

## **A Semantic Study of Alms Begging in Nigerian English Usage: A Case Study of Abak Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper evaluated the semantics of alms begging in Nigerian English with the aim of examining the strategies adopted by some jobless Nigerian youths when begging for alms. The data were gathered through on the spot recording of scenes of begging at ceremonies, and major traffic lanes and other walks of life such as political gatherings, police check points, emblem/ticket check points, market, Motor Park, bar, etcetera. The analysis of the data was done with insight from Chomsky's 1986 Internalized Semantics Theory. Findings show that some Nigerian beggars adopt some strategies when begging for alms by using some euphemistic expressions that are novel and peculiar to Nigeria and understood by most Nigerian speakers of English language. They use these expressions in order to avoid societal stigma that comes with begging. The paper proposes that since these expressions are meaningful to Nigerians, they should thereby be recognized as a significant contribution to the ongoing studies in Nigerian English.*

**Keywords:** *Societal stigma, motor park, begging, alms, Nigerian youths.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Alms begging has recently become prevalent in Nigeria due to factors which include but not limited to economic crisis, unemployment, frustration and misgovernance, laziness and high cost of living. These factors have nonetheless, changed the notion of alms begging in Nigeria as related to only the poor people but to a common lifestyle

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among Nigerians', job seekers especially the youths. Some Nigerian youths now see alms begging as a panacea to the unprecedented hardship and high cost of living that have struck the Nigerian nation, over the years but made worse when the current Nigerian President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu removed subsidy in petroleum products on 29th May, 2023 during his inaugural address to the Nation. Therefore, they (the youth) recently construe alms begging as a means of surviving the harsh economic situation in the country.

Hence, due to the shame and social stigma that may accompany the process of alms begging, new methods, techniques and strategies have been introduced so as to avoid being called or tagged a "beggar" or a poor fellow by some Nigerian speakers of English. According to one of the respondents, "I cannot beg you for money directly but I have to say it the other way round so that you will not know that I do not have the money, rather you will think I have it but only looking for a small amount to add in order to do what I want to do".

The Nigerian cooperate beggar has by all means strategically avoided direct confrontation while begging for alms in order not to belittle himself. This act, according to one of the respondents is called "packaging" meaning pretense. Thus, they achieve this by creating some expressions which are euphemistic in nature which would best fit the situation and coax their benefactors to give them what they are asking for. The euphemistic expressions are aimed at raising high the psyche of the benefactor making him see himself as the only way out of the harsh situation. Accordingly, these formulated expressions, vary from context to context depending on the status of the potential benefactor as well as the situation at hand.

It is pertinent to note that these formulated euphemisms are domesticated in Nigeria, and may be alien to the western world. This in other words means that it may be only meaningful in Nigeria and as such, it is only Nigerian English that has room to accommodate them.

Be that as it may, Nigerian English according to (Edem 2015, 2016, 2018) is a subset of English that is spoken in Nigeria by Nigerians. According to Eka (2000), "Nigerian English is that variety of world Englishes learnt, spoken and/or written by Nigerians who are born and/or brought up within the Nigerian environment". This "variety or subset of English" is distinct from the standard form that is spoken in Britain by the native speakers. And according to (Edem 2018), this subset of English is known as "Englishes". It is used to "describe varieties and subsets of English which arise as a result of specific circumstances in which it finds itself as it moves to various parts of the world through various people". Edem (2018) further explains that "wherever the English language spreads to and remains there for a considerable length of time, it gets nativised and so develops peculiar features reflecting its new

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environment". The "peculiar features" in this context is what is referred to as "local colour" which has brought about the concept of "nativization of non-native varieties" and Nigerian Englishes is one of the proceeds from the nativization of non-native varieties of English (Eka 2000, Edem 2015, Edem 2016, Edem 2018 and Edem 2020). It is pertinent to note that the emergence of Nigerian Englishes or Nigerian English is as the results of the radical spread of English by colonialists, missionaries, merchants of all sorts and by exploiters (Enang, Eshiet and Udoka, 2013). This was apparent after the time when Englishmen spoke English and English was (only) the language of English men and nothing could alter the character of an essentially single and homogeneous community in a fairly uniform environment (Eka 1996, Edem 2015, Urujzian 2018, Enang and Edem 2022). After this period, English entered the stage of "all-comers" as captured by (Edem 2016, 2018).

