

## **A pragmatic analysis of the slang expressions, *no gree & oya* in Nigerian English**

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### ***Abstract***

*Slang occupies a unique place in the dynamic landscape of language in every society. One of such slang expressions that has gained popularity in Nigeria in 2024 is the phrase "No Gree For Anybody." It is a slogan that inspires self-confidence and resistance against all forms of oppression and intimidation. Oya" on the other hand is a Yoruba expression which means "now" or "quick". "No Gree..." and "Oya" are two expressions in Nigerian English that are analysed in this paper with a view to establishing their sources, pragmatic meaning, relevance, significance and functions in Nigerian English usage. The study adopts an eclectic method of data analysis, combining both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. The data for this study is culled from nairaland.com, a website in Nigeria which hosts conversations on issues of public interest. Excerpts from the selected data are analysed using Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's pragmatic theory of relevance, taking into account, linguistic and social considerations in the interpretation of discourse. From the study it is found that "No Gree" and "Oya" form part of the lexicon of Nigerian English and have variety of meanings, significance and functions in Nigerian English usage. "No gree..." is used to express resistance, violence, resilience,*

*confidence and determination while "oya" helps to signal challenge, promptness, humour and time sequence.*

**Keywords:** *slang, pragmatic marker, relevance theory, procedural meaning, language variation*

## **Introduction**

The objective of this study is to identify and analyse selected slang expressions in Nigerian English with the aim of establishing their sources, pragmatic meaning, relevance, significance and functions in Nigerian English usage. The slang expressions under review are "oya" and "no gree". By identifying and analysing these pragmatic markers, the study aims to expand the range of lexical augmentation in the development of English language in Nigeria and advance knowledge in language variation.

The origin of the slang "No Gree for Anybody" is hard to trace. However, some sources suggest that it may have been inspired by a gospel song titled "I No Go Gree" by Sister Agatha Moses in her album "Thank You" (Chukwu, 1). The song, which was released in 2003, has a chorus that repeats the phrase "I no go gree" over and over again. The song is a declaration of resistance to evil and a determination to succeed against all oppositions.

The song became a hit and was widely played in public places, radio stations and churches. Many Nigerians adopted the phrase and started using it in their everyday conversations. The phrase soon evolved into "No Gree for Anybody". The slang also gained popularity on social media, especially on Twitter, where it is often used as a hashtag or a meme.

The term can be used in various contexts such as politics, sports, entertainment, business, education, and social media. It can

be used to show that one is not afraid of one's rival or opponent. It can also be used to express a feeling of dominance, uniqueness, excellence, resilience or a determination to succeed.

The term can also be used sarcastically or ironically, to mock or expose the hypocrisy, incompetence, or dishonesty of someone or something. For example, a journalist may say "No Gree for Anybody" to reveal the corruption or scandals of a public figure. A comedian may say "No Gree for Anybody" to make fun of the absurdity or stupidity of a situation. A protester may say "No Gree for Anybody" to challenge the injustice or oppression of a system. A whistleblower may say "No Gree for Anybody" to expose the secrets or crimes of an organization (Chukwu, 3).

The phrase, 'no gree for anybody' represents a willingness to stand up for oneself and not give in to any opposition or pressure. It is a verbal stance against anyone or anything that tries to intimidate, oppress or undermine one's rights, views or interests. It is a phrase that expresses confidence and self-assertion. It is also a way of refuting misconceptions and setting the record straight any day, anytime. The phrase "No gree for anybody" has transcended linguistic boundaries to become a symbol of personal empowerment and self-determination.

"Oya" on the other hand is a Yoruba expression which means "now" or "quick". "No Gree..." and "Oya" are two expressions in Nigerian English usage that are analysed in this paper. The addition of local expressions from local languages in Nigeria has led to the

expansion of the the English language in Nigeria. Many pragmatic markers in Nigerian English have been studied over the years. They include: as in, like, it is well, kai, haba, chei, chai, mehn, mtchew, jare, nna, omo and you see. This study introduces two discourse markers not previously in the literature, with the hope of showing how they function in Nigerian English usage.

