# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations ......................................................................................................................................................... ii
Preface ........................................................................................................................................................................ ii
Introduction .................................................................................................................................................................. 1
Sources ........................................................................................................................................................................ 1
Spelling ........................................................................................................................................................................ 1
Nigerian English/West African English .......................................................................................................................... 1
Pidgin versus Nigerian English ........................................................................................................................................... 1
Auxiliaries ....................................................................................................................................................................... 2
Student slang .................................................................................................................................................................. 2
Pronunciation spellings .................................................................................................................................................... 2
Re-interpretation of pidgin .................................................................................................................................................. 3
Style versus substance ....................................................................................................................................................... 3
From NE to SE ................................................................................................................................................................. 4
Spelling pronunciation ...................................................................................................................................................... 4
Missionary English ......................................................................................................................................................... 4
Scientific names, and trade names ......................................................................................................................................... 4
Regional variation ............................................................................................................................................................... 4
Phonology ........................................................................................................................................................................... 5
Parts of Speech ................................................................................................................................................................. 5
References .......................................................................................................................................................................... 6
B ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 2
C ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 5
D ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 7
E ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 9
F ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 9
G ....................................................................................................................................................................................... 10
H ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 12
I ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 13
J ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 14
K ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 14
L ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 15
M ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 16
N ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 18
O ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 18
P ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 19
Q ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 22
R ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 22
S ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 23
T ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 25
U ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 27
V ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 27
W ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 27
X ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 28
Y ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 28
Z ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 28
Numbers ............................................................................................................................................................................ 29
Abbreviations

AE  African English  
Amer.  American (for Americanisms)  
arch.  archaic  
dial.  dialect  
et.  etymologically  
euph.  euphemism  
fig.  figurative  
hum.  humorous  
id.  idiom  
ideo.  ideophone  
ins.  insulting  
joc.  jocular  
lit.  literally  
NE  Nigerian English  
NNE  Northern Nigerian English  
SE  Standard English  
SNE  Southern Nigerian English  
sc. sl.  schoolboy slang  
st. sl.  student slang  
TE  Tropical English

Preface

This dictionary of Nigerian English was stimulated by some enquiries from the Oxford English Dictionary on words of putative West African origin. The OED faces an increasingly uphill struggle in its attempts to capture World English; almost every Anglophone country has now developed a set of distinctive uses, some more divergent than others. It is surprising, however, that Nigerian English has never been the subject of a published dictionary; rumours abound of mighty manuscripts, but these have yet to see the light of day. A recent publication by Igboanusi goes some way towards remedying this deficiency but the inclusion here of many words not in his dictionary indicates how much work is still to be done.

The present manuscript is a draft of a document that will eventually, I hope, become a collective product. I doubt that one individual could produce anything very comprehensive; Nigeria is too diverse and regionalised. But it seems sensible to lay down an initial marker; then additions can be made. I am circulating this to individuals I know have an interest; but please send any further information, comments, emendations etc. to the email or address given on the title page.

Roger Blench  
Cambridge  
Sunday, 07 August 2005
Introduction

These notes are intended to raise some issues on sources, interpretation and the definition of Nigerian English.

Sources

One of the most difficult issues in lexicography is documenting usages in a semi-written language. If dictionaries of indigenous African languages are prepared they usually depend entirely on oral sources and thus no specific justification is given for entries. However, Nigerian English is sometimes written, especially in newspapers and magazines, and thus has some sort of orthographic tradition. Nonetheless, many of the most picturesque expressions are strictly oral and must still be captured in the present document. Although previous studies in this direction have tended to cite novels or literary works (notably Jowitt 1991) these are sometimes unrepresentative of the spoken language. I have therefore used newspaper, notices and overheard speech as sources. Example sentences not specifically sourced should be treated as based on the author’s or his correspondents’ experiences.

Spelling

Nigerian English is printed regularly in the newspapers and since much of it consists of using SE in extended senses spelling is generally not a problem. Some forms of pidgin origin such as ‘done’ have conventional representations, e.g. ‘don’. However, others, such as ‘rubber’ are pronounced in a variety of forms, such as ṛọba, ṛọba etc. depending on sociolinguistic considerations. To capture this, I have written phonologised pronunciations in square brackets after head entry. Thus;

leather [lɛda]

Nigerian /Ghanaian/ West African English

One of the more surprising things about Nigerian English is the extent to which it has a common lexicon and grammar with other West African Englishes, notably Ghanaian. A guide to Ghanaian English (Kirby 1998) provides an interesting comparison with the present document and parallel forms are noted. I have less information about Cameroun, Sierra Leone and Gambia and would welcome further insights. However, the puzzle is the history of some of these forms. Do they go back to the early days of colonial presence on the coast or are they more recent products of the massive migration of Ghanaians to Nigeria during the oil-boom era of the 1970s and 1980s? Probably both, but only a detailed scanning of earlier sources will provide answers.

Pidgin versus Nigerian English

Nigerian English is regarded as distinct from Pidgin English, although the exact location of the boundary between them differs from speaker to speaker. Some expressions are regarded as strictly Pidgin, for example pickin for ‘child’ and sabi for ‘to know’. I have thought it best to be quite inclusive, but no doubt some of the entries will be questioned.

1 Thanks to Philip and Vicky Ostien and especially to Kay Williamson for many useful suggestions.

2 Prof. Mary Esther Kropp-Dakubu of Legon University has kindly gone through the draft text and marked all those entries which also have parallels in Ghanaian English.
Auxiliaries

Often the distinctiveness of Nigerian verbs in use consists of unusual auxiliaries applied to conventional verbs. Some of these are as follows;

done

he done go  he went [Pidgin!]

got

the thing got spoiled
the water got finished

has

he has go  he went [just imperfect learning, not standard]

use to

he use to come here  he comes here regularly [back formation from used to]

Student slang

Schools and universities are good but extremely localised sources of slang; Ibadan University in particular seems to have been an important source of unusual expressions. Indeed a small book was published of these expressions when Ibadan was the only university (Opara & Oleghe 1956). Asomugha (1981) began life as a compendium of student slang but was enlarged to take in some more mainstream Nigerian English expressions. Such expressions are often highly localised in time and place; few expressions mentioned in this book appear to be still in use. Where a term seems to be student slang I have noted it; this is a rich and distinct field. Kay Williamson (p.c.) has supplied a number of expressions currently (2002) in use in the University of Port Harcourt, but it is difficult to know how widespread these are.

Tropical English

There are numerous terms which may be termed ‘Tropical English’; unknown to most speakers of SE, they are nonetheless not specific to Nigeria, but are nonetheless widely used across the Anglophone tropics. This is very common in pan-tropical plants, for example ‘oil-palm’ or ‘yam-mound’. I have marked these in the text as TE.

Pronunciation spellings

These are spellings which arise because two English words are pronounced alike by Nigerians and the two spellings, which reflect different pronunciations for SE speakers, get confused or treated as equivalent. Most are nonce-forms, but the following examples are typical.
She feels her life to be **sleeping** away from her finger. SE [slɪpɪŋ] and [sliːpɪŋ] merge as NE [slipin]

He is well **vast** in the Igbo proverbs.

…to **deep** his hand in the bag

… capable of performing impossible **fits**

She turned out to develop cold **fit** for the husband when the going became bad.

Nigerians from all **works** of life …

**Pack** your car here.

**laddle**

Source: Kay Williamson

---

**Portmanteau words**

The portmanteau word, first introduced by Lewis Carroll as a humorous excursus of Humpty-Dumpty, is a lexical reality in Nigeria. Two sound-alikes are combined into a single form as the following examples show;

**impressionario** is a common written form of impressario, presumably a portmanteau form ‘impressario’ + ‘impression’

**virgina** common spelling of **vagina** presumably by re-interpretation from **virgin**

**Re-interpretation of Pidgin**

An interesting process is the movement from Pidgin back into Nigerian English through relexicalisation. For example;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pidgin</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>de ting no gree boil</td>
<td>the kettle did not agree to boil</td>
<td>the liquid will not boil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the kettle won’t boil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pidgin expression is primary and it has been re-expressed by a speaker who sees the second formulation as more prestigious.

**Style versus substance**

The most comprehensive sources for Nigerian English prior to this are Jowitt (1991) and Igboanusi (2002). When native English speakers try to characterise Nigerian English it is clear that their personal perceptions play an important role in determining which lexical items or usages are distinctive. For example, Nigerian newspapers often use the stereotyped expression ‘men of the underworld’ to refer to criminals. This would be unlikely to occur in a current British newspaper, and has an archaic or jocular feel to it. Still, it is perfectly comprehensible to a speaker of standard English and the component words show no significant lexical deviation from their normal meanings. Contrast this with ‘area-boys’, also referring to criminals, which would have no meaning to a speaker of Standard English. Thus, although I have carefully been through the previous sources, I have excluded many entries that seem to be matters of style rather than true lexical difference.
From NE to SE

A similar process occurs where NE is being relexicalised to SE by certain speakers. Generally speaking, the newspapers, formerly a great source of NE expressions, have become closer to SE since the 1980s, almost certainly due to greater exposure to SE forms through the dissemination of news magazines such as Time and Newsweek. For example; ‘hotel’ is commonly applied to bars and drinking places that serve food but may have no lodging and ‘hotel’ in the SE sense is ‘guest hotel’. But modern usage is gradually replacing this so that NE is coming to conform to SE.

Spelling pronunciation

Nigerian English has one or two distinctive spelling-pronunciations, the most characteristic of which is to always pronounce written ‘ch’ as /tʃ/ even when Standard English has /ʃ/. Two common examples are the personal name Charlotte, where /tʃarlət/ is heard in place of /ʃarlət/ and ‘chalet’, pronounced /tʃælət/ rather than /ʃælət/. The second syllable of ‘chalet’ case illustrates another example of spelling pronunciation, but this is in turn a loanword into English.

Missionary English

I have marked some entries ME, ‘Missionary English’. Missionaries seem to have been responsible for some particular usages that were propagated via church materials. These include pejorative terms for traditional religion such as ‘idol’, ‘fetish’ and ‘juju’, but also a series of terms for animals, assimilating indigenous West African animals to those found in Europe and north America. These include ‘fox’ for genet and ‘rabbit’ for giant rat. [Many of the early missionaries were of Sierra Leonean rather than European origin; possibly some of these are due to their interpretations of English words.]

Scientific names, and trade names

In the early colonial era, when many new species were coming to scientific attention and the uses of those known botanically were also being explored, many West African vernacular names were developed, notably for timbers and for economic grasses. These were used in colonial literature but with a few exceptions never really entered West African speech and are rarely heard today. For example, the African olive, Canarium schweinfurthii, is called the ‘bush-candle’ in older literature. Charming and evocative as this name is, I have never heard it in current speech and perhaps it was only ever used by forestry officers in the colonial era. I have entered such forms sparingly, pending further evidence of their context of use. Nonetheless, there are a great many names for the timbers of Nigerian trees that are used, although in the specialised context of the timber trade. Some of these are Nigerian, used in the West African region and some have become international trade names. I have adopted the entries from FMI (1964) sometimes updated with reference to Burkhill (1985 ff.).

Regional variation

There is considerable regional variation in NE, most notably between north and south, but also east and west. The lexicon presented in Igboanusi (2002) for example, is rich in Yoruba and Igbo terms, but omits many terms from the North, the Delta and Calabar. The presence of large communities of migrants, especially in urban areas somewhat blurs these distinctions but nonetheless it is possible to assign some terms to specific areas of the country. I have marked these where known, but considerable further work is required. There also seem to be quite a large number of terms local to the Niger Delta, often reflecting its specialised environment and history.
It is not yet clear whether it would be reasonable to say NE has a phonology. Borrowings from indigenous languages in different regions import phonemes that are alien to English. For example, the labial-velars, /kp/ and /gb/ are found in SNE in loans but are generally absent from NNE, as are the items they denote. An interesting further issue is the presence of tone. Some exclamations clearly have contrastive tone, typically High-Low;

òóò tag placed at the beginning of sentences, following the assertion of a previous speaker indicating negative consequences

but lexical tone appears to have little functional role in other parts of the vocabulary.

### Parts of Speech

The following table shows the abbreviations used in Column 2 of the dictionary. Some of these assignations should be regarded as highly provisional.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full form</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td>Describes a noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.p.</td>
<td>Adjectival phrase</td>
<td>Describes a noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adv.</td>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>Qualifies a verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adv.p.</td>
<td>Adverbial phrase</td>
<td>Qualifies a verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cond.</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>Expresses the relation between two events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conj.</td>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>A word used to join two or more nouns, verbs or clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dem.</td>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
<td>Words used to point out something, 'this', 'that' etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excl.</td>
<td>Exclamation</td>
<td>Greetings or expressions that do not form part of an ordinary sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>int.</td>
<td>Interrogative</td>
<td>Question words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Refers to things, objects etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.p.</td>
<td>Noun phrase</td>
<td>Phrase where a head-noun is joined to other words to form an expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>num.</td>
<td>Numeral</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part.</td>
<td>Particle</td>
<td>Short words added to complete the sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.n.</td>
<td>Proper Name</td>
<td>A name of a person or object; always capitalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p.u.t.</td>
<td>Pre-utterance tag</td>
<td>A tag or exclamation used prior to an utterance to indicate the underlying sense of the utterance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prep.</td>
<td>Preposition</td>
<td>A word positioning nouns or verbs in time or space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron.</td>
<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>A word that stands for a noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sal.</td>
<td>Salutation</td>
<td>A word or phrase that stands alone as a greeting or introduces a dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.t.</td>
<td>Sentence tag</td>
<td>A word or clause standing at the end of a sentence, that intensifies the meaning in some way but is unnecessary to the syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>Expresses action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.aux.</td>
<td>Verbal auxiliary</td>
<td>An inflected verb that co-occurs with an uninflected main verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.c.</td>
<td>Verbal complement</td>
<td>Additional word or words found in phrasal verbs [???]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.i.</td>
<td>Intransitive Verb</td>
<td>A verb with no object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.n.</td>
<td>Verbal Noun</td>
<td>A noun formed directly from a verb to express a state of being [only one type; what of agentives?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.p.</td>
<td>Verb phrase</td>
<td>A phrase where a head-noun is joined to other words to form an expression [head-noun or verb?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.t.</td>
<td>Transitive verb</td>
<td>A verb with an object</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References

Asomugha, C.N.C.?.. *A pocket dictionary of selected Nigerian student slangs.* ?? [referred to in the following entry but not seen]