Thus, Nigerian English refers to the subset of English spoken/or written by Nigerians. This is solely because the standard British English has failed to express the Nigerian' cultural artifact. Nigerian English, just like any other Language, emerged to express the worldview of its speakers (Edem 2015, 2016 and 2018).

It is a well-known fact (as mentioned above) that English left its original home (England) to Nigeria as well as some other parts of Africa through the traders who first traded at the costal part of the country and later through the missionaries and the colonizers in the 19th century (Enang and Edem 2022 and Edem 2023b) when it eventually became nativized and adopted the unique Nigerian cultural artifact, English thus, underwent drastic changes. Therefore, some meanings (unique) and distinct from that of the British standard are attached to English depending on the situation and context in which it is used. This is the concern of subfield of Language known as semantics (Edem 2023b, 2023c).

Semantics, according to Udofot (1998), Udofot and Edem (2018), is the reflection of the local languages and their sociocultural values in the meaning of words, phrases, and or sentences. It, therefore, helps to explain how words that share certain features may be members of the same semantic domain (Edem 2016, 2018, Udofot and Edem 2018, Udofot 2023, Edem 2023b). In other words, Udofot (1998) posits that semantics is the subfield of language, which addresses meaning at the level of words, phrases, sentences or larger units of discourse and they are all known as "Utterance" (Lyons 1968, Edem 2015, 2018). Lyons (1968) also notes that "...every utterance occurs in a particular spatio-temporal situation (a particular point in space and time). This means semantics can explain meaning of an utterance, nonverbal, cultural and stylistic meanings attached to expressions (Edem 2016, Udofot and Edem 2018). This is in line with one of the most basic principles of semantics that meaning or meaningfulness implies choice (Lyons 1977, Udofot and Edem 2016, 2018, 2022,

2023b and Edem and Tsavmbu, 2024). Therefore, this work seeks to explore the embedded meaning in some expressions some Nigerians use while begging for alms.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Chomsky's (1986) internalized semantics (I-semantics) shall serve as a theoretical framework for this study. I-semantics or internalized semantics is one of the theories of meaning which is considered as the advance theory to the previous theories of meaning (truth conditional semantics, naming theory, referential theory, conceptual theory among others). Chomsky (1984) therefore views Language in two different ways. They are: Externalised Language (E-language) and internalised Language (I-language). The Externalised Language or E-language on one hand sees Language as an external tool designed by human beings and it is seen as part of the external word deployed by humans to converse with. The internalised Language or I-language on the other hand is viewed as a body of knowledge within the mind of the language users and it is examined from the psychological view point (Udofot 1998, Edem 2015, Udofot and Edem 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023a, 2023b). According to this theory, semantics which is a subfield of language that studies meaning can also be viewed as either external property (E-semantics or Externalised semantics) or as a body of knowledge within the mind or brain of the user (I-semantics or internalised semantics) (Udofot and Edem 2018, Urujzian 2018 and Edem 2023b).

Hence, the internalised semantics or I-semantics holds that when people communicate using language, they do not communicate about the world per se but about the world as understood by humans. This is from the fact that objects which human refer to when they use Language are therefore not objects outside their knowledge but rather objects that exist in the human's conception of the world (Udofot 1998, Edem 2015, Udofot and Edem 2018). What does not exist in a certain society will not feature in the speech of those who reside in that society and will therefore make no meaning to them (Edem 2022, 2023a, 2023b, Udofot 2023). Glaring from the above assertion is the fact that only things that are in existence in ones' society or conception of the world constitute the realities and feature in their speeches and indisputably are meaningful to them. Chomsky's I-semantics theory is relevant to the present study as the "Nigerian cooperate beggars" conception of their immediate environment are embedded in these euphemistic, carefully crafted or formulated expressions.