The study covers the following pragmatic markers of the slang expressions "oya" and "no gree" used in Nigerian English and they are described within the framework of procedural pragmatics. The Nigerian English exhibits many discourse or pragmatic markers, but these ones are chosen because they have not been studied previously in this manner; yet they are popular among Nigerian English speakers, and they represent valuable additions to the description of language variation in Nigeria.

This study employs mixed approach which combines the quantitative and the qualitative approach to the analysis of data. The quantitative approach is adopted to show the occurrences of each of the linguistic items extracted from the corpus, while the qualitative approach is used to read the corpus, search for repeated patterns of language use and provide in-depth analysis of the functions of these bilingual pragmatic markers. The study adopts non-probability sampling method, precisely convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technology which allows the researchers to utilize a sample which is readily available and they have access to (Golzar, 72). The data for this study is culled from nairaland.com, a website in Nigeria which hosts conversations on topical issues. Excerpts from the selected data are analysed using Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **Relevance theory**

Relevance theory was first developed by Sperber and Wilson drawing inspiration from the works of Paul Grice. "Building on insights arising from their critique of Grice, Sperber and Wilson developed their suggestion that considerations of relevance guide the processes of utterance interpretation" (Clark, 77). Sperber and Wilson define "relevant communication" as "information that modifies and improves an overall representation of the world" by connecting with previous knowledge; that is, information that is worthy of attention" (71).

An utterance is said to be relevant to an individual if it requires less mental processing effort to process the information and yields maximum cognitive effects on the individual. As Sperber and Wilson puts it, "an utterance – or any other observed phenomenon – is relevant to an individual to the extent that its positive cognitive effects on the individual are large and the mental processing effort to achieve these effects is small" (153). Relevance is a comparative property: "the more positive cognitive effects and the less processing effort, the more relevant the utterance" (Sperber and Wilson, 145).

An utterance has more cognitive effects "if it contains new information that is somehow related to the addressee's current cognitive environment, so that he can draw conclusions from the combined old and new data" (Sperber and Wilson, Relevance, 108). "The cognitive effect is said to be positive if it helps the individual to achieve its communication goals" (Sperber and Wilson, 108).

This can be illustrated with the examples below:

Supposing Evelyn asked:

(a) Is it raining?

And Annabel replied:

(b) Yes, it is.

This response is relevant because it confirms Evelyn assumption and accounts for a (positive) cognitive effect. Now imagine Annabel replied instead to say:

(c) Yes, it is raining and it rained in the village on the first of May 2020.

If nothing follows from knowing whether it rained in the village on the 1st of May 2020, then (c) is less relevant than (b). This follows because (b) requires more processing effort but does not lead to any extra cognitive effects.

This theory is based on two general claims about the role of relevance in cognition and communication. “Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance” and “every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance” (Sperber and Wilson, 260).

Within the relevance theoretical framework, utterance interpretation is not merely a matter of encoding and decoding information but an inferential process in which the addressee draws inferences on the bases of the "literal meaning" of an utterance

alongside the addressee's real-world knowledge, sensory input, and other relevant information including the intention of the addresser.

### **Relevance theory and procedural meaning**

Two types of linguistic encoding of information are identified within the relevance theoretical framework. The conceptual encoding which is a prerequisite for construing conceptual representations needed as input to inferential processes of utterance interpretation and the procedural encoding which serves to constrain the inferential computations performed over conceptual representations arrived at through grammar-driven decoding in conjunction with pragmatic inference (Blackmore, 187; Wilson and Sperber, 39 and Nicolle, 16). Conceptually encoded lexical items e.g., tree, leap, etc., trigger concepts. That is, they are linguistic representations of thoughts that are capable of being brought to consciousness, reflected on and used in general inference (Wilson, 11).

