

John Benjamins Publishing Company



This is a contribution from *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 8:2
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Ideology and body part metaphors in Nigerian English

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Studies on Nigerian English (NE) have largely focused on the variation of NE from Standard English. Few of these have investigated metaphors in NE and none, to the best of my knowledge, has worked on ideology and metaphor. This paper fills this gap by concentrating only on body part metaphors. Metaphors related to sexual organs were sourced from Nigerian university students through oral and written interviews. Insights for analysis were drawn centrally from the theory of embodiment and critical discourse analysis. Fourteen sexual organ metaphors, which relate to two major ideological issues: the institutionalisation of gender issues and religious, social and cultural allegiances, are identified. The former relates to gender-based cultural disapproval, gender dignification and gender valuation, while the latter is tied to morality/ decency constraints, and personality/social group constraints. Metaphors have great cognitive values in Nigeria, and their understanding requires knowledge of the social and cultural context.

Keywords: ideology, metaphor, Nigerian English, culture, social group

1. Introduction

Metaphor provides access to the human cognitive process. It is a major means of connecting the impression of the individual with their beliefs and actions. With metaphor, it is possible to see the images formed by groups or individuals of others or themselves, and come in contact with their values, tendencies and attitudes. Thus, metaphor becomes a tool in the expression of sex-based issues and behaviours, itself recognised as embodiment which bridges the brain and parts of the body (cf Johnson, 1987; Maalej, 2004).

Parts of the body, as metaphorically expressed in various cultures and human physical adaptations and behaviours, have been studied in linguistics, mathematics/physics (e.g. Manno, 2005), etc. They have also been explored in respect of

languages such as Chinese (e.g. Yu, 2004), English (e.g. Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987), Arabic (e.g. Maalej, 2004), etc. Despite the interdisciplinary value and global appeal of embodiment, it has been sparsely studied in Nigerian English (NE).

Much as a large body of research has been carried out on English as used in Nigeria (e.g. Banjo, 1996; Akindele & Adegbite, 1999; Adamo, 2007; Chiluwa, 2008; Odebunmi & Alo, 2010), very little attention has been paid to metaphor in Nigerian English, and none to metaphor in relation to body parts. The major reference on metaphor in Nigerian English is Babatunde & Shobomehin (2007), which examines metaphor, within the traditional frame, along the socio-cultural axis. Other studies on metaphor have either considered NE metaphors as aesthetic devices (e.g. Tunca, 2008; Teilanyo, 2009) or have subsumed them in larger frames in strictly language-based studies on NE (e.g. Jowitt, 1994; Onuigbo, 2007; Pérez, 2008). This gap points to the fact that the present study is a first attempt to examine metaphors (of body parts) in Nigerian English from the purview of embodiment, and establish the link between the metaphors and their ideological orientations.

It is important to note that, just like studies on metaphor, very little efforts have been exercised in the literature on gender and body part metaphors. Generally, studies on gender discourse have addressed theoretical perspectives (e.g. Cameron, 1992; Tannen, 1995; Remlinger, 1999), linguistic reforms (e.g. Yusuf, 1997; Pauwels, 1998; Lamidi, 2009), talk/writing patterns (e.g. Kunsmann, 2000; Argamon et.al., 2010), socio-cultural perspectives (e.g. Salami, 2004; Pande, 2004; Maalej, 2009; Arua, 2009) and sex-related issues (e.g. Cameron, 2006; Fernandez 2008). With the exception of the last two studies, which themselves focus on ideology and metaphorisation of sexual discourse in general, none of the existing works has exclusively addressed gender issues with respect to sexual organs, which the present study is concerned with.

In the next section, I state the methodology for this study. In Section 3, I discuss the lexico-semantic features of Nigerian English. In Section 4, I review ideology, metaphor and embodiment. In Section 5, I analyse the data and present the findings; and in Section 6, I conclude the paper.

2. Methodology

For data, metaphors related to male and female sexual organs were gathered through oral and written interviews conducted with purposively selected undergraduate and postgraduate students of three Nigerian universities, namely, University of Ibadan (100 respondents), Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso (105 respondents) and Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos (99 respondents). About 35% of the respondents were females, while the remaining 65% were

males. The disproportionate distribution was accounted for by the timidity and non-readiness of many female students to contribute to sex-related issues. The written interview materials (400, out of which 304 were retrieved), which were distributed to randomly sampled students of the selected institutions, requested information about the expressions/words the students used to describe/discuss the penis, the vagina, the female buttocks and the female breasts, which were unanimously agreed among the population to be quintessential of the concept of sexual organs. Information was also sought about the population's perception of and attitudes to the ideological contents of the words/expressions. Oral interviews were further conducted with about 45 of the population (17 females; 28 males), and more information sought from the NE stock. The analysis of data was based on insights from metaphor theories and Critical Discourse Analysis (with particular reference to van Dijk).

3. Nigerian English: A lexico-semantic exploration

Given that English is spoken in Nigeria as a second language, certain socio-cultural variables necessarily influence the variety of English that is spoken. Since realities and experiences peculiar to the peoples are expressed in another language, certain differences from the Standard English are expected to occur. Differences of this nature have produced Nigeria-peculiar words such as "introduction" (a preliminary formal meeting of the families of a prospective couple), 'bukateria' (a cafeteria), "Okada" (a motorcycle used for commercial purposes), etc.

Adebija (1989, pp. 165–177) identifies six causes of lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English: socio-cultural differences between the English and Nigerian people; pragmatic aspects of the dynamics of a multi-lingual context; the exigencies of varying discourse constraints and modes in English and indigenous languages; the pervasive, omnipresent and indomitable influence of the media; the standardisation of idiosyncrasies and errors; and the predominantly formal medium of acquisition of English. The socio-cultural differences between the English people and Nigerians have led to the development of new lexical items. Examples include: "wrapper" (a piece of cloth tied round the waist or body), "social wake-keep" (a programme organised by Christians, usually held in the evenings, in honour a dead person) and "bride price" (the items paid to a bride's family by the groom's family before a marriage could be allowed to hold).

The multicultural setting of Nigeria has naturally attracted the imposition of English on administrative, educational and other forms of formal situations. The contact of the indigenous languages with English, considering ethnic differences, now results in new lexical items derived from direct borrowing, code switching,

loan translations or calques. Some of the examples are: “There is *no market*” (There are no sales), “*amala*” (food made from yam, cassava or guinea corn flower), “*eba*” (food made mainly from cassava), etc.