## METHOD

Android phone and jotter were used in recording actual begging sessions across strategic places in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The recordings were carried out surreptitiously. That is, both the beggars and the benefactors were not aware that they were being recorded. Seventy three utterances were recorded from thirty-eight begging scene sessions. These were two police checkpoints, two ticket/emblem checkpoints, two political gatherings, two Motor Parks, three mechanic workshops, one market, two junctions, one fast food (restaurant), two football viewing centers, seven streets, one church, two provision shops (supermarket/mall), two betting centers (sporty bet and bet9ja), three ATM stands/POS centers, four bars, three points of religious billboards and two construction sites where begging process took place.

The recordings were carefully selected using purposive sampling technique from which relevant expressions were carefully culled for analysis and discussion. The method of sampling enabled the researchers to select forty-three out of seventy expressions that were used in begging for alms.

**Table 1:** Expressions, Scenes and Implications

S/N	EXPRESSIONS	SCENES OF BEGGING	IMPLICATION
1.	Oga your boys are here.	Police Checkpoint, ticket/emblem checkpoint, political gathering, football viewing center, and construction site.	Massaging of the egos of the benefactors
2.	Oga abeg show us joy.	Betting center, political gathering, ticket/emblem checkpoint, ATM/POS stand, football viewing center.	Massaging of the egos of the benefactors
3.	Anything for the boys?.	Motor park, mechanic workshop, football viewing center, ATM/POS stand, political gathering, ticket/emblem checkpoint, bar, junction, construction site.	Massaging of the egos of the benefactors
4.	Boss abeg bless me.	Church, ticket/emblem checkpoints, market, motor park, fast food (restaurant), betting center, street, ATM/POS stand, junction, and provision shop (provision shop).	Massaging of the egos of the benefactors
5.	Your boy dey loyal.	Police Checkpoint, emblem/ticket checkpoint, political gathering, motor park, bar, betting center, viewing center.	Massaging of the egos of the benefactors

Therefore, these recorded expressions served as a primary source of data for the research. On the other hand, relevant libraries and other internet materials constituted the secondary source of data for the research.

The forty-three expressions (data) collected for this research are grouped into six categories (numbered 1-6) for analysis depending on the context and the situation in which they were used and/or adopted by “Corporate Nigerian beggars” when begging. Also, the different scenes where the begging processes took place within Abak Local Government Area and the implications of the expressions are included in the table I shown below:

### Analysis

Five instance of begging for alms are shown in table 1 above. The five instances are numbered 1-5. In this research, the expression "*oga your boys are here*" was used in five different scenes; "*Oga abeg show us joy*", was also used in five different scenes; the expression "anything for the boys?" was used in eight different scenes; also, the expression "*boss abeg bless me*" was used in ten scenes; while the expression "*your boy dey loyal*" was used in seven scenes. At this point the beggars will bend down to portray themselves as humble and trustworthy. The implication was to massage the egos of the benefactors. The word "*oga*" was used in two expressions while "*boss*" was used in one expression. The opposite of "*oga*" and "*boss*" is "*boy*" and it was used in three of the expressions; the word "*boy*" is a metaphor for the beggars or beggarly and the degenerate persons in society while the word "*oga*" exemplifies someone who is well to do and very influential.

Similarly, the word "*joy*" is a metaphor for "*money*" and it was used in only one expression likewise the word "*bless*" which is a metaphor for "*giving*" or "*gifting*" attracts almost the same meaning depending on the personalities involved and the circumstances. In the present study, the expression "*your boy dey loyal*" was used to raise the psyche of the benefactors and diminish the status of the beggars which broaden the gap between the beggars and the benefactors as one who desperately needs help depicting the poor economic situation which we highlighted earlier in this work.