Robyn Carston explains that procedural encoding acts as clues to the pragmatic inferences the hearer is to carry out (“Procedural Meaning” 161). Since procedural encoding aids in the inferential process, it is seen as effort-saving during interpretation (Nicolle, “Pragmatic Aspects” 407).

Wilson and Sperber submits that the lexically defined role of certain linguistic expressions is to constrain the inferential processing involved in the recovery of explicitly communicated information (39). This means that discourse markers aid hearers’ interpretation of a speaker's utterance by narrowing the meaning.

There is always a significant difference between what is linguistically encoded and what the speaker actually intends to communicate. The gap between what is intended and what is

eventually said is what Carston calls "underdeterminacy thesis" (Carston, 19), illustrating the idea that linguistically encoded meanings always significantly underdetermine intended meanings. The difference between what is encoded and the meanings is achieved by pragmatic inference.

Procedural meaning consists of constraints over how to retrieve propositional constituents from lexical items. In other words, it consists of rules that guide the speaker or hearer in the interpretive process, in assigning a value to an expression. Both types of encoding, conceptual and procedural, interact with new and existing assumptions to form explicatures and implicatures (Sperber & Wilson, *Relevance*, 258).

The foundations of relevance theory have been criticised because relevance, in the technical sense it is used there, cannot be measured, since it is not possible to say what exactly is meant by "relevant enough" and "the most relevant" (Davis, 12). Again, the theory has been criticised for being too individualistic and ignoring the social elements of communication (Mey and Talbot, 14).

Stephen Levinson sees relevance theory as too reductionist, as a single principle cannot account for the large variety of pragmatic phenomena such as implicatures. In particular, he argues that this theory cannot account for generalized conversational implicatures because it is inherently a theory of context dependency. Also, Levinson argues that relevance theory cannot explain how we arrive at implicated premises via creative processes" (465 - 466).

In spite of all these criticisms, the theory is considered to be an improvement of Grice cooperative principle and remains a major milestone in the interpretive process of human communication.

## **Pragmatics markers**

Pragmatic markers are linguistic items “which signal the relationship of the basic message to the foregoing discourse” (Fraser, *Pragmatic Markers* 186). They are “linguistically encoded clues which signal the speakers' potential communicative intentions” (Schiffrin, “Discourse Marker,” 936). Discourse or pragmatic markers generally refer to “a syntactically heterogeneous class of expressions which are distinguished by their function in discourse and the kind of meaning they encode” (Blakemore 2006:221). They are linguistic items which aid the interpretation of the procedural meaning of utterances. Following Blakemore’s model, some examples of discourse markers in English include: well, but, so, indeed, in other words, as a result, now

Bruce Fraser identifies two types meaning, namely, content or conceptual meaning and procedural or pragmatic meaning. Fraser refers to content meaning as “the literal interpretation of the sentence”, a more less explicit representation of some state of the world that the speaker intends to bring to the hearer's attention, while the pragmatic meaning is concerned with the speaker's communicative intention, “the direct message the speaker conveys in uttering the sentence” (*Pragmatic Markers* 186).

Most researchers agree that the use of discourse markers facilitates the hearer's task of understanding the speaker's utterances. They serve as clues or guides in the interpretation of utterances. "Discourse markers are linguistic, paralinguistic and non-verbal elements that signal relations between units of talk by virtue of their syntactic relations and semantic properties and by virtue of their sequential relations as initial or terminal brackets demarcating discourse units" (Schiffrin, 31).

### **Review of related scholarship and justification of study**

Scholars over the years have done extensive studies on pragmatic or discourse markers. Examples of such scholars include: Gisle Andersen, Rotimi Oladipupo, Foluke Olayinka Onuabonah, Felix Nwabeze Ogoanah, Samuel Adeyanju, Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantankah and Ben Kudus Yussif. Gisle Andersen examines the use of "like" as a pragmatic marker in English conversation. He argues that this pragmatic marker provides speakers whose dialect includes this linguistic resource with a means to dissociate themselves slightly from the expressions contained in the utterance. He claims that the use of like commonly agrees with semantically loose use of expressions and provides a procedural signal about the need for enrichment or loosening of the following material. He adds that like can also occur in contexts where there is no semantic discrepancy between the concept denoted by the linguistic expression used and the concept that figures in the speaker's thought.