Much of lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English is traced to patterns of discourse in the indigenous language. ‘In the cultures of Africa, loquacity, ambiguity, redundancy, obscurity and other strategies of verbal discourse are markers of wisdom, age, knowledgeability, sex and other socially relevant criteria’ (Chis-thimba, 1982, p. 247, quoted from Adegbija, 1989, p. 168). Adegbija observes that in Nigeria, the mode of greeting and age of the participants are very important in the talk exchanges. Unlike in the Western world, the greatness of the age of the interlocutor determines the choice of politeness markers and mode of greetings that are employed. In this light, when English is introduced into the scene, new lexical items emerge. For instance, words like “junior” (brother) and “senior” (sister) are introduced as a result of the fact that refusal to give due respect to age in some parts of Nigeria attracts the scorn of the society.

Also, the media help to introduce new words into Nigerian English. These include: “Bottom power” (a woman’s use of feminine charms to gain social advantages) and “National cake” (material privileges which citizens of Nigeria are expected to enjoy). Sometimes, lexico-semantic variation in Nigeria is traced to the idiosyncratic use of English words by some highly respected Nigerians. According to Adegbija (1989), from time to time, such expressions are adopted because of the topicality of their first use. Two examples can be cited here: “A man of timber and caliber” (a very important and influential personality) and “Trouble shooter” (“a person who causes trouble” instead of the British “a person who quells trouble”).

Finally, the formality of the English spoken in Nigeria has been associated with the formal way in which English is taught in Nigerian schools. An average Nigerian speaker of English (especially the elite) largely prefers the bookish variety of English. This is because such a use of the language is associated with knowledgeability and learnedness by Nigerians. This is also reflected in journalistic expressions in the Nigerian media. The word “conditionalities” to describe conditions required by the IMF before granting a loan to Nigeria during the regime of President Ibrahim Babangida is a good example.

In addition to the factors that have given birth to Nigerian English words, different types of lexico-semantic variation in NE have also been identified. Five of these will be discussed: transfer, analogy, abbronymy, semantic shift and extension, and coinage or neologism.

1. Transfer

This may include transfer of meaning, and transfer of Nigerian Pidgin features:

I hear a smell (I perceive an odour) -English

I'm coming (I'll be back presently) -English

I dey well well (I am alright) — Pidgin

Pidgin English is a particularly prominent communicative tool among students of higher institutions in Nigeria as would be seen in my analysis. It is also very popular among youths of all categories and has the reputation of being the lingua franca in coastal areas and linguistically highly heterogeneous cities in Nigeria.

2. Analogy

Words in this category are formed on the basis of partial resemblance with words that are already existing in the mother tongue or English; so, the new item could be English or a blend of both. Affixation is largely instrumental to the birth of words in this category in Nigerian English. Some examples are:

Zikism (ideology of Azikwe) — Azikwe (a former Nigerian leader)

Awoism (ideology of Awolowo) — Awolowo (a former Nigerian leader)

3. Abbronyms

These are words formed from letters or some parts of existing words, phrases or terminologies, which may or may not be pronounceable (Odeunmi, 1996ab, 2006, 2008). The following examples are particular to Nigerian English:

NEPA: National Electric Power Authority (now Power Holding PLC)

MAMSER: Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery

SSANU: Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities

ASUU: Academic Staff Union of (Nigerian) Universities

NUJ: Nigerian Union of Journalists

4. Semantic Shift or Extension

Some words in Standard English have their meanings narrowed, broadened or even shifted completely in Nigerian English. A few of such words are:

chase: to go after a woman with the intention of winning her love

escort: to see a guest off

machine: a motorcycle

5. Coinage or Neologism

There are three types of coinage in Nigerian English: (a) the existing lexical stock in English (b) the existing stock in the Nigerian mother tongues (c) a hybrid of the lexical stock of English and indigenous languages (Adegbija, 1989). The following groups of expressions respectively exemplify the types: “half current” (low voltage)/ “khaki boys” (soldiers); “agbada” (a Yoruba flowing gown)/ “egunje” (kick back); and “bukateria” (cafeteria)/ “JAMBite” (freshman).

4. Ideology, metaphor and embodiment

Ideology, the soul of critical discourse analysis, has been associated with four approaches, three of which have been fully established in the literature. These three are Wodak's discourse historical approach, Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach and Fairclough's socio-semiotic approach. The fourth, which according to Maalej (2007, p.133) is emergent, is Gee's (2004) socio-literary approach. The present study, though takes some insights from all the first three approaches, centrally prefers Van Dijk's because of its socio-cognitive slant which is core to the study.

Ideology has often been conceived as implicit assumptions held in interaction (cf. Fairclough, 2001; Wodak, 1996). This means that certain tendencies, which have been imbibed, and thus become integrated into humans, are exposed and expressed in the course of human interaction. Thus, ideologies are shared. In this line of reasoning, Van Dijk (2001, p. 12) sees ideologies as "a special form of social cognition shared by social groups. Ideologies thus form the basis of the social group members including their discourse, which at the same time serves as the means of ideological production, reproduction and challenge". For Van Dijk (1993), social cognition captures the psychic imaging and processing restricted to social group members, which may include socio-cultural knowledge and evaluative assumptions. This makes ideologies a complex system which group members gradually acquire over a long period through "socialisation and other forms of 'social information processing'" (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 18). Thus, a social group constructs itself a representation with reference to other groups on the basis of "membership devices (gender, ethnicity, appearance, origin, etc) who are we? Actions: what do we do? Aims: why do we do this? Norms and values: which is good or bad? Position: what is our position in society, and how we relate to other groups? ; and Resources: what is ours? What do we want to keep at all costs?" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 14).

Centrally speaking, van Dijk, (2006) holds the view that ideologies are, essentially, belief systems; that the systems are necessarily collective; that they (ideologies) are axiomatic; and that they come through a life time and can thus be stable in relative terms (Van Dijk, 2006, p.117). He identifies four major functions of ideology, namely:

1. organis[ing] and ground[ing] the social representation shared by members of ideological groups
2. [being] the ultimate basis of the discourses and other social practices of the members of social groups or group members.
3. allow[ing] members to organise and co-ordinate their (joint) actions and interactions in view of the goals and interest of the group as a whole

4. function[ing] as the part of the sociocognitive interface between social structure of groups, on the one hand, and their discourse and other social practices on the other.