**Table 2: Mild Imperative Expressions, Scenes of Begging and Implications**

S/N	Expressions	Scenes of begging	Implication
1.	Freestyle me one or two.	Market, Street, betting center, ticket/emblem checkpoint, motor park, junction, bar, and mechanic workshop.	Mild Imperative
2.	Free me one kpa	Mechanic workshop, motor park, ticket/emblem checkpoint, market, street, bar, betting center, junction and church.	Mild Imperative
3.	Lap me something	Ticket/emblem checkpoint, political gathering, junction, motor park, bar, street, viewing center, and betting center.	Mild Imperative
4.	Wire me something/wire me one or two.	Motor park, junction, street, viewing center, betting center, and mechanic workshop.	Mild Imperative
5.	Gum me something.	Ticket/emblem checkpoint, market, motor park, bar, and betting shop.	Mild Imperative
6.	Put something for the Amar.	Political gathering, ticket/emblem checkpoint, mechanic workshop, junction, ATM/POS stand, betting center, market and viewing center.	Mild Imperative
7.	See as you see.	Mechanic workshop, betting center, motor park, street, junction, police checkpoint, emblem/ticket checkpoint, bar and market.	Mild Imperative

## Analysis

Seven instances of alms begging are shown in table 2 above. The seven instances are numbered 1-7 with the scenes in which the expressions were used. For instance, in this research, the expression "freestyle me one or two", was used in nine scenes; the expression "free me one kpa" was also used in nine scenes and the expression "see as you see". On the other hand, the expressions "lap me something" and "put something for the Amar" were used in eight scenes while " gum me something" and wire me something" were respectively used in five and six scenes. The word "something"

which was used to refer to "money" was used in four expressions. On the other hand, the words "freestyle", "free", "lap", "wire", and "gum" were used in these expressions metaphorically to mean "give" or "gift". These are special coinages used and understood mostly by Nigerian speakers of English and they add to the rhythmic and textual quality of language as they drew inspiration from the immediate environment (Edem 2015, Udofot and Edem 2018, Edem 2023a, Edem 2023b, and Edem and Tsavmbu, 2024).

**Table 3:** Command Expressions, Scenes of Begging and Implications

S/N	Expressions	Scenes of begging	Implication
1.	Free me the rubbers!	Ticket/emblem check point, motor park, junction, street, market, and viewing center.	Forceful Imperative
2.	Oga abeg drop something!	Ticket/emblem checkpoint, junction, motor park, and bar.	Forceful Imperative
3.	Roger me something!	Market, political gathering, ticket/emblem checkpoint, junction and viewing center.	Forceful Imperative
4.	I will obtain from you o!	Construction site, motor park, ticket/emblem checkpoint, street and viewing center.	Forceful Imperative
5.	Tanana my aza!	Betting center, mechanic workshop, and motor park.	Forceful Imperative
6.	Oga nno ubok!	Ticket/emblem checkpoint, betting center, and market.	Forceful Imperative
7.	Oga land well!	Political gathering, bar, betting center, street, junction, and emblem/ticket checkpoint.	Forceful Imperative
8.	Gum me rubbers!	ATM/POS stand, ticket/emblem checkpoint, and betting center.	Forceful Imperative
9.	Drop something!	Construction site, ticket/emblem checkpoint, street, betting center, police checkpoint, bar, and mechanic workshop.	Forceful Imperative
10.	Grease my hand!	Ticket/emblem checkpoint and betting center.	Forceful Imperative



## Analysis

Table 3 above shows different begging scenes and expressions adopted by some Nigerian alms beggars when they (the beggars) intended to make the begging process a command and they were apparently impolite (forceful imperative). The expressions are numbered 1-10 with the different scenes in which they were adopted and the implication. In this research, the expressions "*free me the rubbers!!*" and "*Oga land well*" were used in six different scenes; the expressions "*Roger me something!!*" and "*I will obtain from you o!!*" were used in five scenes; the expressions "*Tanana my asa!!*", "*Oga nno ubok!!*", and "*gum me rubbers*" were used in three scenes; the expression "*drop something*" was used in seven scenes; "*oga abeg drop something*" was used in four scenes while "*grease my hand*" was used in only two scenes.