Ukpabio, Mercy U. 1985 *Students’ Language on Campus.* Calabar: Dept of Languages and Linguistics, University of Calabar undergraduate long essay.
A. Abi? s.t. Sentence tag meaning ‘Don’t you agree?’, Isn’t that right? Corresponds to Hausa Ko?
about prep. just, about to I’m about leaving.
abroad n. as in SE, but also refers to being away from home area We love ourselves abroad
We have good relations with other people from our home area when away from it [quoted in Trager, 2001, Yoruba Hometowns]
abuna n. lit. Hausa ‘thing’ but often used jocularly for penis
abura n. timber tree Mitragyna stipulosa
abuse n. insult it is an abuse it is an insult GE
abuse v. to insult that boy abused him well-well the other man insulted him a great deal GE
acada n. academe, academic work, studies student slang
acha n. cereal, fonio, Digitaria exilis < Hausa. Only grown in the Middle Belt
achaba n. motor-cycle taxi < Hausa. Only in Northern towns. cf. okada
Act of God n. tin trunk painted in black and red SNE. Outdated expression used by schoolboys in the 1970s.
Actually! excl. exclamation of strong agreement State government has many people chopping money. Actually!
ad v.i. to add s.t. to s.t. Add more! typically heard in a restaurant, when the diner wants more porridge or stew
adire n. traditional tie-dyed indigo cloth < Yoruba
Afara n. Trade-name for Terminalia superba also GE
African nutmeg n. tree sp. with edible nut Monodora myristica WAE.
African olive n. fruit of Canarium schweinfurthii which closely resembles the European olive
African salad n. any combination of green vegetables
African time n.p. jocular way of referring to the typically casual approach to punctuality characteristic of Nigeria not African time, please! Please be punctual! AE
after adv. later Some time after
again s.t. intensifier We will go to the market, again does not mean for a second time, but simply intensifies the expression. I have no money again similarly. Jowitt (1991:154) compares to p.u.t.s in Hausa kuma, Igbo ozo and Yoruba mo.
agbada n. man’s long robe < Yoruba
agree v.i. to want to, but also applied to inanimate objects the kettle did not agree to boil
agric a. any crop or livestock variety introduced by the agricultural services. Sometimes also applied to implements.
These agric beans do not taste well or He bought an agric plough
akamu n. porridge type with chewy lumps in it served in the morning in the North < Hausa Yoruba?
akara n. fried bean-cake < Yoruba. Now widespread in many languages. GE
alhaja n. technically any woman who has been on a pilgrimage to Mecca, but often used as a title of respect
alhaji p.n. technically any male who has been on a pilgrimage to Mecca, but often used as a title of respect, or as shorthand for a businessman of Northern aspect The alhajis have bought up all the petrol Used ironically to imply a class of crooked businessmen. GE
all what n.p. everything I believe all what you say GE
alligator n. crocodile
Regularly used to distinguish the Dwarf crocodile Osteolaemus tetraspis from the Nile crocodile niloticus. (BBC news item 17.07.2002 reported a cargo of live Dwarf Crocodiles intercepted at Heathrow on their way from Nigeria to Japan, saying that they were falsely described as alligators.)
alligator pepper n. Malagueta pepper, Aframomum melegueta. A ground-fruiting plant with spicy seeds still widely used as a condiment but no longer exported to Europe. ‘Alligator’ for ‘Malagueta’ seems to be either a mishearing or a folk-etymology
almanac n. large coloured wall-poster usually showing photos of members of a club, association, football team etc. often with small calendar inserted pointing to its original function
altar n. rack for drying fish or keeping utensils, etc., in kitchen
amala n. black food made from yam-flour with ground yam skin incorporated < Yoruba
ami(n)go  n. white man  
Amigo! is shouted at foreigners in the southeast of Nigeria. In Bonny in the form amíngo. Presumably connected with the Spanish presence in Equatorial Guinea or former trade by Spanish in the Bonny area.

among  adv. implies ‘among the group previously referred to’  
they are among the group we are talking about

amount  n. usually short for ‘amount of money’ but occasionally applied to other things previously referred to  
he gave me some amount he gave me some money

-an  suff. ending to indicate the inhabitant of a particular state  
Kwaran, Bayelsan

and co.  n.p. refers to sets of matching cloths made for families, age-grades, associations etc.  
they are sewing and co. for the wedding

anini  n. now long-disused coin, originally one-tenth of a penny, but symbolising something of very low value like the English farthing gained additional currency in the early 1990s due to a notorious bank-robber [armed robber] nicknamed Lawrence Anini

answer  v. to respond to a call or command, but not a question, to be named he answers Obi he is called Obi GE

anyhow  s.t. placed at the end of a sentence to suggest ‘indiscriminately’  
the children were playing in the garden, anyhow GE

anyway  p.u.t. Placed before a sentence to tone down or mitigate the implications of a previous statement or question

Apollo  n. eye-infection  
So named because it first appeared at the time of the Apollo 11 moonshot

applicant  n. unemployed person who is supposed to be applying for jobs  
he is an applicant [unemployed school-leaver]

area-boy  n. young man without a job who engages in criminal acts, usually in gangs in towns

arts  n. usually commercial painting particularly trucks and signs  
art by Laranto Arts, Jos commonly seen on back of trucks

art-work  n. work of art can be pluralised, i.e. art-works

aso-oke (1)  n. heavy type of cloth  
The designers...spared no details with aso-oke  

aso-oke (2)  n. practice of a family all wearing the same type of cloth  
Husband and wife were wearing aso oke < Yoruba aṣo oke

Aso rock  p.n. inselberg adjoining Presidential villa in Abuja, hence a symbol of power and decision-making

assignment  n. homework, student essays, projects etc. they give us too many assignments almost certainly borrowed from American English, perhaps in the era when the Peace Corps taught in secondary schools in the 1960s

at all  s.t. Emphasises absence or negativity  
people were not enjoying, at all GE.

At all!  excl. A common standalone response to a negative question or one expecting a negative answer.  
Is this man here? response At all!

attachment  n. additional hair sewn on to owner’s hair, less subtle than weavon

August break  n.p. dry spell in rainy season from late July to August  
SNE

aunty  n. term of respect used by children [younger person] to address adult women has become very common since 1980s) Sim. uncle

automatically  adv. as a matter of course  
now he is elected Governor, automatically he will chop money

ayo  n. mancala, board game  < Yoruba

B.

baba  n. any old man older than speaker, term of respect also papa. widespread term for ‘father’ corresponding to mama for older woman

bacha  n. temporary shed or building CE in Africa? [TE, also in Asia]

back  v. to carry a baby on the back  
In America they don’t back their babies as we do here

back  v. to turn one’s back on  
I just backed him and pretended not to see him

back, at my  adv.p. behind  
He was standing at my back

bad bush  n. place where people who die abnormal deaths are buried or thrown away  
SNE