Knowledge is a major characteristic of ideologies. It directs group members' model design and to some degree the way they produce and understand discourse. Hence, "group beliefs [...] are organised by underlying ideologies (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 123). These ideologies are expressed through context, text, discourse/conversation, meaning and form (cf Van Dijk, 2006, p. 126).

Of importance to this paper, therefore, is Van Dijk's mental models which show how "ideologies knowledge and attitudes impact directly on concrete discourse and social practices" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 15). These models serve as individuals' mental stores of events, and are therefore associated with their individual experiences. They represent each person's views, which may or may not be shared by other members of the group. Consequently, mental models constitute a major factor in comprehension and interpretation of discourses as individuals may see the world differently based on personal experiences. Therefore, given that ideologies are shaped by mental models, they constrain preferences for topics and choices of words, including metaphors, largely on the basis of the group, but sometimes on the level of the individual. This will be shown shortly in my analysis of metaphors in NE. Meanwhile, I turn to the review of metaphor and embodiment.

Metaphor is cardinal to human linguistic experiences, especially the human thought (cf Howell, 2000). It permeates all facets of human life and influences human conceptions of things (cf Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Theories of metaphor are included in cognitive linguistics (cf Lakoff, 1980; Hook, 1999; Hart & Lukes, 2007), which covers conceptual theory, mental space theory, frame semantics, cognitive grammar, conceptual blending theory, metaphor power theory and space discourse theory. Of all these, the most popular and applied (and the one that is preferred in this study) is the conceptual theory (Lakoff, 1991; Chilton & Lakoff, 1995; Musolff, 2004). It is from this theory that the embodiment hypothesis has shot out. I will come back to this hypothesis presently. Henceforth, I simply refer to conceptual theory as metaphor theory/theorising.

Empirical work from cognitive science has demonstrated that metaphor is beyond linguistic or rhetorical elements. It "constitutes a fundamental part of people's ordinary thought, reason and imagination" (Gibbs Jr. et al., 2004, p. 119). Consequently, Lakoff (1989) develops models of metaphor tagged "Idealised Cognitive Models" (ICMs). This metaphor theorising offers a process for the application of metaphor in language and explains human comprehension of the world from the physical to the abstract concepts with reference to language (Lakoff, 1989).

Lakoff's hierarchy of ICMs is constructed in image-schematic, propositional, metaphoric, metonymic and symbolic terms. Core to the ICMs are image schema which are experienced at the very early stage of human lives, involving objects and actions. Other complex human experiences are superstructured on these schemas. Basic kinaesthetic image schemas thus include: container schema, part-whole schema, link schema, centre/periphery schema, source-path-goal schema, up-down schema, front back schema and linear order schema. What is significant about the schemas is their metaphoric posture which pools experiences from different deep-seated domains and transmits them on the basis of group collective assumptions. This is the point where metaphor meets with ideology and where its cognitive seat is confirmed. Yet, the wide explorations made on metaphor notwithstanding, very little attention has been paid to "conceptual metaphor as a purely euphemistic or dysphemistic device" (Crespo Fernández, 2008, p. 96). This gap, filled by Fernandez, is crucial to metaphoric discourse, as many metaphors (as would be shown in my analysis shortly) are euphemisms. In fact, euphemisms and dysphemisms are metaphoric in nature (cf Chamizo Domínguez, 2005 [Bolinger, 1982]).

Allan & Burridge (1991, p. 11) provide a pragmatic definition of a euphemism as: "a euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face, either one's own face or, through taking offence, that of the audience or of some third party". This definition aligns perfectly with the motivation for the use of sexual organ metaphors in Nigeria as would be shown shortly. A further testimony to this observation is obvious in Chamizo Domínguez & Sánchez Benedito's (2000) types of euphemisms: lexicalised, where a figurative meaning is considered as given; semi lexicalised, where a given substitute is seen as a taboo. As would be demonstrated in the analysis, metaphors in NE display all these features. In other words, there is a strong link between metaphors and or metaphoric euphemisms and sexual discourse. In the words of Crespo Fernández (2008, p. 96): "Given that metaphorisation stands out as the most prolific linguistic device of lexical creativity, it is hardly surprising that, speakers turn to figurative language as a means of coping with the realm of sex".

For Lakoff & Johnson (1980), "entailment relationship forms vital subcategories of metaphors. They treat metaphors as mappings either from one abstract domain to another or from abstract domains to concrete domains, with the source or target domain playing a key role. The former is the origin or source of the metaphor (e.g. war) while the latter is the context or situation in which the metaphor is applied (e.g. love making).

The metaphors engaged in sexual discourse derive from certain source domains. Two of these, eating and food, have been observed to be common roots of names for sex in general (cf Crespo Fernández, 2008). As Allan & Burridge (2006,

p.90) observe, “food is often the prelude to sex....Eating and love making go together”.

At this point, it is necessary to turn to the concept of embodiment, which is an off-shoot of conceptual metaphor. In the view of Johnson (1987), embodiment, which can be realised through the way humans conceptualise their emotions, works in concert with the view that the bodily experience of an individual has roots in the person’s abstract reasoning. “It is the way in which human (or any other animal’s) psychology arises from the brain’s and body’s physiology” (*Embodiment Theory, Mathematics, Human Mind and Cognitive Science*, 2008). It locates the body in the human mind, the human thought, the human reasoning and the meaning ultimately derived (cf Maalej, 2004). This means that our cognitive processes are related through our bodies. Hence, Lakoff & Johnson (1999, p.6) contend that

the mind is not merely embodied, but embodied in such a way that our conceptual systems draw largely upon the commonalities of our bodies and of the environments we live in. The result is that much of a person’s conceptual system is either universal or widespread across languages and cultures.

Three levels of embodiment have been identified by Lakoff & Johnson (1999). These are: neural, phenomenological and the cognitive unconscious. In the words of Maalej (2004, p. 56), “the neural level is the level of neurochemistry and cellular physiology” i.e. the physical interface of concepts and cognitive operations. The phenomenological level refers to the part of human thought that is conscious. In other words, it is that level where a meeting is actualised between the mental consciousness, bodies, environment and interactions at the physical and social level. The cognitive unconscious level covers aspects of language use such as the phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and discourse features. Each of the levels, variously and with relative importance, points to human states of embodiment and human consciousness with respect to how cognitive processes work. This singular point clearly establishes that only physiological embodiment has been conceived in the literature. This does not seem representative of the states of things across world cultures. Maalej (2004, p. 56) is thus right to interrogate this conception and to include the cultural slant in his consideration of anger vis-à-vis embodiment:

Embodiment is also a function of cultural correlation between a given emotion and its cultural bearing. Because non-physiological embodiment exists alongside the physiological in many cultures (Tunisian Arabic, Japanese, Zulu, etc) the conception of embodiment needs to be broadened.

