiomatic variation merits a careful study as it poses serious pedagogical problems for teachers and learners in an ESL context. The meaning of an idiom is both figurative and unpredictable. Unless efforts are made to determine idiomatic expressions in Nigerian English that merit standardization, users of other varieties will continue to experience difficulties in understanding our variety of English. This does not augur well for mutual intelligibility in the age of globalization. Problems associated with lack of mutual intelligibility among speakers of World Englishes could be tackled with conscious efforts to codify and standardize each variety. In doing this, considerable attention should be paid to idiomatic variation with a view to checkmating its negative influence on mutual intelligibility.

Considering the active participation of Nigerians in sub-regional activities and the growth in the number of foreigners participating in Nigerian economy, it is imperative that Nigerian English be standardized to cope with the demands

of globalization. The issue of standardization of Nigerian English has remained problematic without a consensus among scholars as to what should be accepted as standards and what should not. The problem has higher stakes attached to it in the context of globalization with the dominant role of English in global information dissemination.

Using idiomatic variation as an illustration, the present study seeks to bring to the fore the Nigerian/West African perspective which concurs with the World Englishes (WE) paradigm. An idiom, according to Adebija (2003: 41), is “any word or group of words whose meaning cannot be guessed or deduced from the meanings of the component parts”. The phenomenon of idiom, though universal, has its peculiarities in different sociolinguistic environments. In other words, it varies from one society to another owing to factors of culture, influence of the mother tongue and peculiarity of usage. It is also pertinent to note that idiomatic variation is not the same as lexico-semantic variation. As rightly stated by Adebija (2003: 41), several scholars who have written on lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English such as Adebija (1989) and Bamiro (1994) “have tended to lump up lexical variation with idiomatic variation” without making any conscious attempt “to make the necessary distinction between lexical items and idioms”. In an effort to distinguish between lexico-semantic variation and idiomatic variation, Adebija (2003: 41) opines, “[...] whereas the meaning of the lexical items *houseboy* and *house girl* in Nigerian English can be easily deduced from the component parts, the meaning of the idiom, *small boy* in the sense of ‘someone who is immature or inexperienced’ [...] cannot be easily deduced”. We may also add that in Nigerian English, while the meanings of the lexical items, *bush-meat*, *go-slow* can easily be deduced from the component parts, the meaning of the idiomatic expression, *kbaki boys* in the sense of military men and *long throat* in the sense of greed cannot be easily deduced.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Kachru’s Three Circles Theory on the spread of English talks of the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle (Kachru 1986). The inner circle, according to the theory, refers to countries where English is used as L1, e.g. U.K., U.S.A., Australia, etc. The inner circle is largely endonormative as speakers find among themselves the norms of correctness and appropriateness to be propagated through language education (Bruthiaux 2003). Thus, the inner circle’s English is norm providing. The ELT prescriptivists would want the entire English-speaking world to stick to this norm as the medium of international communication. The outer circle consists of countries where English is used as L2, especially former British colonial territories, e.g. Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, India, etc. In such countries,

English is not only a medium of inter ethnic communication and collaboration; proficiency in it is seen as a ticket for rising up on the socio-economic ladder. This circle of English users is said to be norm developing. There is therefore a gradual shift from exonormative to endonormative in quest of linguistic self-reliance. In spite of this gradual shift, there exists among English users in this circle, a perception that Anglo-American norms are somehow superior to their own variants (Bruthiaux 2003: 2). The expanding circle consists of users of English as a foreign language (FL). These are countries that are neither in the inner nor in the outer circles, notably Brazil, Italy, Morocco, etc. Such foreign users of English have the tendency to be exonormative as they look unto L1 users for linguistic norms. Since this circle is norm dependent, the idea of seeking for linguistic self-reliance (which characterizes the outer circle) has not arisen.

Although Kachru's theory has been criticized on grounds of being "descriptively and analytically inconsistent" and failing to account for dialectal variation within each variety of English (Bruthiaux 2003: 3), the theory remains a handy tool for explaining the spread of English even in the context of globalization, as it accords hitherto denigrated varieties the needed recognition. The English-speaking world would have suffered the loss of the innovative capability and communicative potentials of non-native Englishes if not for Kachru's Three Circles Theory.

The dominant role of English in the era of globalization remains unquestionable but it does not have to be a single *global English* as no language can be used exactly the same way all over the world and adequately express the socio-cultural heritage of all its users.