Also in this work, the word "*Oga*" was used ironically in three expressions to mean "boy" and it was an embodiment of impoliteness. "Something" was used in three expressions to refer to "money" while "rubbers" which was also used to refer to "money" was used in only two expressions. The words "free", "Roger", "Tanana", "gum", "drop", and "grease" were used as a metaphor for "giving" or "gifting" but in an impolite manner. The impoliteness was best conveyed in the word "obtain". This happened when the beggars have advantage over the benefactors.

**Table 4:** Polite Style in Begging and Scenes of Begging

S/N	Expressions	Scenes of Begging	Implication
1.	Oga abeg drop the least.	Ticket/emblem checkpoint, provision shop (supermarket), street, and viewing center.	politeness
2.	Can I achieve from you?	Betting shop, construction site, ticket/emblem checkpoint, mortor park and junction.	politeness
3.	Should I paste my asa?	Mechanic workshop, market, viewing center.	politeness
4.	Please free me one or two.	Junction, betting center, ticket/emblem checkpoint, bar, street, and market.	politeness
5.	At all at all na em bad pass.	Ticket/emblem checkpoint, bar, market and street.	politeness
6.	Let me drink water at least.	Ticket/emblem checkpoint, motor park, mechanic workshop, bar, market, junction, street, and site.	politeness

## Analysis

Six instances of alms begging are shown in table four above. The six expressions are numbered 1-6 with the scenes in which the six expressions were used. In the present study, the expressions "oga abeg drop me the least" and "can I achieve from you?" were used in five actual begging scenes; the expression "should I paste my asa" was used by the beggars in three actual begging scenes; "please free me one or two" was used in six begging scenes; "let me drink water at least" was used in eight begging scenes while "at all at all na em bad pass" was used in four scenes. The phrases "can I", "should I", and "please free me" were used in the begging and they conveyed politeness. Also, the words "abeg" and "please" were used to show politeness. The word "asa" in expression three above is a metaphor for "bank account" while "water" in expression six is a metaphor for "money". They were used impliedly by those engaged in the begging culture.

**Table 5: Lamentation Style**

S/N	Expressions	Scenes of begging	Implication
1.	Joy soap no come board.	Betting shop, viewing center, market, junction, ticket/emblem checkpoint, and site.	Lamentation
2.	Boss e Don red o	Viewing center, motor park, and mechanic workshop.	Lamentation
3.	Ground no level.	Junction, street, market, and viewing center.	Lamentation
4.	E get as e be.	Ticket/emblem checkpoint, police checkpoint, and provision shop (supermarket).	Lamentation
5.	Street dry.	Ticket/emblem checkpoint, viewing center, police check point, market, and betting center.	Lamentation
6.	Sapa don wound me	Motor park, ticket/emblem checkpoint, street and junction.	Lamentation
7.	E choke.	Viewing center, junction, and shop (supermarket).	Lamentation
8.	Alibop.	Market, Junction, and street.	Lamentation

## Analysis

Eight instances of begging for alms are shown in table five (5) above. They are numbered 1-8 with the actual begging scenes in which the expressions were used. For

instance, the expressions "*alibop*", "*e choke*", "*e get as e be*", and "*boss e don red*" were used in three different actual begging scenes. Similarly, the expressions "*joy soap no come board*" and "ground no level" were used in four different begging scenes while the expression "street dry" was used in five begging scenes in this research. Different words and expressions with implied meaning were used on different occasions and these expressions were chosen based on the context of situation (Edem 2015, Udofot and Edem 2018, Edem 2022 and Edem 2023a). In the present study, "*joy soap*" in the expression one above, was used metaphorically to mean "money" while "*sapa*" in expression 6 above was used euphemistically to mean "lack of money". Same as in "*street dry*", "*E-choke*" and "*Alibob*" in expressions 5, 7 and 8 respectively.