Maalej's position here holds for the situation of things in the metaphorisation of sexual organs in Nigerian English. Sexual organs, described variously by Nigerians, have their lexical tokens largely sunk in the socio-cultural experiences of the people and particular idiosyncrasies that individuals have grown up with. The conception of the embodiment in the sexual axis in Southwestern Nigeria is, therefore, deeply rooted in cultural and social ideologies which have turned a large majority of the people to near automated reactions as far as sexual organs are concerned. These will emerge in our analysis presently.

5. Ideology and metaphors for sexual organs in NE

Fourteen embodiment hypotheses emerged from the data on the sexual organs. These are:

1. THE ORGAN IS THE ROUSER OF A CONTAINER
2. THE ORGAN IS THE ILLEGITIMATE COMPANION
3. THE ORGAN IS TASTY
4. THE ORGAN IS A WEAPON
5. THE ORGAN IS A TREASURED PROPERTY
6. THE ORGAN IS AN ACTOR
7. THE ORGAN IS A COMMODITY
8. THE ORGAN IS A PIT/OPENING
9. THE ORGAN IS AN ACTIVITY/BUSY SITE
10. THE ORGAN IS THE POPULAR/FAMILIAR SITE
11. THE ORGAN IS A CYNOSURE
12. THE ORGAN IS A HEAVY LOAD
13. THE ORGAN IS A FEEDER
14. THE ORGAN IS A RELAXANT

Two major ideological issues emerged from a close examination of the metaphors used by the sampled population. These are: institutionalisation of gender perception, and religious, social and cultural allegiances. I will handle these in turn.

5.1 Institutionalisation of gender perception

By gender perception institutionalisation I mean the deep-seated association between certain verbal behaviours and gender-based actions. In this connection, three factors have been considered with respect to the use of metaphors, namely, gender-based cultural disapproval of word usage, gender dignification and gender valuation. First, I discuss gender-based cultural disapproval of word usage.

5.1.1 *Gender-based cultural disapproval of word usage*

What indexes this factor is the population's avoidance of direct reference to sexual organs because of cultural constraints. Only one metaphor is associated with this factor: THE ORGAN IS THE TREASURED PROPERTY.

Both the penis and the vagina come within this description in our data. Two lexical choices are used to achieve the description: "private part" and "third leg". While both parts are described with "private part", only the penis takes "third leg". The idea of the organs being private parts derives from the cultural value associated with them as personal belongings which should not be publicly exposed, and therefore things to be treasured. The treasuredness associated with the "third leg" kicks off from the physical need to attend carefully to one's leg. The organ being a leg itself derives from its shape and its bestriding position with the legs, which, of necessity, hides it from public view, thus making it a personal belonging as well.

"Private part" especially goes into the socialisation process of the Yoruba, who constitute the dominant group in the sampled population. Right from childhood, a Yoruba boy or girl is schooled to treasure his or her sexual organs as personal or private property. In fact, in a typical traditional Yoruba setting, a mother would call the penis "kokoro" (an insect that can bite), and the vagina, "nkan e" (your thing) to limit the boy's freedom with the penis, and warn the girl to attend seriously to her vagina perhaps to avoid intrusion from men in her later life. This kind of treatment, given to the organs, causes many Nigerians (especially the Yoruba) to avoid direct reference to the organs.

Responses of our population reveal that choices of sexual organ metaphors are made not necessarily because they are available in the NE stock, but because they have a personal, almost automated detachment from the original names, a detachment that is not necessarily group-based. A major tendency found in the data is timidity/shyness on the part of a number of respondents. For example, a male respondent who indicates shyness as a motivation for the use of NE sexual organ metaphor prefers to use "toto", "private part" or "honey well" for vagina rather than the original name. Another male respondent, for the same reason, observes that some Nigerian youths choose the following rather than penis: "prater", "paw", "pencil" and "Ramod stick".

5.1.1 *Gender dignification*

Contrary to the findings of many studies on gender discourse (e.g. Yusuf, 1998) metaphoric language in NE sexual discourse reveals a dignifying slant for the woman. THE ORGAN IS A CYNOSURE picks out the female breasts and buttocks as admired and positively valued elements.

Table 1. The Organ is the Cynosure

Items	Buttocks	Breasts
1. Structure/Shape Indicative words	backyard, behind, backside, yams, v-boot	Pawpaw,
2. Movement-indicative words	Kaka	–
3. Quality-indicative words	Back hassle, reason	Pointer, front wheel, bonnet, Arsenal, Chelsea, Manchester

Three categories of words are found in this connection. These are: structure/shape-indicative words, movement-indicative words, and quality-indicative words. These are presented, with their examples, in the table that follows.

In Table 1, the appeal that the buttocks and breasts make to individuals is shown to vary in NE by structure/shape, movement or quality. Four source domains are involved here, namely, architecture, e.g. “backyard”, “backside”; agriculture e.g. “pawpaw”; mechanical engineering e.g. “back hassle”, “pointer”, “front wheel”, “bonnet”; everyday, e.g. “kaka” (loan) and “reason”.

The structures/shapes are marked by items such as “V-boot” (a brand of Mercedes Benz with a beautifully protruded back), “yams” (showing oblong-shaped buttocks) and “pawpaw” (showing well rounded breasts). “Backyard”, “behind” and “backside” describe the position of the buttocks. Some of our respondents believe that when any of these is used exclaimatively, it indicates that the user has been attracted to it; e.g. Oh! Just look at the backyard.

‘Kaka’, also a slang item for excrement in NE, is used in relation to the movement of the two buttocks of women. It applies to the buttocks when the movement appeals to male admirers. One example given is:

Oh! I go die o, see am kaka
(Oh! This is great; see her buttocks)

Qualities of buttocks are indicated by two lexical items in the data; namely “back hassle” and “reason”. For the rear location of the buttock, “back hassle” is selected. Another reason is the preference for cars with the hassle in Nigeria. These translate to attraction to the woman whose buttocks have been so described. “Reason” is an arbitrary selection, indicating that the buttocks, by appearance and appeal, are enough justification to go after a particular woman. The use of “reason” as a synonym for buttocks is largely private, i.e. not as popularly distributed in NE as some of the others in this category. “Pointer”, indicating breasts, points to the nipples, especially in a well rounded set of breasts. “Bonnet” shows the fascination the user receives from the object.