Globalization, according to Fairclough (2000: 165), is "the tendency for economic, social, political and cultural processes to take place on a global scale rather than within the confines of particular countries or regions". This implies "the universalization of concepts, movements, technology, markets, etc. in the context of a compressed world" (Awonusi 2004: 85). This however does not imply the neutralization of cultural peculiarities of different linguistic entities. Since language is an expression of culture, it becomes unavoidable for L2 users of English to bring in innovations that give expression to their cultural heritage. As rightly opined by Bamgbose (1998: 1), "a non-native English situation is basically an innovative situation involving certain well-known processes of Nativization". Adegbija (2004: 23-29) explicates different levels of domestication (Nativization) of English in Nigeria. They include lexical domestication, idiomatic domestication, phonological domestication, grammatical/syntactic domestication, pragmatic/cultural domestication and semantic domestication. The present study focuses on idiomatic domestication as seen in the following data.

### 3. DATA PRESENTATION

Adegbija (2003: 42-46) presents an inventory of one hundred and two Nigerian English idioms. Although the list is by no means exhaustive of all idioms in the repertoire of Nigerian English, it contains most of the well known idioms whose usage cuts across different geo-political zones of the country. The present study utilizes this list but provides additionally a classification of the idioms in the list based on stability in both formal and colloquial usage and restriction to colloquial usage. Another classification done is on the basis of age (length of usage), and international intelligibility. In addition we present real examples in communicative performance targeted at global/transnational audience. Thus we have illustrations I to VI as follows:

<b>NO.</b>	<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
1.	<i>public dog</i>	a woman who is sexually liberal
2.	<i>son of the soil</i>	an indigene of a place
3.	<i>kola</i>	a bribe
4.	<i>to be sick upstairs</i>	someone who appears deranged in speech or behaviour
5.	<i>carry over</i>	a course in an institution that has to be repeated
6.	<i>to observe a wake-keeping</i>	to have an evening but usually night program in honour of a dead person
7.	<i>not to be on seat</i>	not to be available in the office
8.	<i>to let someone land</i>	to allow someone to conclude a particular argument or statement
9.	<i>to take in</i>	to become pregnant
10.	<i>to join one's ancestors</i>	to die
11.	<i>to carry out an introduction</i>	to have a formal presentation of a bridegroom and his relations to the bride and her relations

12.	<i>to branch</i>	to have a brief stop over at another place apart from one's intended destination
13.	<i>to chase a girl</i>	to woo a girl
14.	<i>to escort a guest</i>	to see the guest off
15.	<i>to put to bed</i>	to give birth to a baby
16.	<i>to be a 419</i>	to be a dupe
17.	<i>national cake</i>	the common wealth belonging to all Nigerians from which everyone should have a share
18.	<i>to send off or send forth</i>	to arrange a farewell program for a person
19.	<i>go-slow</i>	traffic jam
20.	<i>tokunbo</i>	fairly used or second hand item
21.	<i>black market</i>	any illegal transactions
22.	<i>to put hands together</i>	to clap
23.	<i>to go in search of greener pasture</i>	to seek better economic opportunities
24.	<i>minimum wage</i>	the basic salary paid to workers
25.	<i>a bit and run</i>	any person who hits another with a vehicle without waiting to see what has happened or to take care of the injured person, etc.

Illustration I. *Idioms that are fairly stable in both formal and colloquial usage.*

<b>NO.</b>	<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
1.	<i>wetin you carry</i>	any policeman
2.	<i>to have a sidon look attitude</i>	to watch the course of events without being involved

3.	<i>I dey kampe</i>	I am unmoved by the ranting of my opponents
4.	<i>to smell pepper</i>	to be given a very rough deal
5.	<i>long leg</i>	the use of undue influence to achieve a goal
6.	<i>a man of timber and caliber</i>	a man of tremendous social, political and economic influence
7.	<i>to settle a person</i>	to bribe
8.	<i>to wet the ground</i>	to provide prior gratification or bribe that makes a later course of action or conduct smooth
9.	<i>to step aside</i>	to temporarily vacate a position, particularly an uncomfortable one, with the intention of returning to it at a more auspicious time
10.	<i>to hit</i>	to suddenly make great wealth
11.	<i>to take a machine, bike, okada, etc</i>	to ride on a commuter motorcycle
12.	<i>to wash</i>	to celebrate an achievement
13.	<i>to be untouched</i>	to be a virgin
14.	<i>the Aninis</i>	the armed robbers
15.	<i>woman wrapper</i>	one who is excessively fond of women
16.	<i>to shack oneself dry</i>	to be drunk
17.	<i>a letter bomb</i>	a heart breaking news
18.	<i>a no-man's land</i>	something that belongs to nobody or to everybody
19.	<i>Toronto</i>	fake
20.	<i>black assurance</i>	native medicine