bag  n. originally a fifty-kilo jute bag but now commonly used for hundred Naira a bag of money = 100 pounds = 200 naira  [I doubt if this is the bag originally referred to! I
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Dictionary of Nigerian English</strong></th>
<th><strong>Circulation Draft</strong></th>
<th><strong>Roger Blench</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>have thought (but not checked) it was a bag of cowries as an old standard size</td>
<td>rain will beat you GE. also used for rain, even when it is falling softly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bag</strong> v.t. to get, especially position, degree or award</td>
<td>bedsheets n. sheets I will put bedsheets for you I’ll put sheets on your bed GE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adamu has bagged the governorship, He has bagged an M.A. Archaic English sporting terminology. Also in Indian English.</td>
<td><strong>been-to</strong> n. s.o. who has ‘been-to’ Europe or America this been-to is now a big man GE. perhaps now becoming archaic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>balance</strong> n. change (for purchase)</td>
<td><strong>Beetle</strong> p.n. Volkswagen car I get Beetle GE. Volkswagens were made in Nigeria and imported from Brazil long after they disappeared in Europe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>balance</strong> v.t. to give change I will balance you fifty Naira I must give you fifty Naira change GE.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>balance</strong> v.i. standing or sitting complacently, apparently unconcerned about anything (used of a person, possibly also of an animal) See her just balancing there feeling cool about herself GE.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bambara nut</strong> n. Bambara groundnut, Vigna subterranea TE.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bamboo</strong> n. midrib of palm frond. Also applied to bamboo proper, though this may be called ‘Indian bamboo’ to distinguish it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bandy</strong> v.t. to bandy about I have no time to bandy with them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>baobab</strong> n. baobab tree Adansonia digitata. TE.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>barb</strong> v.t. to cut s.o.’s hair She is barbing him Back-formation from barber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>barbing salon</strong> n.p. hairdressing salon Viable small businesses ... are mostly in such trades as hair dressing and barbing salons, tailoring shops as well as “pure water” packaging businesses. (Guardian 11.10.02 p. 22, col. 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bath</strong> n. any type of whole-body washing, most often with a bucket Have you taken your bath? GE.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bath</strong> v.i. to wash the whole body by any method Do you want to bathe? GE.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bature</strong> n. white man shouted at foreigners in northern Nigeria. Also sometimes applied jocularly to albinos. &lt;Hausa be for v.p. to have, to possess this moto is for you this is your car</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>be with</strong> v.p. to have, to possess it is with him he has it GE.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>beans</strong> n. cowpeas Vigna unguiculata</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>beat</strong> v.t. to strike, hit [but not necessarily violently], to fall [rain] If you do that again I am going to beat you. I’m going to beat you [but could be just a token blow] Take care or</td>
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<td><strong>be for</strong> v.p. to have, to possess this moto is for you this is your car</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bomboy</strong></td>
<td>sal. form of address to plump and healthy [male] child. Also used to refer to a child, e.g. How is Bomboy?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>born-again</strong></td>
<td>n. born-again Christian, a fundamentalist type of Christian who rejects all compromise with other religions. According to the predilections of the speaker this can be a simple description or extremely scornful. GE. N.B. can have a plural ‘born-agains’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>borrow</strong></td>
<td>v.t. to lend Borrow me this money</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bottom</strong></td>
<td>a. worst But it’s the bottom men that make the leader the worst men become leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bottom power</strong></td>
<td>n. influence gained by a woman or homosexual through sexual favours</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>boy</strong></td>
<td>n. any male GE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>boy</strong></td>
<td>n. house-servant GE. orig. from Hindi <em>bhai</em> ‘servant’ but re-analysed as English ‘boy’, hence its counterpart ‘girl’ (q.v.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>boys’ quarters</strong></td>
<td>n.p. usually a row of small rooms behind a large house where house-servants or younger relatives live GE. Abbreviated to BQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>branch</strong></td>
<td>v.i. to turn aside, to divert to (when on the way to somewhere else) I am going to branch at his house GE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bread</strong></td>
<td>n. one Naira give me ten bread! the fall in the value of the Naira has meant that this is now of limited use, but used for ‘money’ in general. It may always have been mainly student slang. prob. cognate with SE ‘bread’ for money.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>breadfruit</strong></td>
<td>n. edible fruit TE. <em>Artocarpus communis</em> J.R. and G. Forst.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>breadnut</strong></td>
<td>n. edible fruit TE. <em>Artocarpus communis</em> J.R. and G. Forst. Contrasts with <em>breadfruit</em> – no central stone</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bring</strong></td>
<td>v.t. to turn back on [electricity] <em>NEPA has brought light again</em> GE.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bring</strong></td>
<td>v.t. to hand over [usu. money] <em>Bring money!</em> A common conclusion to a bargaining session.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>brideprice</strong></td>
<td>n. payment by a man to the parents of his wife at marriage or before technical anthropological term, but also in common use in Nigeria TE.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>brocade</strong></td>
<td>n. type of cloth q.v. guinea brocade</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>broken</strong></td>
<td>n. short for Broken English (q.v.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Broken English</strong></td>
<td>n.p. pidgin English in contrast to ‘Queen’s English’ (q.v.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>brother</strong></td>
<td>n. actual brother or male of the same generation in an extended family. Applied by extension to those of a comparable status in ethnicity religion, politics etc.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>brother dash me</strong></td>
<td>n.p. hand-me-down, clothes passed on from another generation of a family</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>buba</strong></td>
<td>n. loose blouse &lt; Yoruba</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>buka</strong></td>
<td>n. street restaurant &lt; Hausa</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>buketeria</strong></td>
<td>n. street restaurant [Humorous blend of <em>buka</em> + <em>cafe</em>teria]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bullet</strong></td>
<td>n. small screwed-up piece of paper flung across an exam hall containing answers to questions st. sl., used in University of Port Harcourt but there may be alternative forms in other universities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bun</strong></td>
<td>n. any small soft cake</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>burst out</strong></td>
<td>v.p. to come out onto take this bush track and you will burst out onto the Onitsha road (esp. roads or rivers)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush</strong></td>
<td>n. uncultivated land, usually open savanna AE. In originally forest areas, woodland</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush a. rustic, uncouth GE.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush-burning</strong></td>
<td>n. preparation of land for farming by burning weeds/scrub TE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush-cat</strong></td>
<td>n. any wild felid GE.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush-candle</strong></td>
<td>n. tree, <em>Canarium schweinfurthii</em> so-called because the oil can be used in lamps. Colonial-era expression no longer in use</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush-cow</strong></td>
<td>n. buffalo, <em>Syncerus caffer</em> GE.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush-dog</strong></td>
<td>n. civet-cat SNE only</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bushfire</strong></td>
<td>n. uncontrolled savanna/bush burning in the dry season TE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush greens</strong></td>
<td>n. any green vegetable used in soup that is gathered from the bush</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bushman</strong></td>
<td>n. unsophisticated person <em>He is a bushman!</em> he doesn’t know city ways GE.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush-lamp</strong></td>
<td>n. kerosene lantern In the rickety wooden huts of Tselekwu, kerosine bush lamps fight a losing battle to dispel some of the pervasive darkness. (Guardian 11.10.02, p.22, col. 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>bush-mango</strong></td>
<td>n. tree and its fruit much prized for use in soup <em>Irvingia gabonensis</em> [cf. <em>ọgbonọ</em>]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term (lowercase)</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>bushmeat n.</td>
<td>any meat from a hunted animal. GE. often served in special restaurants, and in bushmeat soup</td>
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<tr>
<td>bushmeat n.</td>
<td>female visitor from the town, as opposed to the campus/hostels; considered less sophisticated than female students</td>
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<tr>
<td>bush-pig n.</td>
<td>wild pig, usually Sus but can apply to Phacochoerus or Potamochoerus porcus Red River Hog in SNE.</td>
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<tr>
<td>bush-taxi n.</td>
<td>car or pickup that travels along back roads taking passengers</td>
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<tr>
<td>buttered a.</td>
<td>with butter in, not spread on bread</td>
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<tr>
<td>butcher v.t.</td>
<td>to cut up (any dead animal) He is butchering the fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>by a. exactly at (time)</td>
<td>not ‘in the period up to’ He arrived by 2 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. call card n.</td>
<td>visiting card</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>camp, to v.i.</td>
<td>to hire a room in a hotel or elsewhere and keep it for the purpose of entertaining male visitors for money through formal or informal prostitution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>camp v.i. (usu. in passive)</td>
<td>stay in a group in temporary simple accommodation while on a visit for a purpose We were camped in the student hostels while attending the NUGA games.</td>
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<tr>
<td>can v. to like [in relation to food]</td>
<td>Can you eat that type of food? Do you like that type of food?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>can v. to want to</td>
<td>Can you take your bath now? i.e. do you want to take a bath now?</td>
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<tr>
<td>cane-rope n.</td>
<td>rattan-palm or the fibre derived from it Calamus deeratus</td>
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<tr>
<td>canteen n.</td>
<td>supermarket or large grocery store now archaic, as SE supermarket has replaced it, but a colonial-era expression. Borrowed into Hausa</td>
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<tr>
<td>card n.</td>
<td>fish-drying rack this type of fish they put on card</td>
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<tr>
<td>carelessly adv.</td>
<td>anyhow (but used with stative verbs) she was sitting there carelessly she was sitting there in an inappropriate position</td>
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<tr>
<td>case n.</td>
<td>misunderstanding, big problem This thing is a big case now!</td>
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<tr>
<td>cash-madam n.</td>
<td>large-scale woman trader, generally in the south this cash-madam is too tough this woman trader is a hard bargainer</td>
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<tr>
<td>catch v.t.</td>
<td>to affect, to trap, to afflict sickness has caught me rather sickness don’t catch me Pidgin &lt; usage in many African languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ceiba n.</td>
<td>trade name for the kapok tree, Ceiba pentandra cf. silk-cotton</td>
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<tr>
<td>chaik v.i./t.</td>
<td>to chat up or chase s.o. of the opposite sex; usually male to female he prefers chaiking to reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>chance n.</td>
<td>in the expression Give chance! i.e. Give me room! but also give me an opportunity to do s.t. &lt; usage in many African languages</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapman p.n.</td>
<td>soft drink usually made mineral plus Ribina and fruit; similar to a non-alcoholic Sangria</td>
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<tr>
<td>charge to court v.p.</td>
<td>to charge s.o. with an offence bring money, or I will charge you to court</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>chaser n.</td>
<td>man who chases women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Che! excl.</td>
<td>Expression of surprise &lt; Igbo chei!</td>
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<tr>
<td>check v.t.</td>
<td>to see if s.o. or s.t. is present we will go check him we’ll go and see if he’s in check well! said by traders urging you to look round their shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>chewing stick n.</td>
<td>stick from various tree species, chewed to clean the mouth and teeth GE.</td>
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<tr>
<td>chief n.</td>
<td>term of address; used to show respect or towards male friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>chicken-change n.</td>
<td>insignificant amount of money, ‘peanuts’ these people only give chicken-change they only pay peanuts ? &lt; ‘chicken-feed’</td>
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<tr>
<td>child dedication n.</td>
<td>church ceremony followed by elaborate entertainment in churches which do not practise infant baptism, [often] replacing the traditional naming ceremony</td>
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<tr>
<td>chin-chin n.</td>
<td>triangular fried cakes served at gatherings CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>chock v.t.</td>
<td>to place stones or wood under the wheels of a vehicle to stop it rolling away &lt; chock n. used for aircraft in SE</td>
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<tr>
<td>chook n.</td>
<td>awl used by carvers GE</td>
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<tr>
<td>chook v.t.</td>
<td>to prick, to inject the thorn has hooked me AE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Example</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>choose</td>
<td>v.t. to choose between two alternatives, contrast with ‘select’</td>
<td>can you choose rice? do you choose? CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chop</td>
<td>v.i. to eat, can you chop rice? do you eat rice? CE</td>
<td>I can chop rice, do you eat rice? CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chop</td>
<td>v.i. to embezzle (fig.), He has chopped too much money</td>
<td>He has chopped too much money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chop</td>
<td>n. food, let us go for chop, let us go and get some food CE</td>
<td>let us go for chop, let us go and get some food CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chop-bar</td>
<td>n. small eating house</td>
<td>?&lt;GE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chop-congo</td>
<td>v.i. to have sexual intercourse, I chop-congo today I had sex today St. sl.</td>
<td>I chop-congo today I had sex today St. sl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas bush</td>
<td>n. bush whose leaves are used to treat wounds Alchornea cordifolia WAE.</td>
<td>Christmas bush n. bush whose leaves are used to treat wounds Alchornea cordifolia WAE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civilisation</td>
<td>n. shorthand for the colonial and post-colonial era since we had civilisation</td>
<td>civilisation n. shorthand for the colonial and post-colonial era since we had civilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class-mate</td>
<td>n. s.o. in the same year at school or university as the speaker He is my class-mate means he was my classmate a relationship much more important in Nigeria than elsewhere</td>
<td>class-mate n. s.o. in the same year at school or university as the speaker He is my class-mate means he was my classmate a relationship much more important in Nigeria than elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean</td>
<td>v.t. to erase</td>
<td>Clean off that writing!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clean off</td>
<td>v.p. to wipe off, wipe away</td>
<td>Clean off that writing!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clear</td>
<td>v.i./t. to park off the road Clear the car! = Park well!</td>
<td>Clear the car! = Park well!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climb</td>
<td>v.i. to get into, climb that moto! get into that car! cf. enter</td>
<td>climb that moto! get into that car! cf. enter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climb down</td>
<td>v.p. to get out of, to get down from climb down from that machine get off that motor-bike</td>
<td>climb down v.p. to get out of, to get down from climb down from that machine get off that motor-bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>close</td>
<td>v.i. as in SE but applied to enterprises and machines, thus also ‘switch off’ they have closed the enterprise has reached closing time. close the fan shut off the fan GE.</td>
<td>close v.i. as in SE but applied to enterprises and machines, thus also ‘switch off’ they have closed the enterprise has reached closing time. close the fan shut off the fan GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>co-wife</td>
<td>n. wife married to the same husband co-wives always quarrel, GE. =mate</td>
<td>co-wife n. wife married to the same husband co-wives always quarrel, GE. =mate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coal-tar</td>
<td>n. asphalt road, Now we have reached the coal-tar again</td>
<td>coal-tar n. asphalt road Now we have reached the coal-tar again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coast</td>
<td>n. urban areas He has gone to coast he has gone (from his home village) to work in the modern urban sector (common in the Delta) Originally coastal towns visited by European traders.</td>
<td>coast n. urban areas He has gone to coast he has gone (from his home village) to work in the modern urban sector (common in the Delta) Originally coastal towns visited by European traders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cocktail</td>
<td>n. cocktail party You are invited to cocktail GE.</td>
<td>cocktail n. cocktail party You are invited to cocktail GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collect</td>
<td>v.t. to pick up, to go and get Collect your loads GE.</td>
<td>collect v.t. to pick up, to go and get Collect your loads GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colonial masters</td>
<td>n.p. stereotyped expression for British officialdom in the colonial era Our colonial masters taught us this Used sneeringly by some speakers but as a purely decriptive term by others</td>
<td>colonial masters n.p. stereotyped expression for British officialdom in the colonial era Our colonial masters taught us this Used sneeringly by some speakers but as a purely decriptive term by others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>company</td>
<td>a. describes s.o. who owns a number of companies he is a company man he is a man who owns a variety of businesses N.B. ‘company man’ is thus almost the inverse of its meaning in SE</td>
<td>company a. describes s.o. who owns a number of companies he is a company man he is a man who owns a variety of businesses N.B. ‘company man’ is thus almost the inverse of its meaning in SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complain</td>
<td>n. complaint the community forwarded their complaints to higher authorities</td>
<td>complain n. complaint the community forwarded their complaints to higher authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete</td>
<td>a. describes money and usually in the form ‘not complete’ your money is not complete the money is not enough</td>
<td>complete a. describes money and usually in the form ‘not complete’ your money is not complete the money is not enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound</td>
<td>n. any ground of buildings surrounded by a notional or actual external perimeter CE. &lt; Malay kampong</td>
<td>compound n. any ground of buildings surrounded by a notional or actual external perimeter CE. &lt; Malay kampong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conceive</td>
<td>v.t. to impregnate He has conceived her</td>
<td>conceive v.t. to impregnate He has conceived her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>condemn</td>
<td>v.i./t. to be worn out, useless, spoilt (of objects) the moto is condemned the car is no longer any good they have condemned it GE.</td>
<td>condemn v.i./t. to be worn out, useless, spoilt (of objects) the moto is condemned the car is no longer any good they have condemned it GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conducive</td>
<td>a. good, appropriate, fit the place is not conducive</td>
<td>conducive a. good, appropriate, fit the place is not conducive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confusionist</td>
<td>n. s.o. who brings about confusion he is just a confusionist</td>
<td>confusionist n. s.o. who brings about confusion he is just a confusionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continental</td>
<td>a. describes non-Nigerian food of vaguely European type GE. archaic BE</td>
<td>continental a. describes non-Nigerian food of vaguely European type GE. archaic BE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cook</td>
<td>v.t. to heat on the fire, whether a solid or a liquid she is cooking the water She is boiling water GE.</td>
<td>cook v.t. to heat on the fire, whether a solid or a liquid she is cooking the water She is boiling water GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>copaiba balsam</td>
<td>n. tree, Danielia oliveri, formerly valued for its gum CE?</td>
<td>copaiba balsam n. tree, Danielia oliveri, formerly valued for its gum CE?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
copyright a. applied to a song performed by a popular entertainer previously made popular by another entertainer. Often said with slight scorn. That song is copyright.

corner-mate n. person who shares your corner of a room typically a room, especially in Lagos and in universities with accommodation problems, is divided into four corners and each corner can be shared by two people. On the analogy of room-mate; also bed-mate in the same sense, not the SE one.

Corper p.n. Member of the National Youth Service Corps

correct v.c. as in to be correct they are not correct they are not doing the right thing. GE.

cotton n. as SE, but also cotton-wool and kapok from the silk-cotton tree

could remember v.p. for SE ‘can remember’ I could remember when we still had kobos.

cover-cloth n. long strip of cloth usually wrapped around the body when sleeping

cover-shoes n. ordinary shoes as opposed to sandals. Do you never wear cover-shoes? [said to a persistent sandal-wearer]

cowitch n. stinging vine TE. Mucuna pruriens < Hindi kawach

cowleg v./a. common cut of beef, often made into soup cowleg soup GE.

cowmeat n. beef GE.

cowpean. bean, Vigna unguiculata

More written than spoke; cf. beans. TE. <Hindi kalpi

crayfish n. shrimp, prawns

crispy a. concise just a short crispy message

croaker n. sea-fish spp. Pseudotolithus spp. WAE. very widely traded

crown n. king in draughts

cross carpet v.p. to cross the floor (politician)

cry n. as in SE, but also to make a noise (of objects) the thing was crying it was making a noise GE.

cultism n. practice of secret societies, especially in universities. Believed to be violent and based on traditional religion Soyinka seeks end to cultism in varsities (Guardian 15.7.05)

culture n. ceremony, cultural festival They do their cultures after the harvest

cunny a. tricky a cunny man a trickster < cunning?

cup n. any drinking receptacle, including glasses, mugs etc.

cushion chair n. armchair with cushions

customary court n. court where justice proceeds according to the traditions of a particular ethnic group Recognised by the Nigerian state for civil cases

customs bar n. commission charged on every puncheon of oil sold, deducted from the native trader's money and paid to the chief under whose auspices the supercargo had placed his ship for trading archaic, Niger Delta. cf. work-bar

cut v.i. to be broken, cut, snapped in two the wire has cut the wire is cut. GE.

cutlass n. machete, used for cutting vegetation TE. cf. matchet

cutleries n. pl. cutlery Advert: For hire: Chairs, canopies, cutleries, utensils

cutting-grass n. cane rat, Thryonomys swinderianus GE. also more commonly 'grasscutter'. Throughout West Africa

damask n. damask For those who do not know what damask looks like, it is an ornamented fabric with special pattern. It has a hard, paper-like texture, which softens after series of washings. ...Back in the 60s, damask was used to sew iro and buba as well as danshiki. Today, it is being limited to ipele, gele and fila, probably because it is expensive. (Nigerian Tribune 25.06.02 p4). [Very similar to standard dictionary definitions; consult expert for differences. Perhaps simply that it is not commonly used in Standard English.]

dampy a. damp

danfo n. van used for passenger transport < Yoruba

danship n. man’s loose, short gown < Hausa

dash v.t. to give s.o. s.t. for free Dash me this thing! GE.

dash n. s.t. given for free is this a dash? GE.