5.1.3 Gender valuation

Metaphors for sexual organs in NE also, to a large extent, confirm the negative rating of women with respect to language use (cf Yusuf, 2001). Dominant in this class is the man's valuing of his worth vi-a- vis the worth of the woman. However, a little room is explored by the woman to assert her value, but this is not positive all the way.

Men's valuation is captured in two ideological perspectives, namely, "the man is the exploring/exploiting agent" and "the woman is the denigrated agent". Women's valuation is framed in the perspective, "the woman is a gatekeeper". I will take these in order:

5.1.3.1 *The man is the exploring/exploiting agent*

Four metaphors are attached to this view:

- a. THE ORGAN IS A WEAPON
- b. THE ORGAN IS AN ACTOR
- c. THE ORGAN IS AN ACTIVITY/BUSY SITE
- d. THE ORGAN IS THE POPULAR/FAMILIAR SITE

Only the penis is captured with the metaphor THE ORGAN IS A WEAPON. The items derive from the following source domains: firearms, religion, electricity, everyday, politics/administration/education and construction/engineering. The table below shows this distribution.

Table 2 shows that metaphors from the firearm domain work on the shape of the primary object, inclusive the relative size. The discharge capacity of firearms, which also typifies the penis, is evoked at the secondary level. Metaphors from the electricity domain primarily come from the physical semblance between the pole, the boiling ring, the electric stick, and the penis. The secondary image provoked however differs slightly. For "pole", only the length and size are emphasised. For "boiling ring" and "electric stick", in addition to the shape and relative size,

Table 2. The Organ is a Weapon/Object

	Source Domain	Metaphor
1	Firearm	Shakabula (dane gun), short/long gun
2	Electricity	Electric pole, boiling ring, electric stick
3	Religion	Moses rod
4	Everyday	Rod, something, thing, stick, your thing, fuckin stick, that thing
5	Politics	Staff of office, pinpin,
6	Construction	Peg

deep sexual sensations are evoked. “Moses rod” is a biblical allusion, turned to a euphemism, to describe the shape of the penis. The same goes for “rod”, classified with everyday register. “Something”, “thing”, “your thing”, and “that thing” are extremely arbitrary choices made to objectivise the penis in NE. They differ from the earlier groups because no weaponry value is associated with them. “Fucking stick” captures the physical appearance of the penis and the sexual activity it does, overtly marked by “fucking”. “Pencil”, “peg” and “pin-pin” describe the edge of the original object and the activity it is used to perform.

Only the penis is captured with the metaphor, THE ORGAN IS AN ACTOR. The lexical choices “zip up”, “power horse” and “Mr. Man” are engaged in this connection. The coinage, “power horse” picks out the energeticness of the penis. “Mr. Man” describes the strongness of the organ, just like the quality traditionally linked with a man. It also sometimes picks out erection which practically signifies manliness. In fact, some of the interviewees see no man outside erection. “Zip up”, another effective coinage for the penis, is very arbitrary as it sounds contrary to the recently popular jingle on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria where young women are admonished to zip up (i.e. bar sexual intercourse before marriage). The metaphor here, mainly taken at the secondary level, describes the man’s movement during sexual intercourse with the instrumentality of the penis. It especially captures the conclusion of the exercise where the penis moves out of the container.

The vagina exclusively takes the metaphoric description of the organ as an activity/busy site. Three expressions are used to mark off this metaphor: “workshop”, “passion pit” and “juice hotel”. Our findings show that these items vary in terms of application. Both “workshop” and “juice hotel” are engaged in heterosexual contexts or situations where sex partners have limitless sexual contacts. Hence, expressions like: “Hers is my juice hotel” and “my workshop is open 24/7” would mean respectively “I have sex (which I enjoy) with her constantly” and “I have many sex partners who could have intercourse with me any time”. ‘Passion pit’ differs slightly from “workshop” and “juice hotel” in that it signifies sexual arousal where the issue relates more to the containment than to the object which visits it. One expression encountered in this respect is the metaphor, “Her passion pit is full” which means she has been fully sexually aroused.

Only the vagina and buttocks are associated with the metaphor, THE ORGAN IS THE POPULAR/FAMILIAR SITE. “Yanoh” for vagina and “yansh” for buttocks are the choices made to this effect. “Yanoh” is an anglicised loan word from the Yoruba *Yan ina* (warm oneself by the fire) which works on the warmth gained after an intercourse, itself attributed to the vagina. That the warmth is got already presupposes the partner’s familiarity with the site i.e. the sexual organ. “Yansh” is the Pidgin English word for buttocks, especially those of the woman. A good number of our respondents, in addition to indicating awareness of the word as a metaphor

for breasts, also provide the information that the word is a euphemistic slangy term for the buttocks with which the user is familiar. In other words, it describes buttocks of the user's girlfriend or those the user is well acquainted with in terms of sexual intercourse or romantic acts.

In each of the categories analysed, the man is represented as the agent that exploits the woman. Whether or not the metaphors describe the male sexual organs, the man gains an advantage. He wields the weapon, which makes sexual intercourse possible, and the authority, which, when enforced in sexual encounters, may be punitive to the woman. Metaphors such as "Shakabula", "boiling ring", and "electric stick" explain this power reservation. The man's gender authority (and superiority) is represented by "Moses rod" and 'staff of office'.

5.1.3.2 *The woman is the denigrated agent*

The perspective that the woman is the denigrated agent is encased in three metaphors:

- a. THE ORGAN IS A HEAVY LOAD
- b. THE ORGAN IS A FEEDER
- c. THE ORGAN IS A RELAXANT

I discuss these in turn, starting with THE ORGAN IS A HEAVY LOAD. This metaphor applies to both the breasts and the buttocks. The items are predominantly coinages from trade/brand names, body covers, Pidgin, natural phenomenon/other body parts, sports, indigenous languages/theatre in Nigeria, emotive register, names of containers, and weight register. These, with their examples, are tabulated below.