21.	<i>Casanova</i>	any lady who is reputed to be a flirt
22.	<i>Rambo convoy</i>	a gang of armed robbers
23.	<i>to eye a person</i>	to seduce
24.	<i>to be in soup</i>	to be involved in a big problem
25.	<i>bedsbarer</i>	an illicit sexual partner
26.	<i>sweet sixteen</i>	a good-looking lady looking younger than her age

Illustration II. *Idioms that are restricted mainly to colloquial usage.*

<b>NO.</b>	<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
1.	<i>son of the soil</i>	an indigene of a place
2.	<i>been-to</i>	someone who has been abroad before
3.	<i>to smell pepper</i>	to be given a raw deal
4.	<i>cash madam</i>	a lady who flaunts her wealth in appearance and perhaps speech
5.	<i>bottom power</i>	a woman who can use her feminine charm and sexuality to influence others
6.	<i>long leg</i>	the use of undue influence
7.	<i>to branch</i>	to have a brief stop over
8.	<i>to take in</i>	to be pregnant
9.	<i>to carry out an introduction</i>	to have a formal presentation of the bridegroom and his relation to the bride's relations
10.	<i>to chase a girl</i>	to woo a girl
11.	<i>to take the light</i>	to make a power cut



12.	<i>tokunbo</i>	fairly used or second hand
13.	<i>to put hands together</i>	to clap
14.	<i>to be stinkingly rich</i>	to be excessively rich
15.	<i>to go to the great beyond</i>	to die
16.	<i>to join one's ancestors</i>	to die
17.	<i>a man of timber and caliber</i>	a man of tremendous social, political and economic influence
18.	<i>to observe a wake-keeping</i>	to have an evening program in honour of a dead person
19.	<i>not to be on seat</i>	not to be available in the office
20.	<i>to let someone land</i>	to allow someone to conclude his verbal contribution
21.	<i>to wet the ground</i>	to provide prior gratification or bribe that makes a course of action or conduct smooth
22.	<i>to change gear</i>	to abruptly change a policy or known norms of behaviour, etc.

Illustration III. *Idioms that have been consistently used for a very long time in Nigerian English.*

<b>NO.</b>	<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
1.	<i>to be kudied</i>	to be killed or assassinated for taking a notable stand opposed by the powers that be
2.	<i>to have a siddon look attitude</i>	to watch the course of events without being involved
3.	<i>I dey kampe</i>	I am unmoved by the ranting of my opponents
4.	<i>Toronto</i>	anything suspected to be fake
5.	<i>to be untouched</i>	to be untouched: to be a virgin

6.	<i>a letter bomb</i>	A letter bomb: any heart breaking news
7.	<i>Rambo convoy</i>	Rambo convoy: a gang of armed robbers
8.	<i>to be wade</i>	To be wade: to have plenty of, especially money
9.	<i>an Aso Rock</i>	a heavily fortified and impenetrable building
10.	<i>a maradona</i>	a dribbler or one who mystifies others by virtue of his deceptive and wily skills
11.	<i>to step aside</i>	to temporarily vacate a position, particularly an uncomfortable one, with the intention of returning to it at a more auspicious time
12.	<i>woman wrapper</i>	one who is excessively fond of women

Illustration IV. *Idioms that are fairly recent in Nigerian English.*

<b>NO.</b>	<b>IDIOM</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
1.	<i>to cope up with</i>	to cope with
2.	<i>to round up</i>	to round off
3.	<i>to voice out</i>	to voice
4.	<i>to recite off-head</i>	to recite off-hand
5.	<i>to discuss about</i>	to discuss
6.	<i>to congratulate for</i>	to congratulate on
7.	<i>to comprise of</i>	to comprise
8.	<i>to vanish away</i>	to vanish
9.	<i>to be at alert</i>	to be on the alert

10.	<i>to eat one's cake and have it</i>	instead of to have one's cake and eat it
11.	<i>to have more grease to one's elbow</i>	more power to one's elbow
12.	<i>to explain off</i>	to explain away

Illustration V. *Idioms that share the same semantic sense with similar native English idioms.*