**Table 6:** Indirect Begging

S/N	Expressions	Scenes of begging	Implication
1.	Ifang uba (how much you get)?	Church, street, viewing center, and ticket/emblem checkpoint.	Question/uncertainty.
2.	O boy e show?	Betting center, site, and street.	Question/uncertainty.
3.	Wertin dey boss?	Ticket/emblem checkpoint and bar.	Question/uncertainty.
4.	How far?	Ticket/emblem checkpoint.	Question/uncertainty.
5.	Green light dey?	Betting center, junction, and bar.	Question/uncertainty.
6.	Wetin gum your asa?	Fast food (restaurant), motor park, and betting center.	Question/uncertainty.
7.	Make I lap?	Street.	Question/uncertainty.

## Analysis

Seven instances of alms begging are shown in table six above. They are numbered 1-6 with the various begging scenes in which the six expressions were used. The expressions were in form of questions which indicated doubts and uncertainty. The beggars begged for alms by asking the benefactors impliedly whether they (the benefactors) have any money to give to them. The expression "how far" was one of the examples of implied questions the beggars asked. Different words were used at different instances to convey these questions almost implying the same meaning and addressed to the same target.

## Discussion of Findings

It is obvious from the above data presentation and analysis that some of the euphemistic expressions were local idioms, some were implied (implicature in pragmatics), and some expressions were metaphoric, while some took question style. For discussion of findings, like-terms shall be sorted into groups based on the above mentioned terms (implicature in pragmatics, euphemism, metaphor, local idioms, implicature/metaphor/and local idioms; questions and local idioms; local idioms and implicature; questions and implicature; questions/local idioms and implicature; metaphor but direct) and discussed categorically.

### 1. Implicature in Pragmatics

Implicature simply means implied meaning of an expression or utterance that is not expressed directly (Udofot and Edem 2018 and Edem 2022); while pragmatics on the other hand aims at explaining how a language hearer can succeed in retrieving from what is said, the interpretation intended by the speaker and also derive further information that is not actually said or uttered (Edem 2015, 2016, 2018). Pragmatics studies meaning of utterance from the perspective of psychology (Udofot and Edem 2018 and Edem 2020). In this research, utterances that fell under this category were:

*“oga your boys are here” “your boy dey loyal” “freestyle me one or two” “see as you see” “I will obtain from you o!” “at all at all na em bad pass” “let me drink water at least” “joy soap no come board” “boss e don red o” “ground no level” “e get as e be” “street dry” “e choke” “alibop” and “how far”.*

Some Nigerian beggars utilise these rhythmic expressions and special coinages when they were begging for alms in order to attract attention to their situation and also avoid direct confrontation and save themselves from the shame and stigma that characterised alms begging generally. For instance, in this research, by saying "oga your boys dey here", the benefactor(s) would know by implication that the beggars needed money and not just merely being noticed. Also, "water" in the expression "let me drink water at least" was not actual water semantically, rather, it meant gifting them (beggars) some money. Likewise, the expression "street dry" which did not semantically refer to street being dry literally but that they were out of funds and as such, needed money or financial assistance to survive the hardship or harsh situation which they (the beggars) referred to as "*dry street*". Similarly, the expression "*your boy dey loyal*" has biblical undertone in the present study; because

the Holy Bible says in 1 Peter 5v6 and in James 4v10 that when you humble yourself before the Lord, he will lift you up. Therefore, by saying they were "loyal" means they were humble before you and as such, you have to lift them up by giving them money to survive or to remind them of their meeting with you. More so, the expression "*joy soap no come board*" was not about joy tablet or toilet soap rather it was used impliedly to mean money or more money (Edem, 2022). "*Joy*" to some Nigerian does not simply means a female bearing the name "joy" or a state of mind, rather, it means "money"; "*no come board*" means "there is no joy (there is no money)" and they expected the benefactor to know by implication that they were asking him or her to give them (the beggars) some money. "*Ground no level*"; "*e get as e be*"; "*e don red*" were impliedly used to mean they were devastated and needed to be given money urgently as a matter of fact depicting their vulnerable state.