In Table 3, the sub-metaphor that runs through the items is: THE BREAST/BUTTOCK IS AN ENCUMBRANCE. In the concepts of the items, the various sizes of the sexual organs are seen as excessive. This is obvious in the expressions and contexts in which each appears, some of which include:

- (1) The thing na real *bra*, boy
(The thing is extremely big, boy)
- (2) The *cowbells* just look
(These are very big breasts; just look at them)
- (3) Oh! Shit, what a *Zuma rock*
(Oh Shit, what a big breast!)
- (4) It's *Ikebe* super
(These buttocks are rather excessive)

Table 3. The Organ is a Heavy Load

S/N	Sources	Breasts	Buttocks
1.	Trade/brand names	Cowbell, V- boot	–
2	Body covers	Bra	–
3	Pidgin English	–	Ikebe
4	Natural phenomenon/other body parts	Zuma rock, bust, body	–
5	Sports	Attacker, attack, reliable defender, defence	Defence formidable attack, attack
6	Indigenous Languages/ Theatre in Nigeria	Oshodi Oke	Eru/Bakassi
7	Emotive register	Courage	–
8	Name of containers	–	Basket
9	Weight register	Load	Load

- (5) Uh! *Oshodi Oke*
(Uh! The breasts are excessively big)
- (6) She get *defence/attack*
(She has big buttocks/breasts)
- (7) Na *eru*, look am
(It's really big; look at it)
- (8) My *bakassi* no dey fear you
(You are not afraid of my buttocks)
- (9) The woman get *courage*
(The woman has big breasts)
- (10) She has the *basket*
(She has excessively big breasts)
- (11) The trouble is her *load*
(The trouble is her excessively big breasts)

The metaphorisation of the breast, with the “bra”, derives from the conspicuousness of the breast as a result of the size. This invariably means that in the sociolect of NE where the term is found, it is not an all- time occurrence as “bra” could still take its ordinary sense.

“Cowbell” is a trade name for a local beverage in Nigeria, which naturally influences the coinage as referring to the breast. The logo of the product carries a cow head, with a bell as neck in a seeming dangling position. The image of the

dangling bell is carried into the metaphor of breast size in conjunction with the picture of the usually big breasts of cows, to show the encumbrance that these constitute to the carrier i.e the woman.

“Zuma rock”, “Ikebe”, “Oshodi Oke” “eru”, “bakassi”, “basket” and “load” show the heaviness and the excessiveness of the breasts in question. The Zuma rock is a conspicuously gigantic rock in Nigeria, a quality that fetches it a place on the Nigerian #100 currency note. Likening the breast to it, then, does not portray a moderate and attractive size of the organ. This picture goes through the rest of the items. “Ikebe”, for example, is from the Nigerian humorous/entertainment magazine called “Ikebe Super”, where the popular actress is *Pepeye* with excessively protruding buttocks. “Oshodi Oke” is a Yoruba phrase, meaning the upper part of the street of Oshodi in Lagos. “The upper part” in the metaphor points to the position of the breast in the body of the woman. The same phrase, “Oshodi Oke”, serves as the stage name of a popular Nigerian home video female artist with excessively large breasts. “Bakassi” (Peninsular) is from the name of the region between Cross River/Akwa Ibom States in Nigeria and Cameroon, a place whose ownership was contested between Nigeria and Cameroon until sometime in 2008 when the Nigerian government yielded it to the latter. The metaphor obviously derives from the speculated excessive, yet untapped oil in the region. “Basket” and “load” simply refer to the extra-normal sizes of the breasts.

All the items in the sports category derive from the need for the players in the positions of attack and defence in soccer to go all out for the success of the game. This effort is not ordinary, just as the breast and the buttocks are not. The items, thus, like the other ones, point to the excessive sizes of the breasts. The same effect is intended with the metaphor “courage” which derives from the transliteration of the Yoruba “aya” i.e. chest. The metaphor locates the breast at the woman’s chest. However, the Yoruba expression, “O ni aya” (She has a chest), transforming metaphorically, when related to courage to, “She has breasts”, does not go for breasts of all sizes. In the context, it is applicable only to the breasts that are conspicuously big.

The metaphor, THE ORGAN IS A FEEDER, applies only to the breast. Our concept of “feeder” here is the lexicographic meaning of the word as, “a container filled with food for birds and animals” (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2000, p.519). Three categories of lexical groups are found in the metaphor of the feeder, namely: the breast as container of food, the breast as food and the breast as giver of food. The items are fully represented in the table below.

In the first sub-category in Table 4, the breast is portrayed as contained/found in a factory/industry, in jugs, in kegs (“kego”) (“kego” is a Kegite coinage from keg. “Kegite” is a group of young people, male and female, formed in Nigerian higher institutions, whose members are believed to be united by palm wine drinking) and in a tank. The containers are big in relative terms, showing the various sizes

Table 4. The Organ is a Feeder

No	Items	
1.	The breast as container	Milk factory, jugs, milk industry, kego, tank
2.	The breast as food	Babies' food
3.	The breast as giver of food	Sucki suck, piking food

of the breasts interactants refer to. Invariably, the terms then come to be largely derogatory of the breasts as being oversized. The “babies’ food”, sucki suck” and “pikin food” become operational when the breasts of non-mothers (i.e. unmarried ladies) are considered big enough to be maternity breasts! In other words, they are like those that could be used as food for babies, and those that babies could feed from (“sucki suck” and “pikin food”). The encumbrance of maternity responsibility is thus placed on the single woman! In a way, these young ladies are looked down upon as flirts and morally loose individuals whose age could not be matched with their wide sexual experiences.

The metaphor, THE ORGAN IS A RELAXANT applies only to the breast. Only three items, which derive from domestic sources, are found here. Two of these, “pillow” and “foam” (i.e. mattress) found in the bedroom, are selected for the comfort and relaxation they give when people rest or merely recline. The third, “leather”, is largely domestic in that leather materials are largely found in the home. The image that the metaphor picks from the items is that of softness, which allows for relaxing. This transforms the breast into a romantic object which relaxes partners when on romantic course. The woman is thus turned into an object that the man exploits for his pleasure.

5.1.3.3 *The woman is a gatekeeper*

As noted earlier, the woman also pushes some of her voice into the valuation scheme. In this situation, as our data reveal, she acts as a gate keeper. This is illustrated in only one metaphor: THE ORGAN IS A COMMODITY. Only one item, as provided by our respondents, and confirmed in the NE stock, signals the commodification capacity of the penis and vagina. While “toto” is sometimes generally used to refer to the vagina, it is more frequently used at brothels in bargaining for sex between the prostitute and the patron. Hence, expressions like, “My toto no dey cheap” (My vagina is not cheap), “No be my toto” (It’s not my vagina), “which toto you dey talk self” (Whose vagina are you even talking about?), etc are common in the negotiation.