NO.	IDIOM	SOURCE	CONTEXT
1.	<i>...dancing around the well and not daring to jump....</i>	M.K.O. Abiola, on the annulment of the 1993 Presidential election	BBC interview (1993)
2.	Abacha was all evil; he killed SaroWiwa...; whoever said Abacha had any good side should <i>have his head examined</i>	Gani Fawehinmi, in reference to Arch Bishop Olubunmi Okogie's claim that Abacha 'had his own <i>good side</i> '	V.O.A. interview shortly after Abacha's death in 1998.
3.	We'll hold vigil for Lucky Dube at the Africa shrine	Yeni Anikulapo-Kuti	Reaction to the death of Lucky Dube, a notable South African artist (2007)
4.	...We should keep the <i>flag of oneness, resilience and excellence flying which Lucky Dube represented</i>	Yeni Anikulapo-Kuti	Reaction to Lucky Dube's death (2007)
5.	Lucky was one of the <i>Shining Lights</i> in Africa	Yeni Anikulapo-Kuti	Reaction to Lucky Dube's death (2007)
6.	He started from nothing, weathered the horrifying storm of life and became a phenomenon in world music	Yeni Anikulapo-Kuti	Reaction to Lucky Dube's death (2007)

7.	London Metropole Hotel <i>stands still for Nigerian Artistes</i>	Nigerian Tribune, Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2007	Newspaper's caption on an award night for artists in London
8.	The new image is a challenge to us to continue to <i>build bridges</i> with African films	Mike Abiola, Editor of African Voice Newspaper	At an award night for artistes in London in November 2007
9.	Our youths are now too much in a hurry to <i>make it</i>	Governor Ikedi Ohakim of Imo State, Nigeria	Keynote address at the 13th Igbo World Congress in Detroit, Michigan U.S.A. (Saturday Sun Newspaper (22/9/2007)).
10.	If we revere hardwork then we must never <i>worship sudden unexplained wealth</i>	Governor Ikedi Ohakim of Imo State, Nigeria	Same as above
11.	Here today, <i>we burn and consign to the dustbin of history</i> the memory and guilty legacy of the civil war...	Governor Ikedi Ohakim of Imo State, Nigeria	Same as above
12.	You can <i>never cure a disease you do not know</i>	Governor Ikedi Ohakim	Same as above

Illustration VI. *Real examples of idioms in communicative performance targeted at global/transnational audience.*

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

Illustration I above presents examples of idioms that are fairly stable in both formal and colloquial usage. Idioms such as “public dog”, “kola”, “to take in”, “to put to bed”, “to escort a guest”, etc. are commonly used in both formal and informal contexts in Nigeria. Their usage also cuts across different geo-political zones of the

country. Their usage across different contexts and geo-political zones for a long time is a testimony to their social acceptability. Most idioms in this category may stand the test of time if considered as candidates for standard Nigerian English idioms.

Illustration II presents examples of Nigerian English idioms whose usage is restricted mainly to colloquial contexts. Thus we have in this category, pidgin expressions such as “I dey kampe” (attributed to former President Obasanjo); “siddon look” (attributed to the late Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige); “wetin you carry” (attributed to policemen at check points); and other expressions such as “a man of timber and caliber” (attributed to the late Dr K. O. Mbadiwe); “to step aside” (attributed to former military ruler, General Babangida); “to wet the ground” (derived from Yoruba idiom (*d’omi si’le ko tele tutu*) etc. Idioms in this category are hardly used in formal contexts. Although their usage cuts across different geo-political zones, their restriction to colloquial usage may limit their chances of being admitted into the candidacy of standard Nigerian English idioms.

Illustration III presents examples of idioms that have been consistently used for a very long time in Nigerian English. Such idioms as “son of the soil”, “bottom power”, “to take in”, “tokunbo”, “to put hands together”, “to be stinkingly rich”, etc. have not only existed for long in Nigerian English, their usage cuts across different geo-political zones as well as contexts of usage. The age-old existence of the idioms in this category implies their stability in Nigerian English and subsequently, the likelihood of their being accepted as candidates of standard Nigerian English idioms.

Illustration IV presents more or less the opposite of Illustration III in terms of age or length of usage. The existence of this class of idioms is fairly recent and their stability in Nigerian English cannot be guaranteed for now as some of them remain unpopular with the vast majority of the Nigerian elite. Thus, idioms such as “to be kudied” (attributed to the assassination of Mrs. Kudirat Abiola); “Toronto” (attributed to the fake certificate of Third Republic Speaker of the House of Representative, Alhaji Buhari who claimed (falsely) to have graduated from the University of Toronto); “Maradona” (referring to a dribbler or one who mystifies others by virtue of his deceptive and wily skills), etc. may be confined to colloquial usage and as such, not be admitted into the candidacy of standard Nigerian English idioms until they have gained more popularity among the elite.