## 2. Euphemism

Euphemism simply means the expression of unpleasant, offensive and or vulgar thing in a mild, pleasant and or less offensive or blunt way (Udofot and Edem 2018, Edem 2020 and Udofot 2023). Although all the expressions were euphemistic in nature, some expressions were pure euphemisms. The expressions that fell under this category were: "oga abeg show us joy" and "anything for the boys"? Due to the societal stigmatization that accompanies alms begging, instead of saying "master or sir please give us some money" they chose to say it indirectly and less blunt; this made it euphemistic. Also in the present study, "anything for the boys" was used to appear less vulgar and indirect by asking "anything for the boys"? rather than saying "we need money, is there anything for us?" "Boys" here categories the degenerate folks.

## 3. Metaphor

It is pertinent to mention that all the expressions were metaphoric in nature, but there were some that were pure metaphor. The expressions that constituted this category were: "Boss abeg bless me" and "Drop something". In the present study, the "bless" in the first expression has nothing to do with spiritual or religious blessing but it was used metaphorically to mean "give me money". "Something" in the second expression is a metaphor for "money". Therefore, by saying "drop something" it means give money. In this study, the meaning of "blessing" in Nigerian English has been extended to include "money" and alms giving and not necessarily a religious ritual. Therefore, the blessing was a monetary blessing in this case.

#### **4. Local Idioms**

Idioms are expressions which the meaning cannot be deduced from the literal meanings of the words (Edem 2022). However, by local idioms, it means the meanings are peculiar to a certain locality (Udofot and Edem 2018). In this research, despite the fact that most of the formulated expressions were ostensibly local idioms, there were some that were pure local idioms that were limited to the Nigerian society. They were: "Lap me something" "wire me something" "gum me something" "put something for the Amar" "roger me something" "oga land well" "grease my hand" and "oga abeg drop me the least".

In this study, the word 'wire' in the expression "wire me something" has nothing to do with electrical tool or register. It was used to refer to an act of giving money which is the "something" they asked to be 'wired' which is a new situation to the English lexicon. In this research, the expression "oga land well" was used to inform the benefactor that he or she should not bother them (beggars) with long speech rather he or she should jump to conclusion by mentioning the amount of money he or she would give. Failure to do that means the benefactor did not land well. This is most common at political gatherings and social. "Put something for the Amar" means the benefactor should give out some amount of money to the area boys. "Amar" in this context was used to refer to a certain area or locality. "Grease my hand" means that the benefactor should give them some money in order for them to be happy and be diligent about whatever he or she has to do. "Gum me something" and "lap me something" mean give me some money. In the present study, "Gum" in the former expression was a metaphor for "gifting" or "giving" likewise "lap" in the later expression. The same thing was applicable to "roger" in the expression "roger me something" which are acts of expectancy by hungry looking Nigerian youths

#### **5. Implicature, Metaphor and Local Idioms**

Aside the expressions discussed above, there were some expressions that were both implied, metaphoric, and idiomatic in nature. Some of these expressions used by some Nigerian beggars were: "free me one kpa" "free me the rubbers" and "Tanana my asa". The expressions were used by the beggars impliedly with an expectation that the benefactor would retrieve the intended meaning intuitively. Also in the present study, the above expressions were all local idioms. Words like "kpa" and "rubbers" are metaphors for "money" while "asa" was used metaphorically to mean "bank account". Similarly, the word "free" literally means "gift" and or "give" while "Tanana" is an onomatopoeia word which was used to describe the sound of credit alert. This adds to

the rhythmic and textual quality of the discourse. The expression also shows the materialistic attitude of most Nigerian youths who are anxious to overcome life's challenges.

## **6. Question and Local Idioms**

Be it as it may, some of the formulated euphemistic expressions took the form of both questions and local idioms. Some of these expressions were: "should I paste my asa?" and "can I achieve from you?" In this research, these questions were somewhat rhetorical in nature but were local idioms. Some of the "cooperate beggars" sometimes chose to beg for alms by asking the benefactor indirectly. "Achieve" in the later expression "can I achieve from you?" was no other achievement than getting money precisely from the benefactor. Similarly, "asa" in the former expression "should I paste my asa?" meant nothing more or less than "bank account" while "paste" means 'to send' bank details for possible transfer of money to them. Therefore, the expression literally means, "should I send my details?" While the later expression on the other hand literally means "can I get some money from you"?

