

***Omo*, what are you waiting for?: The discourse-pragmatic imports of *omo* in Nigerian English**

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Borrowing is an inevitable consequence of language contact whereby elements from a source language are incorporated into a target language discourse (Poplack, Weeler and Westwood 1987). Recent studies have revealed a number of lexical items often borrowed from indigenous Nigerian languages (INLs) and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) to enrich the linguistic resources of Nigerian English (NigE). Imported from INLs are pragmatic markers, such as *o*, *sha*, *shey*, *jor*, *fa* (Unuabonah & Oladipupo 2018, 2021) and bilingual interjections, which include *haba*, *kai*, *chai*, *na wa*, *shikenah* (Unuabonah 2020; Unuabonah & Daniel 2020). Amongst NP loans in NigE are *abeg*, *sef*, *na* (Unuabonah, Oyebola & Gut 2021). A borrowed lexical item which hitherto has not been given scholarly attention in NigE is *omo*, a Yoruba loan word. Despite its prevalence, its status remains very sketchy. It has been claimed without empirical analysis, though, that *omo* functions as an address term which indicates solidarity among peers (Unuabonah 2021).

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to examine this borrowed linguistic item, *omo*, in NigE with a view to establishing its meaning, status, grammatical properties, collocational pattern and discourse-pragmatic functions. 110 instances of the item were extracted from the Nigerian component of the Global Web-based English corpus (GloWbE) and analysed qualitatively and quantitatively using the pragmatic borrowing theory. The findings show that *omo*, translated 'child' in English, is used as an address term and an emotive interjection, an equivalence of the English interjection *mehn* (Unuabonah 2021). It largely occupies clause-initial position and often collocates with grammatical items but less with other discourse-pragmatic markers. *Omo* also expresses different emotions such as admiration, sympathy, fear and disappointment, which shows its multifunctional nature. The study establishes the continuous influence of bilingual discourse-pragmatic markers on the linguistic resources of Nigerian English.

Keywords: discourse-pragmatic markers, Nigerian English, pragmatic borrowing, interjections, GloWbE.

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