dead stone n.p. any stone that looks hard but breaks easily he found to his surprise it
was dead stone calque from H. matace
dutse
deadness n. complete silence at night
that night, there was complete deadness
deadness n. impotence the
deadness of his penis concerns him
deal on v.t. to deal in She deals on cloth
dealer on n.p. dealer in Dealer on
electrical equipments
deep a. complex or pure form of a language
He is speaking deep Nupe.
defile the air v.p. to fart Who is defiling the
air? schoolboy euphemism
defleb palm n. fan-palm (q.v.) AE
deliver v.i. v.t. to give birth my sister
has delivered my sister has given birth My wife
has delivered a male child GE.
dey v.i. to be, to exist plenty dey there is
plenty God dey Proverbial exclamation
more pidgin than NE proper
diev.i. to cease functioning, to no longer work the
moto has died GE.
dirts n. dirt sweep away these dirts
discuss v.i. to discuss [mentioning no topic] We
discussed for a long time
disting pron. for ‘This thing’ but used generically
for anything whose name has been forgotten
tight the disting i.e. tighten the nut
Pidgin
disturb v.t. to annoy, to irritate, but not disturb
in the SE sense he is disturbing me too
much GE.
disvirgin v.t. to deflower (a virgin)
girls never forget the man who disvirgined
them
do interj.? used as equivalent to ‘please’ by
some old-fashioned speakers Do, allow
me to close early
do v.a. used to emphasise present continuous
periodic conflicts do occur
doctor n. any expert watch-doctor
watch-repairer GE.
dodo n. masquerade or other spiritual entity
performed by non-Muslims in the north
they are doing dodo today <Hausa
dodo n. fried plantain, Musa
paradisiaca < Yoruba
…doing n.p. happening Either in the
phrase anything doing or nothing doing
Archaic SE?
doll-baby n doll
double face n. two-facedness He is a man
of double face
down-wine n. wine tapped from a fallen
or felled oil or raphia palm
dowry n. marriage-payment in either
direction, thus = brideprice
draw a. mucilaginous We are enjoying
draw soup typically in the expression ‘draw
soup’, a sauce made from sticky vegetables such
as okra and Jew’s mallow.
draw v.i. to form long mucilaginous strings
(of sauce) This soup draws well GE.
dress n. any type of formal or elaborate
clothing for either sex He is putting on his
dress he is putting on formal clothes GE.
dressing of Danfo [Lagos sign]
dress up v.p. to dress ≠ to dress
smartly
drink v.t. to ingest esp. medicine and
including tablets etc. I have a terrible headache.
I'm going to drink two Panadol and go to bed?
calque from Hausa sha magani
drive v.t. to chase away [often jocular] I
came to visit you and now you are driving me! I
won't come again.
driver n. as in SE, but also chauffeur
GE.
drop (down) v.i. to get down from a vehicle
we are dropping(down) here we are getting
down here GE.
drop n. A. section of route regularly plied
by taxi or bus with a standard fare from here
to the junction is two drops GE.
B. hire of a taxi by a single customer/group
Drop is how much?
dubbing n. copying in an exam with
variations, contrast rank xerox
duck-fowl n. duck
E.

earnestly adv. honestly

ease oneself v.t. to urinate or defecate

GE. Presumably a polite form from the colonial or missionary era

eba n. staple food made from boiled cassava < Yoruba. Originally low status compared with yams and standing for cheap food, but nowadays many people’s preferred food

ebony n. timber from Diospyros spp.

egusi n. melon, or its dried and crushed seeds, used to make a popular sauce < Yoruba. Citrullus lanatus in NNE but more commonly Cucumeropsis mannii in SNE GE.

eko n. boiled food made from cassava <Yoruba

elders n. senior people in a community, usu. with connotation of authority WAE

elephant grass n. tall grass sp. Sorghum arundinaceum AE.

emaciate v.i. become emaciated No matter how much an elephant has emaciated, its thigh is still bigger than a hare (Tarak proverb 365)

enable v.t. to enable ...to I humbly wish to apply for a loan to enable me buy a motor-cycle. GE.

ending n. month-ending

engage v.t. to become engaged to That boy has engaged Rose

enjoy v.i. to be having a good time He is enjoying he is having a good time GE. The West African usage seems to have preceded the Californian imperative Enjoy!

enlight v.i./t. to enlighten I enlightened him N.B. this has no religious connotation in Nigeria and is usually a way of saying ‘I told him’.

enlightenment n. knowledgeable, urban, civilised They have not yet had enlightenment

entire a. qualifies plural nouns the entire members all the members

envelope v.t. to put in an envelope Please envelope this letter for me.

equally adv. also

equipments n. pl. equipment Advert: Dealer on electrical equipments GE.

ESCORT p.n. the number plate given to cars that drive beside or behind a big man cf. PILOT

estacode n. allowance for civil servants when travelling overseas on official business

ever adv. never I ever went there I never went there

experiment v. experiment with He was trying to experiment a new credit scheme

extra a. extra (but precedes qualified term) extra twenty twenty extra GE.

F.

factory n. building belonging to trading house Constructed by the large coastal traders such as John Holt. They have fallen into disuse so the term is essentially historical

fail out p.v.i to fail so badly that one has to withdraw from a programme of study After six years, all students must either pass out or fail out

faithfuls n.pl. church members (collective noun pluralized) May not be in general use.

fanciful a. fancy I don’t like to drive fanciful car

fancy n. 1. fashionable clothes 2. decoration

far a. remote far, far bush remote bush area

GE.

Fare Well sal. common written form of Farewell!

farina n. dry food prepared from cassava <Portuguese

farm n. single field/area of farmland of a particular crop I have five farms I have five fields GE. Usually in the south of mixed crops harvested at particular times

farm v. to hoe, to cultivate

fashion out v.p. to fashion He was trying to fashion it out

fathom n. two yards, a measure of cloth, canoe, farmland, etc. (?) confined to Niger Delta’). Also long fathom a measure of cloth.

3 From Williamson (ined.) Izon dictionary. fathom (square measure of cloth) short fathom (i.e. 72” x 32”) long fathom (i.e. 72” x 36”)

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**fatting house, fatting room, fattening room** n.p.
- Institution of the Niger Delta peoples and those eastwards along the coast. Room to which unmarried girls are sent, to be ‘fattened’ to make them more eligible for marriage.

**SNE**

**Federal character** n. practice of ensuring that the staff in an office or ministry come from different areas so that no one ethnic group is seen to be dominant

**feeding** n. money for food when away
- *what of my feeding?* What money will I get to buy food?

**fence** v. to put any sort of wall, including brick and cement around s.t.
- GE.

**fence** n. any wall, including brick and cement around s.t.

**fetish** n. shrine, ritual object
- *It is my fetish.* WAE. also *juju* < Portuguese

**finish** v.i. to have run out
- *Orange has finished*

**flood** n. season when river overflows into the bush (roughly August to October)
- Niger Delta region

**flower** n. any cultivated flowering garden plant or shrub

**flower** n. menstruation
- Archaic English origin, now Pidgin

**flying-boat** n. speedboat

**foam** n. foam rubber mattress
- *I will go to the market to buy foam*

**follow** v.t. to accompany
- *I will follow you to market* I’ll go with you to the market ‘to follow’ in SE sense is ‘go after’

**follow** v.t. to attend
- *I need money to follow that course*

**follow** v.t. to take a certain direction
- *follow that road* go that way

**follow behind** v.t. to go after, follow
- SE

**followership** n. state of being a follower
- If you have a good leader then followership is assured [Ovation, Issue 53:117, 2003]

**food** n. can be as SE, but most commonly applies to starchy staples
- *let us go chop food* let us go and eat a full meal. *I need food, not snacks.* We have food but no soup
- GE.

**footing** adv. by foot
- *we must go footing.*

**for prep. in, into**
- *put water for this cup*

**forp.** belonging to, by (can express parenthood)
- *She has two children for him.* Also *Is this thing for you?*

**forbid** v.t. to put a taboo on
- *All the members of our family forbid iguana*

**foreign** n. foreign places
- *They bring in sophisticated weapons from foreign*

**fowl** n. chicken
- GE. arch.
- SE for the specific

**fox** n. jackal
- ME. in the Delta, genet

**free girl** n. prostitute
- also *free woman*

**free life** n.p. worthless life
- *so-so free life he dey live*

**free speech** n.p. speech made by guests at ceremony that is not on the programme

**free woman** n. prostitute
- also *free girl*

**French suit** n. man’s two-piece suit
- buttoning up to the neck
- arch.? 1960s/1970s

**fuel** n. petrol (and usually not other fuels)
- *fuel shortages are common*

**fulani** p.n. usual Nigerian name for the FulBe people, cattle pastoralists found throughout West Africa
- < Hausa. GE.

**funeral home** n.p. funeral parlour

**fura** n. balls of guinea-corn with spice, usually mixed with milk
- < Hausa.
- Food eaten mainly in the north

**furnitures** n. different types of furniture

<table>
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<tr>
<th>G.</th>
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</table>

**gallop** n. hole or bump in the road
- *This road has too many gallops*

**gallon** n. plastic container for liquid
- *She took a gallon containing kerosene, doused some on the girl’s hands and laps and set her ablaze* (Guardian 17.06.02 p.15) GE. originally the 4-litre containers for oil, but now generalised to any plastic or other container in the shape of a Jerry-can; cf. rubber

**garage** n. bus-station
- cf. motorpark

**garden egg** n. eggplant, brinjal
- GE. *Solanum incanum.* Applies to local, bitter varieties, including inedible types.

**gar(r)i** n. dried, grated cassava
- WAE. Cassava is processed in this way to
eliminate the cyanide in bitter types. The name
text technology were brought by the Portuguese
from the New World
gas v.i. to fart he has gassed also defile
the air, mess up
gas n. diesel fuel
Gedu-nohor n. trade-name for
Entandrophragma angolense
gele n. head-tie < Yoruba
general weakness n.p. tiredness, bodyache
I am suffering from general weakness
GE.
George [cloth] a. tie-dyed adire cloth with
pattern representing George V, now somewhat
unrecognisably
get v.t. to have he get plenty money he has a lot of
money Pidgin also GE.
get accident v.p. to have an accident the
moto got accident
Ghana-must-go n. fibre bag from
Taiwan with zipper and tartan or other pattern
used to transport goods < a period
in the 1980s when Ghanaians were expelled from
Nigeria and allegedly used these bags to
transport their goods back home
Giant rat n. wild rat, Cricetomys,
widely sold in markets and by the roadside
CE, not widely used. Often called rabbit in
SNE
Girl n. house-girl formed by
analogy with ‘boy’
gist n. news, more especially gossip I
have plenty of gist for you today.
gist v. to tell someone the news or the
gossip I will come and gist you this
afternoon. She gisted me fully More generally,
v.i. gossip, talk informally: We were gisting till
midnight Originally student slang, but now
used more widely
give v.t. to share a story with s.o. Veronica
gave us an experience
give v.t. to make available they don’t
want to give us light they are organised enough
to keep the electricity on
give out v.p. to give away she is
giving out oranges More general than SE
giwan ruwa n. Nile perch (Lates niloticus)
< Hausa ‘elephant of the water’
glass n. window, esp. car-window
Roll down the glass!
globe n. light-bulb the globe has
quenched
go about v.i. to go about locally more
than is considered proper that woman is
always going about (the implication is that this is
inappropriate behaviour)
go to hell v.p. long hooked stick for
getting down fruits such as mangoes
Middle Belt. Presumably from the
resemblance to the hooked sticks used by devils
to drag down sinners.
go up and down p.v. to roam about see
that pig going up and down
go-slow n. traffic jam esp. in Lagos they were
captured in the go-slow
goatery n. place where goats are kept
godfather n. person in position of
influence able to assist you Luckily, I have a
godfather on the university admissions council.
going n. motor-cycle taxi I must get a
going Middle Belt. A calque from Hausa
achaba (q.v.)
gongoro lorry n. Mercedes 911 truck with
locally built-up sides, usually decorated <
Hausa gongoro
good a. full, complete [follows qualifying
numbers] I spent six good years in Kano <
SE ‘a good six years’
gorilla n. chimpanzee Pan
troglodytes. Few Nigerians have ever seen either
animal so their characteristics are somewhat
vague. Actual gorillas exist in small numbers
along the Nigeria/Cameroun borderland.
goro n. cola, used in the same way to mean,
tip, bribe, entitlement < H.
got v.a. has become the beer got
finished the beer has run out GE.
Grammar p.n. Standard English
grasscutter n. cane rat, Thryonomys
swinderianus also ‘cutting-grass’. WAE. More often printed than spoken
grasseater n. fish sp. ? calque
from Hausa ci haki
greet v.i./t. to greet (which is a much elaborate
and formulaic process in Nigeria) it is correct
to greet greeting is appropriate behaviour. She
greeted him implying a formal, social process
GE.
grind v.i. to grind s.t., to have s.t. ground I
sent my baby out to grind I sent my daughter out
to get it ground
groundnut
n. peanut  *She is selling groundnut.*

*Groundnut* is a pan-African Anglophone usage and is probably a calque of French *pois de terre,* or German *Erdnuss.*

**grub** v.i. to eat  students’ slang

**guber** a. gubernatorial (i.e. referring to the election of State governors)  *Borno in guber race* (Newspaper headline)

**guidance** n. guidance  *We pray for your guidance and protection, oh Lord*

**guinea brocade** n. type of cloth  q.v. brocade

**guinea-corn** n. sorghum  WAE. *Sorghum bicolor*

**guest hotel** n. hotel with accommodation  cf. hotel

**guest inn** n. hotel with accommodation  cf. hotel, lodge

**gunner** n.枪smith, gun-supplier noticeboard  sign  *SE ‘gunner’*

**guy** n. fashionable boy or young man  <American English  **guy name** n. nickname  GE.

**guyish** a. describes s.o. behaving like a guy  (q.v.)  *His behaviour is guyish*

**H.**

**Haba!** excl. Expression of surprise or amazement  < Hausa and heard mainly in the North. GE.  N.B. *Habahaba!* was a common expression of joking amazement in the US in the 1940s. Related?

**had to** aux. it was likely that…would  *When the war broke out many people had to die*

**hair-packer** n. small elastic band with beads attached, used to adorn a hair style

**hairy** a. with plenty of hair (but with a positive implication) *she is a hairy girl* she has lots of hair

**handset** n. mobile phone

**hand-work** n. anything produced by hand, including both crafts and physical labour  *It is a hand-work* Presumably from SE ‘handiwork’

**hanging** part. state of hanging from the back of a passenger vehicle  *The policeman demanded ₦200 “fine” as punishment for the offence of the conductor, who was hanging on the vehicle’s door* [The driver] said: “One of the policemen demanded ₦200 from me alleging that my driver was hanging”.  (Guardian 17.06.02 p. 2)  GE.

**harlot** n. prostitute  *The harlots are dancing*  N.B. not considered archaic in Nigerian English

**harmattan** n. season of dry winds and dust, usually December-February  WAE.  < ? but prob. via Francophone region

**haste** adv.c. in the expression *in a haste*

**Have it!** excl. Usually in the context of shopping, a shopkeeper will say ‘Have it!’ meaning ‘Take it!’

**head** n. as in SE, but also state of mind, mental state as in Californian English ‘*Your head is not correct* You’re mad (abusively rather than medically) but also ‘You are seriously confused’  (about some specific matter)

**head-load** n. amount that can be carried on the head  CE

**head-pad** n. quoin, circular cloth or fibre pad, to protect the head when carrying a basin or similar  GE.

**head-pan** n. large enamel basin commonly used to carry loads  GE.

**head-tie** n. kerchief tied around the head  GE.

**hear** v.t. to understand a language  *I hear Yoruba*

**hear** v.t. to sense, smell  *I hear the food on fire*

**heavy** a. pregnant  *My wife is heavy*

**heed to** v.t. to heed  *The students refused to heed to their pleas.* [Senate minutes]  (on the analogy of *listen to*)

**hell of** n.p. plenty of  *They were making hell of noise* GE. < hell of a lot of

**hemp** n. marijuana, dope  archaic SE. also *Indian hemp*

**hence** conj. since, because  *Hence we are going to market, we’ll buy oranges* In SE, ‘hence’ means ‘therefore’, ‘thus’, ‘consequently’, ‘it follows that’: it marks the conclusions of arguments. In NE it means ‘since’ or ‘because’, marking the premises.