Illustration V presents examples of idioms referred to by Adegbija (2003: 46) as sharing: the same semantic sense with similar idioms in native English contexts but are structurally or lexically different from their exact native equivalents, sometimes by the use of a different verbal particle or a different lexical item. Thus expressions such as “to cope up with” (instead of to cope with); “to round up” (instead of to round off); “to voice out” (instead of to voice) etc. which are probably derived from their native English equivalents but structurally modified to reflect Nigerian usage have not only existed for long in Nigerian English, they are very popular among

the Nigerian elite of different geo-political zones. Idioms in this category have an additional advantage of mutual intelligibility with speakers of English in other nations due to their similarity with native English idioms. They therefore stand the chance of being accepted as good candidates of standard Nigerian English idioms.

Illustration VI presents different contexts of communicative performance in which Nigerian English idioms feature. Such contexts include interviews on British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America (VOA) as well as speeches involving prominent Nigerians targeted at global/transnational audience. Such idiomatic expressions as “dancing round the well and not daring to jump” (by M.K.O. Abiola); “should have his head examined” (by Gani Fawehinmi); “the shining light in Africa” (by Yeni Anikulapo-Kuti); “never worship sudden, unexplained wealth” (by Ikedi Ohakim), etc. might be problematic for users of other varieties of English if no efforts are made to standardize Nigerian English.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS OF IDIOMATIC VARIATION IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH

In the past, several scholars queried the authenticity of Nigerian English as a legitimate dialect of the English language, but over the years, such scholars realized the existence of regional variations of English usage. This realization has invariably doused the controversy over the acceptability or otherwise of Nigerian English. However, the problem that remains unsolved till date is the question of standardization of Nigerian English. We cannot talk of standard Nigerian English if no efforts are made to standardize the idiomatic expressions peculiar to it. Idiomatic variation in Nigerian English has implications for formal usage, age (length of usage) social acceptability and international intelligibility particularly in the context of globalization.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS FOR NORMAL USE

Idioms that are used not just as colloquial expressions but in formal contexts could be considered standard while those whose usage is restricted to informal contexts cannot be accepted as standard. The reason for this is that such idioms that are used in formal contexts such as in literary works and official documents have the tendency to be permanently entrenched in the language due to their apparent acceptance by the elite and their expanded role (employed for both formal and colloquial usage) while the idioms that are restricted to colloquial usage may not remain permanent in the language due to their restricted usage. Illustration I of our data is therefore proposed as representing a class of standard Nigerian English idioms while Illustration II represents a class of idioms that cannot be accepted as standard.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS FOR AGE OR LENGTH OF USAGE

Idioms that are as old as Nigerian English cannot be divorced from our variety of English. They have been able to stand the test of time and their stability remains unquestionable. Such idioms as we have in Illustration III should therefore be considered standard, while idioms that are recent in Nigerian English such as we have in Illustration IV cannot be considered standard as no one knows how stable they will be in Nigerian English.

## 8. IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL INTELLIGIBILITY

Idioms that share the same semantic sense with native English idioms as exemplified in Illustration V should be considered standard as their usage enhances international intelligibility – a most crucial factor of English usage in the age of globalization. Communicating with international economic partners such as China, ECOWAS and OPEC member nations makes international intelligibility mandatory. In fact, any idiom that impedes effective communication with nationals of other countries should not be accepted as standard Nigerian English idioms.

## 9. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY

Idioms that have not enjoyed social acceptability across cultures and geo-political zones should not be accepted as standard Nigerian English idioms. Examples such as “to hit”, “to shack oneself dry”, “black assurance” (Illustration II), “to be kudied”, “Toronto” (Illustration IV), etc. have not enjoyed a reasonable degree of social acceptability especially among the Nigerian elite. They should therefore not be accepted as standard Nigerian English idioms.

## 9. CONCLUSION

In this study, efforts have been made to classify the idioms in Nigerian English into different classes with a view to determining which of them could be recommended as standard and which could not. The study observes that idioms that are stable in formal usage and those that satisfy the condition of international intelligibility are suitable for inclusion in standard Nigerian English idioms. The same applies to idioms that have the same semantic sense with native English idioms but structurally different from their exact native English equivalents. The study also reveals that in the context of globalization, idiomatic variation has implications for standardization in the areas of age (length of usage), degree of formal usage, social acceptability and international intelligibility.

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