## **7. Local Idioms and Implicature**

More so, from the present study, some of these euphemistic expressions were local idioms but the beggars in some occasions chose to use them impliedly which make the expressions to function as both local idioms and implicature. Some of the expressions that fell under this category were: "please free me one or two" and "Sapa don wound me". The two expressions were local idioms but they were used as implicatures. The word "wound" in the later expression was not a physical injury in standard British English usage rather financial injury caused by poverty that is prevalent in Nigeria. By lamenting their situation to their benefactor(s) using these expressions, they were expecting their benefactors to know by intuition that they (the beggars) were begging him or her for money and not for lamenting sake. The former expression though seemed to be more direct and less implied, the words "one or two" made it implied. 'One or two' in the expression means nothing more or less than "money" or monetary transaction.

## **8. Question and Implicature**

In addition, there were some expressions which were formulated and utilized by some Nigerian beggars which were both questions and implicature. Some of these expressions were: "wetin gum your asa?" "green light dey?" and "wetin dey boss?".



The above interrogations were to be examined psychologically not otherwise in order to retrieve the intended meaning. In the present study, "Green light" in the expression "green light dey?" was not a mere light that is green in colour rather, it means any possibility of getting money from the benefactor. "Gum" in the first expression was not a glue rather it was money. The first expression "wetin gum your asa" simply means "how much is in your bank account?" However, the beggars chose to ask with an implied meaning in order to evade the shame and the societal stigma that goes with begging. "Boss" in the expression "wetin dey boss" was used to raise the psyche of the benefactor and let the benefactor feel that he was the only person to help or someone at advantaged position to do so. It also helped to broaden the gap between the beggar and the benefactor.

## **9. Question, Local Idioms and Metaphor**

However, there were some of these metaphoric and/or euphemistic expressions utilised by some Nigerian beggars when begging for alms that embody the question, local idioms and metaphoric forms. Example was the expression "make I lap"? the intended meaning of the expression is metaphoric and idiomatic in nature and it takes the form of a question. "lap" is a metaphor for "coming" and coming in this context was coming to get nothing more than money. Again, this shows the psyche of most Nigerian youths who think that these in leadership corruptly enriches themselves and by resorting to begging they no longer believe that hard work pays. Rather they want to get easy money from the people.

## **10. Metaphor (But Direct)**

Finally, the formulated expression "oga abeg drop something" in this study functioned as a metaphor but it was seemingly direct. The use of the word "something" metaphorically to mean money made it a metaphor although the message conveyed was direct. From the discussions above, it can be deduced that some Nigerian cooperate beggars formulated some expressions euphemistically based on their conception of the world around them. Edem (2015) observes that these euphemistic expressions were used based on the context as well as the situation. It was the context and the situation that determined the kind of expression to be used when begging for alms. They merely used this expression in order to evade the societal stigma that characterised alms begging which implies the concept of *Machiavellian* philosophy where the end justifies the means (Edem 2015, 2016, 2023b, Udofot and Edem 2018).

## CONCLUSION

Alms begging is prevalent in the Nigerian society due to how challenging the means of livelihood in Nigerian environment has become. Some Nigerians take to alms begging as a panacea for surviving the harsh economy and come to terms with the hardship that characterised the Nigerian society over the years due to poor leadership despite the abundant natural resources at their disposal. In view of the societal stigma that is attached to alms begging, some Nigerian youths formulate some euphemistic expressions with implied meanings and utilise these formulated expressions in begging for alms. The method or expression adopted on each occasion depends to a large extent on the context and the situation at their disposal.

It is recommended that since these euphemistic utterances are meaningful to some Nigerians as they have utilised them in various ways, they (the formulated expressions) should be recognized in the pragmatic usage of Nigerian English and also be recognised as a significant aspect of ongoing studies in Nigerian English and if possible, be included in the dictionary of Nigerian English Usage.

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