**herbalist** n. traditional doctor who treats patients, in principle with plant remedies, but
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dictionary of Nigerian English</th>
<th>Circulation Draft</th>
<th>Roger Blench</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>also other types of socially approved magical remedies</td>
<td>replacing this so that NE is coming to conform to SE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high(-)life n. musical style now rather outmoded</td>
<td>house-rent n. rent the landlord has increased the house-rent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably of Ghanaian origin. (1950s and 1960s)</td>
<td>How far? int. lit. how far are you going? How far have you succeeded (in the matter we discussed previously)? Taken as an invitation to ride with the speaker who would normally be in a vehicle. Also used when you cross paths with s.o. and want to know how far they have come.</td>
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<tr>
<td>highly welcome excl.p. very welcome</td>
<td>You are highly welcome!</td>
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<tr>
<td>hint v.t. to give a hint to s.o. he hinted me that he would go hinted to me … GE.</td>
<td>hint v.t. to have sex with a woman he hit her in the palour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hit v.t. to have sex with a woman he hit her in the palour</td>
<td>hold v.t. to stand guard over, to be in place We are holding the road so that no-one may disturb you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hold v.i. take place, be held The meeting will hold at 4 o’clock arch. SE</td>
<td>hold v.i. to stay in place Although I patched my bicycle it did not hold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home n. place where some activity is carried out barbing home hairdressing salon maternity home clinic for women to give birth funeral home funeral parlour</td>
<td>home people n.p. extended family in your home area How are your home people?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hometown n. association of expatriates from a particular area or tribe, formed to promote development in their area of origin</td>
<td>hold v.i. to stay in place Although I patched my bicycle it did not hold</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>hook v.i. to have made a woman pregnant he sexed her and it has hooked he had sex with her and now she is pregnant</td>
<td>hook v.t. to feel (as a pain) The pain hooks me there</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>hook (s.o.) v.t. to be arm-in-arm with someone</td>
<td>hook (s.o.) v.t. to be arm-in-arm with someone</td>
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<tr>
<td>horn v.t. to blow the horn on a car horn him!</td>
<td>how now? sal. How are you?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>hospitality committee n. group formed to meet with incoming Fulani pastoralists and inform them of local grazing access rights Northeast Nigeria only</td>
<td>I.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hot n. short for ‘hot drink’, i.e. spirits beer and hots for sale [Notice on shopfront] GE</td>
<td>hot a. alcoholic any hot drink for me, sah? (often said by policemen at road-blocks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illegitimate n. commonly applied to bars and drinking places that serve food but may have no lodging ‘hotel’ in the SE sense is ‘guest hotel’. Modern usage is gradually</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ibeji n. carved figures representing twins made when one twin has died &lt; Yoruba</td>
<td>ibonise v.t. to turn a foreign word into an Igbo form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>home people n.p. extended family in your home area How are your home people?</td>
<td>iceman n. ice-block Bring ice-block for this mineral Sometimes just ‘block’ in context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ibo n. any object used in traditional religion, such as masks and carved figures ME</td>
<td>idol n. if not conj. if it were not for.. if not this haze, you would see the fadama clearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>idomano p.n. Igbo person</td>
<td>if not conj. if it were not for.. if not this haze, you would see the fadama clearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>igboma n. N.B. In principle, the suffix –man can be applied to any ethnic group, but in fact Igboman is the most common collocation.</td>
<td>iguana n. Nile Monitor Lizard</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>illegitimate n. fraud, counterfeit object, fake &lt; Yoruba</td>
<td>illegitimate n. fraud, counterfeit object, fake &lt; Yoruba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilebe n. buttocks, but by extension also padding placed inside dress to enlarge the buttocks &lt; Yoruba</td>
<td>illegitimate n. fraud, counterfeit object, fake &lt; Yoruba</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ill-lucks n. misfortunes</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>illegal bunkering n.p. the practice of removing petroleum products from oil pipelines and well-heads, without authorization from either oil companies or the government. It is widely thought to involve large-scale smuggling operations that use road tankers, barges and large ships offshore.</td>
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<tr>
<td>impressionario n. impressario Portmanteau form ‘impressario’ + ‘impression’</td>
<td>impressionario n. impressario Portmanteau form ‘impressario’ + ‘impression’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in front adv. ahead The house is still in front [does not mean in front of us]</td>
<td>in front adv. ahead The house is still in front [does not mean in front of us]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Nigerian English</td>
<td>Example</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>in soup v.c. in trouble &lt; English ‘in the soup’</td>
<td>[285x60]in soup</td>
<td>Example: I hope he comes in time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in time adv. quickly, not within a specified period</td>
<td>[285x63]in time</td>
<td>Example: I hope he comes in time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian spinach n. small herb used for sauces Basella alba</td>
<td>[285x63]Indian spinach</td>
<td>Example: We are indigenes of this state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indigenes n. inhabitants (of a particular administrative unit or region)</td>
<td>[285x63]indigenes</td>
<td>Example: We are indigenes of this state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information n. used without article</td>
<td>[285x63]information</td>
<td>Example: I received an information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ingredients n. spices etc. used to make soup. Are you going for ingredients? GE.</td>
<td>[285x63]ingredients</td>
<td>Example: Are you going for ingredients? GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest to v.p. to have an interest to</td>
<td>[285x63]interest to</td>
<td>Example: I hope he comes in time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iroko n. tree sp. used for carving WAE. Milicia excelsa</td>
<td>[285x63]iroko</td>
<td>Example: Iroko trees are used for carving furniture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iron-bender n. skilled worker in the building trade who bends and cuts iron rods to the required size</td>
<td>[285x63]iron-bender</td>
<td>Example: Iron-benders are skilled workers in the building trade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ironwood n. duramen, i.e. the hard central wood of certain trees TE?</td>
<td>[285x63]ironwood</td>
<td>Example: Ironwood is the hard central wood of certain trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issue n. children, progeny He has many issues Not archaic in NE. Can form plural. Extension of legal term?</td>
<td>[285x63]issue</td>
<td>Example: He has many issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jamb n. pronounced jam Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (?) University entrance exam I want to do jam.</td>
<td>[285x63]jamb</td>
<td>Example: I want to do JAMB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jerry-curl n. hairdressing style GE. &lt; American English</td>
<td>[285x63]jerry-curl</td>
<td>Example: Jerrycurl is a hairdressing style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>join v.t. to get on board transport Where will you join taxi?</td>
<td>[285x63]join</td>
<td>Example: Where will you join the taxi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joke n. to have a formalised joking relationship with We Tarok joke with the Chamba people</td>
<td>[285x63]joke</td>
<td>Example: We joke with the Chamba people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jollof rice n. rice cooked with tomatoes and spices, served with chunks of meat at parties GE. jollof = Wolof as the dish is purportedly from Senegal</td>
<td>[285x63]jollof rice</td>
<td>Example: Jollof rice is a popular West African dish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jubilate v.i. to rejoice Because of the Buna festival, people were jubilating</td>
<td>[285x63]jubilate</td>
<td>Example: People were jubilating because of the Buna festival.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juju n. anything to do with traditional religion he has practised juju on her he has put a spell on her. It is a juju it is to do with traditional religion ME.</td>
<td>[285x63]juju</td>
<td>Example: Juju is a traditional religion practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just sitting down n.p. staying on one place [has no connotation of actually sitting] there we were, just sitting down, nothing doing</td>
<td>[285x63]just sitting down</td>
<td>Example: We were just sitting down, nothing doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-legs n. knock-kneed to have K-legs be knock-kneed</td>
<td>[285x63]K-legs</td>
<td>Example: To have K-legs, a person must be knock-kneed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kabukabu n. private car operating as an unlicensed taxi Danfos, yellow taxis and the unpainted, moonlighting kabukabus tend these days to be tokunbos, used vehicles imported mostly from Belgium (NI 343:20.col.2)</td>
<td>[285x63]kabukabu</td>
<td>Example: Kabukabu are private cars operating as unlicensed taxis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaikai n. local gin cf. ogogoro. GE.</td>
<td>[285x63]kaikai</td>
<td>Example: Kaikai is a local gin in Nigeria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanda n. skin (usually of cow or goat?) cooked and eaten as a delicacy in pepper soup, etc.</td>
<td>[285x63]kanda</td>
<td>Example: Kanda is a type of skin used in pepper soup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano cloth n. cloth woven in narrow strips on traditional looms. Woven in many places in the North, not just in Kano. SNE.</td>
<td>[285x63]Kano cloth</td>
<td>Example: Kano cloth is woven in narrow strips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep v.i. to stay I kept three days in Kaduna. Don’t keep late!</td>
<td>[285x63]keep</td>
<td>Example: I kept three days in Kaduna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep v.t. to put (on) keep it there on the table</td>
<td>[285x63]keep</td>
<td>Example: Keep it there on the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kero(sene) n. paraffin &lt; American English</td>
<td>[285x63]kero(sene)</td>
<td>Example: Kero is a paraffin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiakia n. type of minibus introduced about 1950s? now obsolescent &lt; Yoruba ‘quickly’</td>
<td>[285x63]kiakia</td>
<td>Example: Kiakia is a type of minibus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kick starter n. starter motor of cars as well as motor-bikes Open the kick starter! Start the engine!</td>
<td>[285x63]kick starter</td>
<td>Example: Open the kick starter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>king fern n. fern sp. ground up and rubbed on for swelling Nephrolepis biserrata SNE.</td>
<td>[285x63]king fern</td>
<td>Example: King fern is a fern used for swelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>king worm n. blind wormsnake, amphisbaenid Typhlops sp. SNE</td>
<td>[285x63]king worm</td>
<td>Example: King worm is a blind wormsnake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kiss v.t. to hit another car gently his moto kissed me his car touched mine Don’t kiss me (often painted on back of commercial vehicles)</td>
<td>[285x63]kiss</td>
<td>Example: Don’t kiss me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knicker n. in the expression short knicker (q.v.)</td>
<td>[285x63]knicker</td>
<td>Example: Knicker is in the expression short knicker.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Dictionary of Nigerian English**

**know how to** v.p. corresponds to SE Do you? or Can you? Do you know how to eat our food? Can you eat [Nigerian] food? GE.

**kobo** n. one-hundredth of a Naira effectively went into disuse through inflation in about the early 1990s

**kola** n. 1. nut from *Cola acuminata* and *C. nitida*, presented and shared formally in ceremonies in many areas TE. Also cola.
   2. entertainment, hence bribe, small present Where is my cola?

**kose** n. fried bean-cake <Hausa

**kuka** n. dried powder of baobab leaves used to make draw soup <Hausa

**kulikuli** n. dried snacks made from shaped residue after the oil has been expelled from groundnuts <Hausa

**kunnu** n. drink made from cereal flour, sugar and ginger, sold in the North, but increasingly also known in southern urban areas <Hausa

**lace** n. cloth in the style *broderie Anglaise*, with many gaps. Imported from Austria and prestigious because expensive they are wearing lace

**langalanga** n. curved piece of iron used to swipe at grass and knock it down GE. an extraordinarily ineffective tool, often used by schoolchildren NNE

**lap(s)** n. thigh(s), lap Chicken laps for sale. [notice] //She put the baby on her laps. // The deceased was seated at the back of the vehicle carrying a fellow student on her laps (Guardian 17.06.02 p. 2) She took a gallon containing kerosene, doused some on the girl’s hands and laps and set her ablaze (Guardian 17.06.02 p.15) GE.

**last** a. as in English but in temporal expressions it follows the noun Sunday last, I went to Kaduna

**late** a. dead, of people [but used without 'the' and more informally than in SE] late Chuks gave me this book can be intensified.

**lent** v.p. corresponds to SE Do you? or Can you? Do you know how to eat our food? Can you eat [Nigerian] food? GE.

**lately** adv. late He came lately

**launching** n. Nigerian ceremony to introduce a new publication, society or institution where money is raised through public pledges They are having a launching for the book GE.

**lean** a. thin, but with implication that leanness is caused by troubles GE. Being thin does not have a positive cultural value in West Africa

**leather [leda]** a./n. plastic [bag] put it in a leather [bag]

**leave** v.t. to leave off, to stop He should leave chasing girls

**left-hand drive** n.p. hair-style where the hair is plaited into cornrows on the left of the head s.t. also ‘right-hand drive’

**leg.** leg, but also ‘ankle’, ’foot’ Wipe your leg on the door-mat, please! or My leg is paining me too much I have twisted my ankle Adapted from African languages where leg often stands for other parts of the lower body. Parallel usages of hand to include arm

**leg, to have long** v.p. to be influential, to have connections

**lend out** v.p. to lend

**lick (soup)** v.t. eat “soup” While eating with me, you are licking the soup, but I am eating the porridge [Tarak proverb 425].

**lift** v.t. to give a lift to Will you lift me to Oshodi?

**light** n. electricity They have taken the light the power has gone off GE.

**light food** n. food that comes in separated grains or pieces applies to rice, macaroni etc. Contrast with ‘solid food’.

**lighting** n. Nigerian ceremony to introduce a new publication, society or institution where money is raised through public pledges They are having a launching for the book GE.

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**light** n. electricity They have taken the light the power has gone off GE.

**light food** n. food that comes in separated grains or pieces applies to rice, macaroni etc. Contrast with ‘solid food’.