These metaphors place the woman in the position of a gatekeeper of sorts, and show how she could exercise her authority and freedom in the bargaining process. Although prostitutes who largely employ these expressions are negatively valued

in the Nigerian society, yet the women in this capacity are able to put the patronising men in a submissive position. And the men have to succumb to the authority of the women to have their sexual desires granted.

5.2 Religious, social and cultural allegiances

Another major set of ideological issues in the data relate to religious, social and cultural allegiances of the population. These are guarded by two factors: morality/decency constraints, and personality/group constraints.

5.2.1 *Morality/decency constraints*

These constraints relate to the religious and cultural loyalty of the population. Many unsheathed expressions describing sexual organs are condemned as lacking in good manners/ upbringing or working against the tenets of the people's religious beliefs. To avoid the associated condemnation, users with strong religious and cultural backgrounds resort to metaphors which can be conceptually captured as THE ORGAN IS THE ROUSER OF A CONTAINER. The earlier discussed THE ORGAN IS A TREASURED PROPERTY is also applicable here. However, only the former will be given attention.

The only sexual organ associated with this metaphor is the penis. The lexical item "prick", which is also found in Standard English, referring to the penis, is used to achieve this. The sense of "prick" presupposes containment which reflectively picks out the vagina which is pricked. The sense of the rousing comes from meanings of "prick" such as:

1. press briefly or puncture with a sharp point.
2. feel a sense of sensation as though a sharp point were stuck into one. Cause mental or emotional discomfort to (*Oxford Dictionary of English*, p. 1134).

Each of these lexicographic entries supports the euphemistic sense of 'prick' as a synonym for "penis", as the latter operates in the described or related ways. There is however a slant of the meanings that seems to suggest that the sexual intercourse brought into being by the rousing done by the penis is a painful exercise. This view perfectly aligns with the concept of consummation in a marriage in Yorubaland, when a virgin is newly betrothed. In the past, virginity in Yorubaland was regarded as the only condition for a ceremonial wedding to take place. Consequently, on the conjugal night, the virginity of the bride was tested/confirmed in a painful, first, sexual encounter with the bride where drops of blood from the intercourse were taken as evidence of the intactness of the virginity as of the time of the encounter.

Many of the respondents see using sexual organ metaphors as a display of society-acceptable morality standard, which shows the social decency of the

individual. Some of the respondents, for example, prefer “private part” for “vagina”, “for decency reason”[sic]. Some prefer “dick” for “penis”, “backyard” for “buttocks” and “sweet banana” for “breasts”, “for decency reason [sic]” or “simply for decency”. Some, guarded strictly by the moral code instilled since childhood, decide to speak euphemistically about the organ(s) “so that people around will not know that you are talking about it”.

The morality/decency question has further yielded the factors of sacredness of the organs (as seen in some respondents’ non-provision of any alternative name, and the respondents simply indicating “no idea” and “It is considered sacred” against the columns for the penis and the vagina when asked to provide alternative names and reasons for the use of such alternatives); and fear for using the original names, obviously tracking from childhood and societal high moral standards. One of the respondents who prefers to call the vagina “heaven’s well” specifically observes that “many people are afraid to call the vagina its real name”. Equally important is respect for the organs. In the words of a respondent, “For the Yoruba, there is a lot of respect for reproductive organs in human kind”. Hence, he prefers “prick” for “penis” to avoid, in line with the marked influence of his socialisation process on him, using the original name.

The third constraint on the use of metaphors in this category is the consideration of the original names as taboos. This agrees with Crespo Fernández’s (2008) semi-lexicalised category of euphemisms. The views expressed on this include the fact that calling the female organ “vagina” “is usually regarded as a taboo word”; “that it is a taboo to mention the private part [note the self-restriction here] instead they say “private part”; and that they are used “to hide private organ [sic] because they should not be mentioned openly”. The examples provided by the respondents include: “pussy”, “cunt”, “Congo” and “pekus” for the vagina; “rod” for the penis and “toto” for the vagina.

5.2.2 *Personality and group constraints*

Sometimes, metaphors are constrained by the personality of the users and the sub-culture of the group they belong to. In order to retain their membership in the group, the users operate with certain group-restricted, coded metaphors for sexual organs. Two conceptual metaphors in this class are: THE ORGAN IS TASTY and THE ORGAN IS A PIT/OPENING.

The metaphor, THE ORGAN IS TASTY, applies to the penis, the vagina and the women’s breasts. The cognitive processing derives from the pleasure associated with sex. The metaphors for the parts are coined from four categories of names: names of fruits, names of sweetening elements, names of pleasure-tagged activities and names of refreshment items. The table below captures these categories with their examples:

Table 5. Tastiness of the Organ

	Fruits	Sweetening Elements	Pleasure-tagged activities	Refreshment items
Penis	Sweet banana, banana	lolly pop, sugar stick	Toitoi	–
Vagina	Adam’s apple, sweet banana, orange, tomato	Honey well, honey pot, salt of life	–	Doughnut
Women’s breasts	Orange, sweet banana, apple, sweet, pawpaw, banana, apple juice, two oranges	Milk	–	–

Many of the words /names in Table 5 belong to those of fruits and sweetening elements, while single, few instances are found in each of the other two categories. This points to the fact that pleasure is associated with the organs, and each is likened to the taste enjoyed in the fruits and sweetened/sweetening elements. This eating concept as a site for the metaphorisation of sexual organs has been discussed in the literature (cf. Allan & Burridge, 2006; Crespo Fernández, 2008).

It is interesting to note that the elements, even though are similar or the same, are largely used to indicate/pick out different things. For example, in “penis”, the primary image is that of the shape which resembles that of banana, especially when uncovered. The secondary image is the sweetness or tastiness. In “vagina” and “breasts”, only the secondary image is engaged to underscore the pleasure derived from the organs. “Adam’s apple”, “orange” and “tomato”, in “vagina”, take off from the secondary image to index enjoyment, while “apple (juice)”, “(two) orange(s)”, and “pawpaw” utilise both the primary and secondary images. The primary image identifies the shape and varying sizes of women’s breasts, and the secondary one the pleasure attached to sexual intercourse.

In terms of use, it is more common to have either sex engage the items in discourse with the other. But it is also observed that the words are used in intra-gender discourses. Hence, expressions like the following are found in NE:

- (1) I like her *oranges*.
- (2) Do you mean my *apple juice*?
- (3) Na real *sweet banana*
(It is a sweet banana indeed).