Andersen introduces the notion of metalinguistic use of like, in which the marker qualifies the following material in terms of its formal rather than semantic properties and "expresses a certain psychological distance to the expressions used" (Pragmatic Marker 150). According to him, "like" in its most general use, "provides the hearer with a signal that a less-than literal interpretation of the utterance particularly, the immediately following material is the most relevant one" (Pragmatic Marker, 150). He concludes that "like" in a metalinguistic use may suggest that alternative modes of expression may be equally appropriate, or more appropriate, or that the expression chosen is one which is, to some extent, stylistically awkward for the speaker to use.

Ogoanah Felix and Samuel Adeyanju in *The contextual implication of "like" and "as in" as pragmatic markers in Nigerian English Usage* analyse these two markers with examples from spoken data within the relevance theoretic framework of inferential pragmatics. They examine "like" and "as in" in terms of their differences, similarities, functions and contextual sensitivity in relation to other markers in English Usage. The study adopts relevance theory by Sperber and Wilson. Their data was collected from mainly young Nigerians (ages 14-25 years) through recordings and on- the-spot observation of language behaviour in group discussions at different locations and at different times; and through constructed data based on the knowledge of the uses of this particle in actual contexts. The findings reveal that the markers encode procedural meaning or show how a piece of information is to be understood by the hearer. They mark salient boundaries in the process of searching for the relevance of a particular expression in a given context. The authors conclude that both markers are widely used, in their metarepresentational capacities, to convey meanings in a variety of ways. They are borne out of the speaker's desire to get the hearer to understand that an important aspect of the communication is underway and to help him capture the intended meaning.

Foluke Olayinka Onuabonah and Rotimi Oladipupo examine six bilingual pragmatic markers, namely: jare, biko, jor, shebi, shey, and fa which are local expressions borrowed from indigenous Nigerian languages into Nigerian English. Their objectives are to explain the meanings, sources, frequencies, spelling stability, positions, collocational patterns, and -pragmatic functions of these expressions in Nigerian English. The data used for the study is drawn from the International Corpus of English-Nigeria and the

Nigerian component of the Global Web based English corpus. The corpus comprises 1,010,382 words of spoken (609,586) and written (400,796) educated Nigerian English usage, which include conversations, broadcast discussions, business letters, and examination scripts, amongst others. The result of the exploration of ICE-Nig and GloWbE shows that *jare* with (N = 185) has the highest frequency, followed by *biko* (N = 180), *jor* (N = 164), *shebi* (N = 51), *shey* (N = 36), and *fa* (N = 22). This study is of immense importance to the growing research on bilingual pragmatic markers in second-language contexts (395-397).

Kwabena Sarfo Sarfo-Kantankah and Ben Kudus Yussif examine the syntactic and pragmatic use of "actually" as a discourse marker in Ghanaian parliamentary debates. The data for this study is from electronic copies of parliamentary Hansards obtained from the Parliament Service Secretariat and the Ghanaian Parliamentary website (<https://www.parliament.gh>). In this study, a corpus methodological approach of 1.9 million-word corpus of Ghana parliamentary data was used to examine the patterns of the use of *actually* by Ghanaian parliamentarians in their parliamentary debates (240-243).

There are a lot of studies on pragmatic markers in relation to Nigerian English usage and from the reviews so far, none made mention of the markers in this study and their approach is quite different. Hence, this study employs a different approach to the study of the selected pragmatic markers in Nigerian English Usage.

## Analysis

The data for this study is sourced from [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com). Ten excerpts were randomly selected for this study. Five out of the ten instantiate the pragmatic marker *no gree*, while the other five are

instances of *Oya*. Relevance in this study is analysed in terms of how these two slang expressions are contextualised to reflect different meanings in the different excerpts in which they occur.