**list out** v.t. to list I cannot fully list out all its various uses.

**load** n. bundle, pack, head-load, luggage Collect your loads N.B. can also have a plural, loads

**lobster** n. large shrimp *(Macrobrachium vollenhovenii)* Nigeria has only shrimps, no true crayfish or lobsters

**local** a. provincial, unsophisticated he is a local man!

**local Maggi** n. flat cakes made from the fermented seeds of the locust tree (q.v.) and used as a soup condiment =Maggi, a commercial stock cube sold widely in West Africa
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>locust</td>
<td>n. locust-bean tree, Parkia biglobosa. N.B. locust as an insect is usually 'cricket'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lodge</td>
<td>n. hotel, cf. ‘guest inn’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lolagbola</td>
<td>p.n. trade-name for timber from the tree Oxyystigma oxyphyllum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lonely</td>
<td>a. lonely, also alone. If we go, she will be lonely in the house. If we go, she will be left on her own in the house. The two meanings may well merge in African culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long-leg</td>
<td>n. influence, personal connection with s.o. in power. He gained his position through long-leg &lt; Vernacular e.g. Hausa dogon kafa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loose</td>
<td>v.i.t. to be loose, to come loose, to untie. The thing has loosed. It has become loose. Loose it untie it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loss</td>
<td>v.c. to be lost, as in don loss or get loss. The thing has got loss. It has got lost Pidgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lost</td>
<td>n. loss, lost of thousands of Naira GE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lugardia</td>
<td>old-fashioned. This your shoe is Lugard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luggages</td>
<td>n.pl. as SE but pluralised. Luggages carried at owner’s risk. [Notice]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luxury bus</td>
<td>n. large coach as opposed to bus, usually applied to small vans. Also luxurious bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M &amp; B</td>
<td>n. all types of medicines. Lit. acronym for May &amp; Baker, formerly a manufacturer of common pharmaceutical products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ma</td>
<td>n. Term of respect used to address an older woman. Ma, I don’t know how to do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>machine</td>
<td>n. motor-bike GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>machine boy</td>
<td>n.p. motor-bike taxi driver. See Okada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maclean</td>
<td>n. any toothpaste. &lt; Brand name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>madam</td>
<td>n. generic respectful term for older woman. I have been hearing of this madam GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maggi</td>
<td>n. any commercially made stock-cube. &lt; Maggi brand name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mahogany</td>
<td>n. tree sp. Khaya senegalensis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>majority</td>
<td>n.p. used without article. They are majority GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make</td>
<td>v.t. to do [hair]. She has gone to salon to make her hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make accident</td>
<td>v.p. to have an accident. The moto has made accident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makossa</td>
<td>p.n. rhythmic dance music popular in Nigeria of putative Congolese origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mallam</td>
<td>technically, learned Islamic scholar but often a title of respect for any putatively learned person, also humorous. Mallam! What is the day? Generalized to any male dressing in Islamic style; also title = Mr. for a Muslim GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mamban</td>
<td>lead bars or ingots used to make shot for cannons. Niger Delta area. archaic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mami-Wata</td>
<td>p.n. Goddess - the subject of a widespread cult in the Niger Delta area GE. Represented as a mermaid, with snaky hair and believed to be responsible for pulling fishermen to their deaths, although also courted to enrich people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mammy</td>
<td>n. woman, usually applied to mature women who run market-stalls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mammy market</td>
<td>n. market attached to barracks where products for soldiers are sold, such as dogmeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mammy wagon</td>
<td>n. lorry converted to carry passengers on seats facing backwards. Arch. as replaced by other types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manage</td>
<td>v.i. to be surviving. We are managing GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manage</td>
<td>v.t. to make do, to put up with. He begged me to manage him in the one room. He asked me to put up with him staying in the same room. The car developed problem, but I managed it to Onitsha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>market woman</td>
<td>n.p. woman who regularly sells in the market, trader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>match</td>
<td>v.i.t. to tread on, to trample on. Match on it trample on it. Confusion with mash? to mash palm-oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matchet</td>
<td>n. machete, used for cutting vegetation. cf. cutlass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matchstick</td>
<td>n. match GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mate</td>
<td>n. co-wife SNE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maternity</td>
<td>n. maternity clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mbeke</td>
<td>n. white man shouted at foreigners in the south-central regions of Nigeria. In Port Harcourt area it is bekee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>meat</strong> n.</td>
<td>meat served with soups, sold by the individual chunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>medicine</strong> n.</td>
<td>conventional SE sense but also extended to a wide variety of chemicals, particularly agricultural insect medicine pesticide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>meat</strong> n.</td>
<td>as in SE, but also a small piece of meat served with soups, sold by the individual chunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>medicome</strong> n.</td>
<td>mediocre person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>meek</strong> a.</td>
<td>timid [but applied to mind]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>meet</strong> v.t.</td>
<td>to encounter, but used for objects and situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mense</strong> v.i.</td>
<td>to menstruate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mess, make a</strong> v.p.</td>
<td>to cast in an inferior light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mess (up)</strong> v.i.</td>
<td>to fart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mess up with</strong> v.p.</td>
<td>to socialise with in a disapproved way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>microchip</strong> n.</td>
<td>tiny piece of paper with useful information concealed on the body in an exam st.sl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Belt</strong> p.n.</td>
<td>region of Nigeria between ethnic block of the Yoruba and Igbo in the south and the Hausa in the north. Roughly from south of Kaduna to north of Ilorin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mighty</strong> a.</td>
<td>large, powerful, overbearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mind</strong> v.t.</td>
<td>usu. in the expression Don’t mind.. + pron. meaning Don’t pay any attention to..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mind</strong> v.t.</td>
<td>want, like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mineral</strong> n.</td>
<td>soft drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mise</strong> v.i.</td>
<td>to be miserly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>miss, to</strong> v.t.</td>
<td>to not have, to have lost she missed her husband her husband is no longer around (dead, divorced etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>missing, to get</strong> v.c.</td>
<td>lost, vanished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>money</strong> n.</td>
<td>as in SE but also ‘cost’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>money-minded</strong> a.</td>
<td>obsessed with obtaining money (#stingy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>money-mind</strong> v.t.</td>
<td>want, like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Money-mind</strong> v.t.</td>
<td>want, like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mop</strong> p.n.</td>
<td>Mobile Police, an extremely aggressive force brought out in times of civil emergency nickname is ‘Kill and Go’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>moreso</strong> conj.</td>
<td>especially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>moto</strong> n.</td>
<td>car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>motorpark</strong> n.</td>
<td>garage for commercial vehicles, bus station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>move with</strong> v.p.</td>
<td>to accompany on a regular basis, usually implying friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mr. Hare</strong> p.n.</td>
<td>common protagonist of folk-tales in the north</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mr. Man</strong> sal.</td>
<td>Way of addressing s.o. unknown to you joc. Disappearing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mud</strong> v.</td>
<td>to slap dollops of mud on a house either in building or sealing cracks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>murtala</strong> n.</td>
<td>Twenty Naira banknote from the portrait of Gen. Murtala Mohammed who appears on the note</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nama n. zebu cow  <Hausa

Native Authority p.n. administrations
established in the colonial era as part of the
system of Indirect Rule

Naming ceremony n.p. Ceremony rather
similar to baptism  of Islamic origin?
Now normally replaced by child dedication in
the South

Native court n. courts established in the
colonial era to try cases according to customary
law

Native cow n. small local cow as opposed
to the Fulani zebu

Native doctor n. practitioner of traditional
medicine, cf. herbalist  GE.

Native law n.p. customary law of a
particular ethnic group, applied in customary
courts (q.v.) they tried him according to native
law  GE. this sounds rather archaic in SE but is
current in NE

Native potash n. potash obtained from burnt
plantain peelings and stumps of palm bunches

Neck-deep a. in deeply  She was
neck-deep in relations with Mr. A.  ? for SE
‘knee-deep’

Neighbourly a. neighbouring  Fulani from
neighbourly state of Borno

NEPA p.n. the national power company, often
used for electricity in generalNEPA has gone off
there’s no electricity <Nigerian Electric Power
Agency

Net v.t. to capture  The police netted
him

Never part. don’t  Never you be envious of
that which belongs to another!

News n. item of news  there is a news
that...

Next tomorrow adv.  the day after tomorrow

Ngbatì a.  Yoruba it is disheartening that the
Ngbatì press must do everything  (The News,
20:9, 3/2/03)

Nigerian factor n.   general explanation invoked
whenever a well-designed plan does not work out
as expected

Night-fighter n. prostitute

Nko s.t. indefinite generalizing tag
Suppose they sell the land and then
something comes up nko, what happens then?

No more a. any longer  there was
no more love between the couple the couple
didn’t love each other any longer

Non-challance/non-challant n., a.
nonchalance, nonchalant
Common written error

Not more adv.  no longer  he was not
more coming to that place

Not quite adv.p.  a little, not much  I
was sitting not quite far from you I was sitting
near you

Not quite long adv.p.  for only a short time  He
had been doing this for not quite long, when..

Not reach v.i. to be inadequate, to be not
enough  the money did not reach GE.

Novel n. reading matter of almost any type
except the Bible and newspapers

Now now adv.  immediately, at once Do
it now now!

Number six n. brain  Use your number
six!  student slang?

Nyash n.  genitals ?buttocks  < ?
Portuguese

Nylon [lilo] a. plastic (usually bag)
has begun to replace ‘leather’ in this context
In the Port Harcourt area, nylon now largely
replaced by waterproof in the sense of plastic
bag

O.

Oo s.t.  tag placed at the end of sentences, to soften
the statement or give it slight emphasis  I
think I would do it, oo! Go register now, oo [ID
Card poster, March 2003]

Oòò p.u.t.  tag placed at the beginning of
sentences, following the assertion of a previous
speaker indicating negative consequences
They promised to pay on Tuesday. Ooo!
Last month they were a week late

Oak-tree n. tree with strong wood, often
used for canoes  SNE. (Panda
oleosa Pierre PANDACEAE)

Oba n.  < Yoruba. Other
status titles are commonly used in the appropriate
part of the country: amanyanabo (Eastern Ijo)
etc.

Obechen.  trade-name for the tree Triplochiton
schleroxylon

Obong p.n.  Traditional ruler of Efik/Ibibio
peoples  < Efik/Ibibio
off v.t. to turn off, to switch off
light!
offsprings n. offspring My
offsprings are many
off head adv. something you know
without referring to a book, by heart I know this
off head < SE ‘off the top of my head’
office pin n. pin GE.
often and often adv. very often
Oga n. master, boss term of respect
often used partly ironically. How now, Oga? <
yoruba
ogbanje n. child that continually
reincarnates and dies to torment the parents
< Igbo = repeater = abiku < Yoruba
ogling a. qualifies a noun girls parading their
flesh in front of ogling men (Thisday 6.12.02)
ogogoro n. locally-distilled alcohol
< Yoruba
okada n. motor-bike taxi the okadas are
many < Okada, a former airline with a
somewhat unfortunate safety record
okpokoro n. dried, salted cod, imported
from Scandinavia, now an expensive delicacy
cf. also stockfish
okrika n. secondhand/used clothing
Omo™ n. any soap powder
GE. Omo is now discontinued in Europe but
those with longer memories will know that it
washes whiter
on v.t. to turn on, to switch on on the light! They
onned the generator.
on c. replaces ‘in’ in nominal phrases e.g. dealer
on as in He is a dealer on electrical goods the
default preposition in NE
on v. to have on if road safety stops you, you
must be on seat-belt i.e you must be wearing
your seat-belt
on admission adv.c. describes being admitted to
hospital I am on admission
on break adv. describes taking a break We
are on break
on fire adv.c. to be cooking the food is on fire
≠ SE ‘burning’
on seat adv.c. the expression to be on seat. is to be
present in the office He is on seat
on transfer adv.c. either being or already
transferred My brother is on transfer
one-one adv. one-by-one, singly he
gave out the oranges one-one. Make two-two
copies can be applied to any number, two-
two, three-three etc.
operate v.t. to operate on, be operated on
they will operate him tomorrow
opportune to p.v. to have the opportunity to
He was not opportune to go to Jos He didn’t
have a chance to go to Jos
original a. authentic original
one not a fake [applied to anything
manufactured: motor parts, electrical appliances
etc.] original village man really coming from the
village [but implying down-to-earth, not citified]
osomaalo n. originally a name for an
Ijesa Yoruba trade association but now a general
term of an Ijesa person Osomaalos made
money, built houses but they can’t pool resources
62]
other a. as in SE but used with reference to
both entities being discussed.
other time, the n. some time ago, on the last
occasion when.. He said he met you the
other time, and..
outing [ceremony] n.p. ceremony after the
funeral when the family puts on bright clothes
and goes to church together.
outrightly adv. completely They
outrightly objected to it
overflood v.i. to flood, to burst banks, to
gush out the river is overflooding GE.
overhurling n. overhauling
common error in signboards
overspeed v.i. to go too fast Do not
overspeed! GE.
oyibo n. white man oyibos get money
white people are rich Oyibo! is shouted at
foreigners in central and southwest Nigeria
Since the civil war it has largely replaced older
terms such as bekee and onye ocha in eastern
Nigeria
P.
pack v.i./t. to put away, to remove, to steal
they packed it they stole it packing of water
throwing out the water from a pond to catch the
fish
pack v.t. to put inside, to tie up, to confine
she has packed her hair she has tied it up in
a bun or ponytail. Those trousers pack your
buttocks very well
pack v.t. to park please pack your car well
common error on signboards
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Dictionary of Nigerian English</strong></th>
<th><strong>Circulation Draft</strong></th>
<th><strong>Roger Blench</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>pack</strong> p.v. pack in** to move in**</td>
<td>they have packed in</td>
<td><strong>pepper</strong> n. chilli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pack (out)</strong> p.v. pack (out)** to pack up and leave**</td>
<td>the landlord warned him to pack out</td>
<td><strong>TE. Capsicum annuum</strong> (≠ European pepper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pack</strong> v.t. pack (out)** to move in**</td>
<td>See where they are packing the sand from the riverbed</td>
<td><strong>people</strong> n. usu. in the expression How are your people? meaning extended family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>packer</strong> n. dustpan</td>
<td><strong>pepper-fruit</strong> n. fruit sp. chewed as a snack</td>
<td><strong>Dennettia tripetala</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>palaver</strong> n. discussion, trouble, matter</td>
<td>woman palaver GE. often used jocularly and in humorous versions of W. African speech. &lt; Portuguese palavra</td>
<td><strong>pepper soup</strong> n. type of consommé soup made with meat or fish and containing chilli pepper but no oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pain</strong> v.t. pain** to be painful**</td>
<td>This my leg pains me too much my leg is very painful it pains you, why? [common slogan on trucks] GE.</td>
<td><strong>peprish</strong> a. pepperythe soup is somehow peprish for ‘pepperish’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>palm-wine</strong> n. sap tapped from the terminal bud of various palms, which ferments and is used as a drink</td>
<td><strong>periwinkle</strong> n. small, black-shelled shellfish, extremely popular as food along the coast. <strong>Tymanotonus fuscatus</strong>. ≠ British periwinkle.</td>
<td><strong>petty petty</strong> a. small, trifling, unimportant Why do you give me such petty petty things? GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pam</strong> n. palm-wine</td>
<td><strong>pant</strong> n. women’s knickers</td>
<td><strong>her friend was a personnel at Kingsway</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pant</strong> n. women’sknickers</td>
<td>she tore her pant GE.</td>
<td><strong>Phar.</strong> n. pharmacist, abbreviation used on calling cards etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panya</strong> p.n. Fernando Po &lt; España</td>
<td><strong>pick</strong> (1)v.t. pick (1)** to get (usually a vehicle)**</td>
<td>He picked a taxi to Lagos GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>parable</strong> n. proverb</td>
<td><strong>pick</strong> (2)v.t. pick (2)** to pick up (phone)**</td>
<td>Will you not pick it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>parlour/palour</strong> n. applied both to beer-drinking places and to the sitting-room in a house. <strong>Beer palour or Let us go sit in the palour</strong> The spelling palour is common on notices. Despite the spelling, always pronounced palo</td>
<td><strong>piece</strong> n. measure of cloth</td>
<td><strong>GE.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>parlour party</strong> n.p. party held in the front room of the house</td>
<td><strong>piece of cake</strong> n.p. share of something they are always asking for their piece of cake ≠ SE ‘piece of cake’ for easy to do</td>
<td><strong>PILOT</strong> p.n. the number plate given to cars that drive in front of a big man cf. <strong>ESCORT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>parry away</strong> p.v. parry away** to fend off** Farmers try to parry away the Fulani from their fields</td>
<td><strong>pass</strong> c.a. to exceed, to surpass</td>
<td><strong>He</strong> picked a taxi to Lagos GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>particulars</strong> n. car papers</td>
<td><strong>pass</strong> v.i. to turn aside, to bend</td>
<td>go straight then pass right GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pass all</strong> v.p. best watch doctor pass all &lt;Pidgin. GE.</td>
<td><strong>pass away</strong> v.p. to pass the time over a period</td>
<td><strong>PIN</strong> that stick here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pass away</strong> v.p. to pass the time over a period</td>
<td>a novel would help me pass away the weekend</td>
<td><strong>pito</strong> n. local beer brewed from sorghum, millet etc. NNE &lt;Hausa. GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>passport</strong> n. passport photo</td>
<td><strong>place</strong> n. place of origin, either town, country or region where is your place? i.e. where do you come from?</td>
<td><strong>where is your place?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>patch</strong> v.t. to repair a puncture</td>
<td><strong>PILOT</strong> p.n. the number plate given to cars that drive in front of a big man cf. <strong>ESCORT</strong></td>
<td><strong>where is your place?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pear</strong> n. 1. avocado pear</td>
<td><strong>play</strong> n. dance or masquerade it is a play it is a masquerade or dance</td>
<td><strong>play</strong> v.t. to play as in SE, but also to perform dance or masqueradethey are playing a dodo they are performing a masquerade They are playing masquerade today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. fruit of indigenous tree</td>
<td><strong>play</strong> v.t. to caress sexually, make love They are playing love</td>
<td><strong>play</strong> v.t. to caress sexually, make love</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
play v.i. to forage about (animals)