The phrase “sweet banana” came into Nigerian English through the linguistic innovation of the Nigerian popular musician, Sunday Adeniyi (King Sunny Ade). In his album entitled “Sweet Banana” (1986), he has the dialogue:

Lead/Vocal: What do you desire? What do you have under?

Chorus: sweet banana,

where the lead/vocal represents the male voice, and the chorus, the female voice. Of his two coinages here “have under” and “sweet banana”, the latter catches on and gains popularity in NE, while the former, also referring to the vagina, remained a nonce word.

Metaphors derived from sweetening/sweetened elements are formed from sugar, honey and milk. For the penis, both “lolly pop” (made of sugary contents) and “sugar stick” utilise both the primary and secondary images. At the primary level, the shape of the penis is identified by that of each of “lolly pop” and “stick”, and at the secondary level, the taste, signifying sexual pleasure, is marked. For the vagina, “honey well” and “honey pot” bear both the primary and secondary image as the containment i.e. an opening in the body is signaled by ‘well’ and ‘pot’, and the enjoyment by “honey”. At the same time, relative depth, perhaps signifying different levels of attraction and satisfaction, is indicated by “well” and “pot”. In “salt of life”, only the secondary image is signified i.e. the pleasure. For the breasts, “milk” utilises primary and secondary images. Maternity, or potential maternity, milk is marked at the primary image level, while at the secondary one, the taste i.e. romantic enjoyment is indicated.

In the third column on the table, “toitoi”, an onomatopoeic coinage from the sound believed, by some young men, to be produced by female partners during sexual intercourse, and which is believed to be caused by the action of the penis, is associated with pleasure-tagged activities. Its arbitrariness (in the Nigerian context, although a German word) gives it more value, for the secondary than the primary image, to refer to the enjoyment of sex. In the last column, where we have “doughnut” for the vagina, only the secondary image is evoked as it points to the enjoyment gained by the male sex partner.

Only the vagina occupies the space of THE ORGAN IS A PIT/OPENING. The metaphoric descriptions here are used to capture the varying sizes and depths of the female sexual organ. Some of these terms simply describe the organ as an opening. The table below provides details:

In Table 6, the different metaphors index personal experiences of individuals and the attitudes of these to the female sexual organ, thus fitting well with van Dijk’s mental models at the level of the individual. As shown on the table, some of the respondents see the vagina as a deep point in the body. “Hole”, “bore-hole” ‘well’, and “inner thing” variously indicate this depth. Also, the vagina is conceived

Table 6. Vagina as a Pit/Opening

Vagina as a Deep Point	Vagina as a Wide Opening	Vagina as Dug Point
Hole, bore-hole,	Congo, labia	Peckus, pigeonhole
Well, inner thing	Wet valley	Cut

as a wide opening. This is marked by the choices: “Congo”, “labia” and “wet valley”. “Congo” [*Kongo*] is a loan word from Yoruba, which refers to the small bowl used in measuring cereals for sale in Yoruba (and Nigerian) markets. “Labia” is a borrowing from English phonetics, standing for “lips” and, in the context of NE, indicating the wideness of the female sexual organ (like the lips). “Wet valley” is innovatively used to also mark the vagina as a wide opening. The additional quality added here is the wetness which brings in the emotion of the user.

The last category points to the vagina as a point in the body penetrated through an object. This brings an interaction between the object and the container. “Peckus” is a coinage from the Standard English euphemistic term “pecker”: “the penis; literally, an instrument for making a hole by pecking (Holder, 1995, p. 276). “Peckus”, in NE, now becomes that which is pecked, i.e. the pecked/pecking site, ultimately opened up. “Pigeon hole”, usually chiseled through, is likened to the female sexual organ in NE as an opening in the female body. The last, “cut”, simply picks out a slight opening when compared to all the items on the metaphor of “vagina” as a pit/opening.

Respondents here largely see the metaphor as appearing in peer communication, which is largely coded. Hence, except those that have been long in use, a good number of the items are private and are intelligible only within a social group. Items like “reason”, “thing”, “zip up”, “kego”, etc. for “vagina”, “penis” and “breasts” are so arbitrary that the actual physical context and intended meaning would be needed for the items to be decoded.

Generally, metaphors of sexual organs in NE are more frequent with the youth than with the adults. Their uses are therefore more in informal than formal communication in which, apart from transacting information, humour or aesthetics may be intended. Some respondents agree that a word like “oranges” for “breasts” is used in a jocular context, while words like “yansh”, “backyard”, “behind”, “backside” and “Ikebe” for buttocks are used to “conjure useful images in the mind of the people” i.e. for aesthetic purposes. The items are thus deliberate, largely class-constrained choices made by the youth for certain age-restrained effects, and are sometimes lexicalised, except where a taboo is observed.

6. Conclusion

I have shown in my analysis and discussions that Nigerian university students, representing the educated Nigerian youth, employ 14 conceptual metaphors in talking about sexual organs. These metaphors portray two ideological issues: the institutionalisation of gender perception and religious, social and cultural allegiances of the users. From these broad categories have emerged respectively the uses of sex-related metaphors to reflect gender-based cultural disapproval to serve as gender dignifying tokens and to demonstrate gender valuation; and to show morality/ decency constraints and personality/ social group constraints.

The ideological basis of the employment of these metaphors has been connected with socialisation patterns, societal values and group preferences which have necessitated the users' resorting to euphemistic metaphors as a cognitive key to communicating both in a society that legislates against the use of the original names of sexual organs and in micro-social groups where identities are marked with the ability to use and understand the euphemistic expressions. This confirms Van Dijk's (2001) concept of ideologies as socio-cultural knowledge and evaluative assumptions, and incorporates his mental models which provide sufficient interactive and communicative background knowledge for successful verbal interactions. Ultimately, what is gathered is that the euphemistic expressions are largely available in the Nigerian stock of English, which is yet to be codified with its own dictionary. This means that an average user of English in Nigeria needs the knowledge of the culture and some social group-controlled background information to understand the meanings of the expressions.

Further studies could explore metaphors used by other social and professional groups in Nigeria, such as the military, the police, factory workers and others who have the tendencies to discuss sex on a greater scale. In the long run, the findings would be useful in a lexicographic documentation of both a Nigerian English dictionary in general and a dictionary of NE euphemisms in particular.

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