playground n. place in a village where dances, masquerades, meetings etc. are held has no association with children

playmates n. two people in a joking relationship they are playmates GE. this implies they can abuse each other, sometimes violently, without offence being taken. Sometimes this relationship also exist between households, clans or even tribes

please s.t. inserted in various positions in a sentence to express deference No, please!

please for refusing

plenty n. plenty of GE. Pidgin

plumpy a. plump that woman is plumpy GE. (older?)

poach v.i. to have diarrhoea yesterday I was poaching N.B. does not mean you have taken a medicine. cf. purge

police n. policeman one police is there

police political election shorthand for the introduction of democratic elections in 1999 since there was politics we no longer pay tax on fish-ponds

politics n. shorthand for the introduction of democratic elections in 1999 since there was politics we no longer pay tax on fish-ponds

pol Stage name for the introduction of democratic elections in 1999 since there was politics we no longer pay tax on fish-ponds

pmade n. oily paste rubbed on the hair and body GE. can be extended to almost any sort of cream rubbed on the body

porridge 1. n. heavy dumpling-like porridge of cereals such as sorghum, millet etc. served as a staple Northern

porridge 2. n. cooked staple with sauce mixed in Southern

possible best n. best I have tried my possible best.

potash n. yellowish-grey stone from the North Ground for use in cooking and with snuff. A mixture of sodium and potassium carbonate.

potassium n. blue mineral taken as medicine

poultry n. poultry farm The committee inspected 15 poultries on campus.

pound v.t. to pound a staple into porridge GE. not usually found in other senses

praise-singer n. musician or singer who sings praises to eminent people in the North WAE

prawn n. prawn, but also shrimp and other smaller crustaceans such as sqills and ghost-shrimps

pregnate v.t. to make pregnant she has been pregnated. He has pregnated her

Also pregnant (stress on second syllable) dry-cleaning as in SE

press v.t. to iron He is pressing clothes ≠ dry-cleaning as in SE

price v.t. to find out the price of Please price tomatoes for me!

private part n.p. genitals GE.

properties n. property Collect your properties

prostitute v.i. to behave as a prostitute Becky began prostituting at age nineteen. [Information booklet]

provincial a. small-minded, dull he is a provincial man

pudding n. prepared food wrapped in leaves

puff-puff n. round fried cakes made from flour and sugar also poff-poff

puggy a. pure water n. water (from any source) sealed inside plastic bags and sold cold from the fridge in the street Viable small businesses ... are mostly in such trades as hair dressing and barbing salons, tailoring shops as well as “pure water” packaging businesses. (Guardian 11.10.02 p. 22, col. 2)

purge v.i. to have diarrhoea yesterday I was purging N.B. does not mean you have taken a medicine. cf. poach

pushful a. pushy, ambitious, go-ahead

put on v.t. as in SE, but also ‘to wear’ He is putting on shoes He is wearing shoes

put to bed v.i./t. to give birth (to) She put to bed a bouncing baby boy

put to birth v.i./t. to give birth
qualitative a. quality The thing is qualitative It is of good quality

quarrel v.t. to argue with s.o. I quarrelled with him I argued with him

Queen’s English n.p. Standard Nigerian English in contrast to Broken English (q.v.). Mainly SNE

quelea (bird) n. black-faced dioch, a major agricultural pest in semi-arid Nigeria < Scientific name Quelea quelea

quench v.i./t. to stop, to turn off, to extinguish The thing has quenched It has stopped. Quench it! Turn it off cf. colonial era story of someone buying an electric stove/oven (then a novelty) just before going on leave, and asking cook on his return how it was working: reply “Fine! Fire never quench!”

query v.t. to question intensively [over a bureaucratic misdeed] The headmaster queried him seriously

quite a. qualifier in the sense of ‘very’ but used with negatives See ‘not quite’

Quite an age! sal. I haven’t seen you for ages!

rabbit n. giant rat, Cricetomys, widely sold in markets and by the roadside. cf. giant rat SNE only. Rabbit as in SE in NNE.

rank xerox n. copying in an exam exactly, contrast dubbing St. sl.

rascal a. badly-behaved, criminal Those rascal boys did this!

rascality n. bad behaviour he never tires of his rascality

rascally a. badly-behaved, criminal they are rascally they behave badly

rate n. usu. in the expression at the rate of xx meaning ‘it cost xx’

reach v.i./t. to reach in SE, but also intransitively we have reach we have arrived

recent, of recent adv. recently I have not seen him of recent

Reduce! excl. Lower the price!

refutal n. refutation commonly used in newspapers to deny s.t. is the case

remain v.t. to be left over remain ten Naira there is ten Naira left GE.

remotely adv. in a remote place, far away he lives remotely in the village he lives far away in a village

rentagen. rent

reply v.i. to reply to he replied me

request for v.t. to request I wish to request for a loan. GE. (on the model of ask for)

research n. used with indefinite article The Hart Report is a very treacherous historical document to rely on for a serious research. (Aye, E. U. 2002. The origin and migrations of the Efiks. Calabar: The Author.)

result to v.t. result in They will ask you some tough questions which will result to your death if you are unable to answer them well. RF

revenge v.i. to revenge an action I will revenge N.B. has a less serious, more jocular aspect than SE.

rewind v.i. repeat, start over Prof I beg, rewind st. sl.

ripe v.i. to ripen the mango has riped GE.

ritualist n. follower of traditional religion, but often with implication of s.o. who kills others for ritual purposes

road-safety n. A special unit intended to enforce road-safety regulations the road-safety are taking bribe on Abuja road

round n. bout of sexual activity inability to go a second round [common expression in adverts for traditional medicine]

roundlight n. Mercedes Benz sp. [defined as] the type of Mercedes Benz with two pairs of round headlights that currently represents the summit of material achievement (NI 343:20.col.1)

roselle n. green leaf, Hibiscus sabdariffa, used to make soup TE. also sorrel (q.v.)

rub minds v.p. to interact with, to discuss with let us rub minds

rubber [roba] n. A. any strip of elastic material, such as the flexible strips used to attach loads to a bicycle use roba to fix it to the bicycle B. plastic bowl, bucket or similar open container GE. around Port Harcourt
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>S.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sakara n.</td>
<td>popular music style using a small frame-drum, <em>sakara</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salla(h) p.n.</td>
<td>Islamic festivals of Id-el-Fitr and Id-el-Kebir. <em>I am going for Salla</em> GE. &lt;Arabic <em>sala</em> 'pray'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sawasawa n.</td>
<td>fruit sp. <em>Annona squamosa</em> cf. also <em>soursop</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanitation n.</td>
<td>custom of staying in the house on some Saturday mornings so that the householders could keep 'the environment' clean. Begun in the 1970s and now discontinued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sapara n.</td>
<td>lighter, more casual form of <em>agbada</em> &lt;name of Yoruba doctor who introduced it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapele n.</td>
<td>trade-name for <em>Entandrophragma cylindricum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>say v.t.</td>
<td>usu. in the expression <em>What says the time?</em> i.e. ‘What is the time?’</td>
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<tr>
<td>scattered p.a.</td>
<td>untidy, messy <em>The house is scattered</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>scent-leaf n.</td>
<td>scented green leaf <em>Ocimum gratissimum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>schooling n.</td>
<td>at school <em>Where are you schooling?</em> N.B. implies secondary school not University</td>
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<tr>
<td>scrape v.t.</td>
<td>to shave off <em>He scraped his head</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sea n.</td>
<td>wide river or estuary, not the ocean <em>Nigerian Delta English</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sea-pirates n. pl.</td>
<td>pirates who rob passengers and leave them stranded while they make off with the boat (the equivalent on the rivers of armed robbers on the roads)</td>
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<tr>
<td>second burial n.p.</td>
<td>ceremony held a year or more after the death of an important person</td>
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<tr>
<td>security n.</td>
<td>security man, guard &quot;<em>Where is the security for this building?</em>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see flower v.p.</td>
<td>to menstruate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see pepper v.p.</td>
<td>to get or be in trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sef u.t.</td>
<td>emphatic? <em>I have been hearing of this madam and saying who is this woman, sef?</em> of Pidgin origin although used more widely now Dis God sef? <em>Na wa oh:- me I no know</em> How I go take think am sef <em>E just dey surprise me every time I think of am!</em> (Pidgin poem by B. A. Mukoro-Penawei)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seize v.t.</td>
<td>to cut off [electricity] <em>NEPA has seized the light</em> cf. also <em>take</em> They have taken light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>select v.t.</td>
<td>to separate out, e.g. into large and small sizes <em>she was selecting the good groundnuts</em> contrasted with choose (q.v.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sell out v.p.</td>
<td>to sell <em>she is selling out local Maggi</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semi-singlet n.</td>
<td>type of t-shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>send-forth party n.p.</td>
<td>party to celebrate either a girl getting engaged or someone being posted to another part of the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>senior v.t.</td>
<td>to be older than <em>He seniors me</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>senior service n.p.</td>
<td>senior ranks of the civil service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>series n.</td>
<td>Used without indefinite article <em>It has a hard, paper-like texture, which softens after series of washings. (Nigerian Tribune 25.06.02 p4).</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seriously adv.</td>
<td>strongly, intensely <em>I will query you seriously I will ensure you are questioned intensively [over a bureaucratic misdeed]</em> GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sew v.t.</td>
<td>to make (by sewing) <em>damask was used to sew iro and buba.</em> (Nigerian Tribune 25.06.02 p4 GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sex v.t.</td>
<td>to have sex with s.o. <em>he sexed her very well</em> he engaged in energetic sex with her GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sha p.u.t.</td>
<td>makes the sentence that follows conditional but often simultaneously asks a question &quot;<em>Sh, you are going to the market, buy me some tomatoes will you please?</em> If you are going to the market, please buy me some tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shall have aux</td>
<td>have (in future context) cf. 19th c. English: ‘When the seas and large rivers of our globe shall have been more fully explored, many animals may be brought to knowledge of the naturalist, which at present are known only in the state of fossils’ G. Young 1840 Scriptural geology (cited in S. Winchester 2001 (2002) The map that changed the world, p.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share v.t.</td>
<td>to deal (cards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharp v.t.</td>
<td>to sharpen <em>he was sharpening the knife</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shea n.</td>
<td>tree, <em>Vitellaria paradoxa</em> GE. formerly the most common source of oil in savanna areas, but now falling into disuse. Also <em>shea-oak</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>shea-butter</td>
<td>n. oil from the shea tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shea-oak</td>
<td>n. shea tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shock</td>
<td>v.t. to give ... a shock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short knicker</td>
<td>n.p. shorts you are wearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shout on</td>
<td>p.v. to shout at, to talk to vigorously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shovel</td>
<td>n. spade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>signboard</td>
<td>n. sign, advertising hoarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silk-cotton</td>
<td>n. kapok tree, <em>Ceiba pentandra</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>since long</td>
<td>adv.p. for a long time, since long ago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sister</td>
<td>n. respect term for woman of approximately equal age and status to the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sit down</td>
<td>v.i. to stay in one place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>size</td>
<td>v.t. to be the right size for, to fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slang</td>
<td>n. slang expression, can be pluralized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slap</td>
<td>v.t. to slap, but metaphorically to give great offence to so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleep off</td>
<td>v.p. to go to sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slippers</td>
<td>n. flip-flops, flat rubber beach-shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small</td>
<td>a. applied to people (usually small boy, small girl), unimportant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small chop</td>
<td>n.p. snacks, small dishes of food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small-small</td>
<td>adv. little by little, in small amounts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dictionary of Nigerian English Circulation Draft**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>smell pepper</td>
<td>v.p. to get a shock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snail-speed</td>
<td>a. slow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snake-lizard</td>
<td>n. skink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snap</td>
<td>v.t. to photograph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so</td>
<td>v.c. that s.t. is the case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so far as</td>
<td>adv. p. for ‘Insofar as’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sokoto</td>
<td>n. traditional dress associated with Sokoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solid food</td>
<td>n. any type of pounded staple or food that does not come in separated grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some funny thing</td>
<td>n.p. strange thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>somebody</td>
<td>n. person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorry!</td>
<td>excl. Exclamation used when someone hurts themselves or suffers a loss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sort</td>
<td>v.t. bribe a lecturer to pass an exam or get a better grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sorting</td>
<td>n. bribing of a lecturer to pass an exam or get a better grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so-so</td>
<td>a. very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soup</td>
<td>n. sauce accompanying any pounded staple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soursop</td>
<td>n. fruit of West Indian origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sawasawa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spark</td>
<td>v.i. to produce showers of sparks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*NEPA wire is sparking* the electricity wires are showering sparks not uncommon in the rainy season and a great source of entertainment to all.
Dictionary of Nigerian English

those who witness it. Nigeria's equivalent of the Northern lights.

sparks v.t. to connect, as in electrical wiring

Spark it! [said by car mechanic to second mechanic to make a connection] GE.

specie n. singular of species

spent horse n.p. person who no longer has anything to contribute

spent force

spoil v.i./t. to go bad, to no longer work

The thing has spoiled. It has stopped working. They have spoiled all they've messed everything up GE.

spottish a. spotted the animal is somehow spottish

spray v.t. to place money on the forehead of a dancer or musician at a ceremony

spring-bed n. bed with springs as opposed to hard base

squat, to v.i. to stay with friends or relatives temporarily [usually because you cannot stay in your own home]

she is just there, squatting

squelch v.i./t. to finish, to stop working (device)

staff n. staff member, co-worker

He is a staff at the school. Also in plural. They are staffs at the college Also I had lunch with one of my staffs GE.

steal away v.t. to steal

I don't park my car on the road, in case thieves steal it away.

stew n. sauce accompanying staple that is boiled, such as yam, rice etc.

GE.

stockfish n. dried, salted cod, imported from Scandinavia, now an expensive delicacy GE. cf. also okpokoro

storey building n.p. any building with more than one storey GE.

stranger n. visitor, guest

I see you have strangers visiting GE. adapted from Nigerian languages where stranger and visitor are often the same word

strolling n. wandering about in a social fashion like the Mediterranean promenade, but also applied to animals

we are going for strolling or the pig has gone for strolling

strong food n. any type of pounded staple or food that does not come in separated grains applies to yam, pounded cereals etc.

Contrast with ‘light food’. Also ‘solid food’.

stupid a. irresponsible, uncontrolled, badly-behaved

those machine boys are very stupid

the motor-cycle taxi drivers are very irresponsible

sweet a. delicious, good-tasting, not necessarily applied to sweet things. Extended to things other than food

the soup is very sweet the sauce is delicious The music/dance is very sweet GE.

sugar-daddy n. older man who supports younger woman in exchange for sex

GE. < American English

sugar-mummy n. older woman who supports younger man in exchange for sex

GE. Sugar-daddy is a longstanding Americanism but sugar-mummy is a more recent West African formation.

sue to court v.p. to bring a charge against s.o.

He will sue me to court he will bring a charge against me

suffer v.i. to make things difficult for s.o.

He was suffering me he was making things difficult for me

suya n. kebab, roasted meat on stick

University of suya [sign on roadside kebab stand] <Hausa

swallow v.i./t. to eat pounded yam or other foods that do not require chewing

No, I don't want jollof rice, I want to swallow i.e. I want to eat yam etc.

sweet a. good-tasting, desirable

The soup was very sweet ≠ sugary

swell-fish n. puffer-fish

Tetraodon spp.

T.

tablet n. pills, a pill

I am going to town to look for tablet

Taiwan adj. inferior type of manufactured article (contrast Belgian)

take v.t. to eat, to prefer a type of food or drink

Can you take Nigerian food? Do you eat Nigerian food? GE.

take v.t. cut (power)

They have taken light the electricity has gone off also seize

take in p.v. to become pregnant, to conceive

She has taken in. Their daughter took in somebody

take it to be p.v. to assume that s.t. is x

Take time! excl. used to urge s.o. to do s.t. slowly and carefully

talk less conj. let alone

A lady officer had said that they had not been able to
### Dictionary of Nigerian English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>honour</td>
<td>tickets bought in Cameroon, talk less of the one from Nigeria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamba</td>
<td>n. finger-millet &lt; Hausa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taste</td>
<td>v.i. to taste [but without object] the beans do not taste well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tasteful</td>
<td>a. tasty for your tasteful food [typical restaurant sign]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taxi-park</td>
<td>n. place where long-distance taxis congregate cf. also motor-park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tea-bush</td>
<td>n. Ocimum gratissimum Term taught in schools in colonial period. = scent-leaf</td>
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<tr>
<td>tear</td>
<td>v.i./t. to be torn or to tear up The cloth has torn. You can tear it, it is useless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tell lie</td>
<td>v.p. to tell a lie He is telling lie!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temporal</td>
<td>a. temporary This patch is only temporal, we will fix it properly tomorrow GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ten-pounder</td>
<td>n. West African ladyfish Elops lacerta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tent</td>
<td>n. mosquito net ? restricted to the Delta area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>dem. fronted demonstrative That your book</td>
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<tr>
<td>thatch</td>
<td>n. thatching-mat, many of which are used to thatch a house They have bought many thatches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>themselves</td>
<td>pron. each other My sisters love themselves. or The Husband and Wife who hate themselves [title of an Onitsha novel]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thinking nothing</td>
<td>v.p. to not be thinking about anything particular I was sitting there, thinking nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those days, in</td>
<td>adv. p. in the far past People used to go about naked in those days.</td>
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<tr>
<td>thunder protector</td>
<td>n. lightning protector</td>
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<tr>
<td>tiger</td>
<td>n. leopard ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiger-nut</td>
<td>n. sweet, edible corn, Cyperus esculentus TE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tight</td>
<td>v.t. to tighten tight the screw GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tight friend</td>
<td>a.p. close friend</td>
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<tr>
<td>till date</td>
<td>a.p. up till now Thank you, god, for sparing our lives till date! [Ovation, Issue 53:132, 2003]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinted</td>
<td>a. with tinted windows he always goes about in tinted cars he travels in a car with smoked-glass windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tokunbo</td>
<td>n. used vehicle, stereotypically imported from Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tolololo</td>
<td>as in tololo head, i.e. stupid that tololo head is still trailing him &lt; Hausa, Yoruba tolololo, 'turkey'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tomo</td>
<td>n. palm-wine</td>
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<tr>
<td>tomtom</td>
<td>n. slit-gong SNE. N.B. This sounds rather patronising in SE but is used without pejorative implications in NE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tong</td>
<td>v.t. to straighten with tongs tonging, often seen on hairdressers’ adverts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>too much</td>
<td>adv. a great deal, but not with the implication of excessively He disturbs me too much GE. the ‘too’ is often lengthened and given a glide tone</td>
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<tr>
<td>torchlight</td>
<td>n. torch [Amer. flashlight]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toto</td>
<td>n. vagina GE. also tutu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tough</td>
<td>a. Person who tries to gain prestige by spending money He is a tough man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>towel</td>
<td>n. stomach-lining of animals From its appearance. Commonly sold in the market place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trace out</td>
<td>p.v.t. to track down, to find the location of I will go and trace him out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trafficate</td>
<td>v.i. to use the indicators on a car GE. N.B. not considered archaic in NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trafficator</td>
<td>n. indicator light on vehicle N.B. not considered archaic in NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transport</td>
<td>n. A. transportation I am going to the taxi-park to try and pick transport GE. B. money for transport What of my transport?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travelled</td>
<td>v.i. used to indicate not present out of town Where is x? He has travelled! GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trek</td>
<td>v.i. to go by foot I must trek to market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trickish</td>
<td>a. tricky he is somehow trickish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tryv.i.</td>
<td>to have made an effort and succeeded You have tried! You have worked hard to achieve this. Try your possible best! Do your best!GE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tube</td>
<td>n. cigarette-holder SNE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tune to...</td>
<td>p.v. to put on music from a particular artist or country Tune to Congo! Put on Zairean music!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
turn v.t. to transfer food or liquid from one container to another  Please, turn the leftover soup into that plastic container the image is turning out solid food as you might turn out a cake, but the meaning has been extended
turner n. large wooden spatula or paddle used for stirring starch and garri

under repair a.p. being repaired  My moto is under repair

uniform n. same material worn by members of a group  It is common for members of the same family, church group etc. to have a dress made up from identical cloth; used or ceremonial purposes
unless a. used in response to a question, meaning roughly ‘No, only x’  Do you get oranges? Unless mango.
up-and-down n. woman’s dress where the blouse and wrapper are made from the same material  GE.
up to v.c. capable of doing s.t.  he is up to he can do it
up-wine n. wine tapped from a standing oil palm
up-yam n. aerial yam  Dioscorea bulbifera

upliftment n. uplifting  This will contribute to the upliftment of the population

upon all (that) conj.p. despite that  Upon all that, he still goes there

use v.a. in use to, implying to do s.t.
regularly  he use to come here he comes here regularly.  GE. Marks habitual, extended to present from SE used to

V.

V-boot n. fashionable type of Mercedes Benz (preceding roundlight?)
VCD plate n. video-disc
vampire n. 1. nocturnal bird which enters and makes a noise inside roof of buildings In Williamson (ined.)

2. hence, a bird believed to be housing the spirit of a witch  When shot down, it is not to be touched but burnt to ashes, after which the witch is believed to die within a few days

very a. actual  he is the very boy he’s the actual person  arch. SE

vex v.i. to get annoyed  Mastah, no (go) vex!  Boss, don’t get annoyed Pidgin

Vice n. Vice-President  He was to be the Vice of Abiola

vagina n. common spelling of vagina presumably by confusion with virgin

vulcanise v.t. to repair a puncture  go and vulcanise the tyre  GE. archaic in SE but not in West Africa

vulcaniser n. one who repairs tyres  GE. archaic SE

W.

wack v. to eat  Man must wack!  Name of chop-bar students’ slang <Pidgin

wahala n. trouble, problem  I had plenty wahala I had lots of trouble wahala for me  < Hausa. GE.

waist n. back, lower back  My waist is paining me  I have back-pain GE.

walnut n. nut sp. eaten as a snack  Tetracarphidium conophorum

want v.i. to be about to, to be able to  The car didn’t want to start  SNE

wash v.t. 1. to develop film  So far they didn’t wash it they haven’t developed it yet v.t. 2. to celebrate a new birth or acquisition such as a car  When will you wash the car?  When will you have a small celebration for your new car?  ?  < Hausa. e.g. Za mu wanke shi we will wash it, i.e. celebrate it

wash off v.t. to wash out, clean off  he was washing off his dress  i.e. he was cleaning his clothes

watchnight n. night-watchman giving way to security(-man)

waterproof n. plastic bag

wave v.t. to wave at  I waved him but he did not see me

wax n. wax-printed decorative cloth, formerly often from Holland  she went to market to buy wax  also Dutch wax

wear v.t. put on  Wear your shoes!  (Parent to child)
wears n. pl. clothes *Unisex wears* [advert.]

weave-on (also weavon) n. hairdressing style where additional hair is added to the natural one GE

Wellodone! excl. General approval after someone has completed s.t. *Afternoon! Wellodone!* [Also encouragement to someone working: equivalent to Igbo *Jisi iké*, Yoruba *E kúse*! [check], etc.]

well-fed a. fat [as SE but applied to animals] *a gift of a well-fed cow*

well-well adv. very well *You do this thing well-well You should do it very well*

Pidgin

*what and what* int. Used when the anticipated reply includes more than one item. *What and what did you buy?* GE

*whether* conj. stands for if, to see if… *let us go to the office, whether he is there*

*whereby* conj. ????

wild pumpkin n. climbing plant with yellow flowers whose fruit is used as sponge *Luffa cylindrica*

will aux. *would* *he will like to go to Abuja*

windstrap n. whirlwind, tornado used in Kaduna. Locally analysed as ‘wind’s trap’.

*within* adv. inside [but not in an inner room] *He is within. [i.e. he is somewhere in the building]*


*wrap* n. piece of food wrapped in a leaf *She gave me a wrap of moinmoin she gave me one leaf-packet of cooked bean paste*

*wrapper* n. cloth worn wrapped around the body from the waist to below the knees by males or females *tie your wrapper well fix your cloth so that it stays in place*

*wolf* n. hyena ME

*woman* a. female *the market is completely a women affair*

*Wonderful!* excl. Exclamation used for a surprising event of any type. GE. Thus on hearing of the death of a close relative it would be appropriate to say Wonderful! *? calque of Hausa Mamaki!*

*working-place* n. work-place

*worry* v.t. to annoy, to trouble *This thing worries me too much* GE.

*work-bar* n. commission claimed from a supercargo by the representatives of a house to which a trade belongs on every twenty puncheons of oil bought Niger Delta, archaic

*would* aux. will *Federal Government would solve light problems by next year*

X.

Y.

*yard* n. length of cloth *I went to market to buy some yards*

*yellow* a. light-skinned *See that yellow boy!*

*yellow fever* n. hepatitis, jaundice

*Yellow Fever* n. traffic policeman *A Yellow Fever stopped me* so named because of their orange uniforms

*Yes now!* excl. Response of encouragement to rhetorical polar question. *Shall I go buy wrapper at the market? Yes, now!* Pronounced with a rising intonation on ‘now’.

Z.

*zana mat* n. mat made from a heavy grass, used for doors and fencing < Hausa. GE.

*zinc* n. corrugated iron sheets used for roofing *Remain one zinc to complete it. It only needs one sheet of corrugated iron to complete [the roof]*.

*zone* v.t. to practise zoning (q.v.)

*zoning* n. common political practice designed to reduce ethnic tension, whereby political positions are shared among areas in such a way that particular posts are shared out ahead of the election to specific areas; competition for each post is then limited to people from the agreed area
### Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>404</td>
<td>dogmeat</td>
<td>404 is ready sign outside an eating establishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cross River, Akwa Ibom only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>419</td>
<td>monetary fraud</td>
<td>he is trying 419 on them &lt;the number of the act defining this as a crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>504</td>
<td>Peugeot 504 saloon car, once almost the only brand on the roads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>911</td>
<td>Mercedes-Benz 911 truck, with built-up wooden sides, the common workhorse of commercial goods transport in Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>