## **Analysis of *no gree***

### ***No gree* as a marker of violence**

Excerpt 1, MightySparrow:

I am a yoruba man myself. I knew little about Ife - Modakeke face-off. It lingered more than a hundred years. It was on and off. The moment Obasanjo waved in, none of the warring sides attack any solders. There are numerous land boundary issues in courts, even to supreme court from Yorubaland. Apart from Fulani herders' attacks, Yorubaland has been peaceful. They seek justice from Law courts than senseless killings in Niger Delta. In a community where I served in Ekiti, the land tussle was in court for thirty-eight years before it was finally resolved.

Niger Delta, people believe in the use of force. ***No gree for anybody***. They should be civil in the name of humanity.

The losses would be heavy on them. If the military kills a thousand of them, the will carry the corpses away and will not allow any

journalist to cover anything. On this issue, the communities have not acted wisely.

[Politics / Re: Soldiers Tricked Us Into A Hall Then Opened Fire, Okuama Residents Speak by MightySparrow: 10:21am On Mar 20. www.nairaland.com]

The phrase *no gree for anybody* is used in this context to mean violence and the use of force in resolving dispute. In this example, the phrase *no gree for anybody* is confrontational. It is used to demonstrate the aggressive nature of the Niger Delta people. But often time violence ultimately results in losses on two conflicting sides. Dialogue or legal settlement of disputes remains the best bet for conflict resolution.

According to relevance theory, "utterance interpretation is an inferential process" and according to the inferential model, "the speaker provides evidence of her intention to convey a certain meaning which is inferred by the hearer on the basis of the evidence provided" (Wilson and Sperber, 607). In the above excerpt the speaker infers that Niger Delta people are violent since they often resort to the use of force.

### ***No gree as a marker of resistance against domination***

Excerpt 2, Onyedikachi231:

They won't still agree that Israel existed before Islam and the quoran, they want to twist history because the Jews *no gree* for mohammed, hence the hatred.

[Politics / Re: Kaduna Is Now In A Situation Described In Isaiah 49:26 - Shehu Sani by Onyedikachi231: 9:19pm On Mar 31, 2024. www.nairaland.com]

The phrase '*no gree* in the excerpt above expresses resistance of the Jews against the domination of Islam. The conflict between Christians and Muslims in Kaduna State is compared to the war in Gaza. This comparison is easy to contextualise because the two scenarios have so many things in common. They both have religion and the quest for dominance as underlying cause of the conflict. As noted by Sperber and Wilson "an utterance has more cognitive effects if it contains new information that is somehow related to the addressee's current cognitive environment, so that he can draw conclusions from the combined old and new data" (Sperber and Wilson, 108). In other words, an utterance is relevant to another if their meanings are related.

The struggle for dominance has persisted among different religions of the world. This superiority contest is unnecessary as the different faiths are considered as equal in the constitution of civilized societies, as they represent different mediums or channels of accessing the creator or supernatural being (Almighty God). Humanity has suffered unquantifiable losses across different ages and regions as a result of religious conflict. We cannot afford to allow this to continue. Since the different religions are different means to the same end, no religion should be considered as superior to another. That is only when the world can have lasting peace.

## ***No gree* as a marker of confidence**

### Excerpt 3:

That's one thing about some women. They 'hate' dark skin but end up marrying someone with dark skin. Of all people, Mide shouldn't be the one insulting another woman over her skin colour. How can you marry an Afeez in his dark glory and then insult another woman for being dark? Total M A D N E S S.

And you, Habibat, has got a very low self-esteem. no use Mide as excuse. Contemplating bleaching over an insult from a woman with a dark-skin husband and dark-skin kids, only shows that you've never been proud of your skin colour.

In this life, *no gree* **for anybody**. If they come after your dark melanin skin, go after their washed-up light skin.

[Celebrities / Re: I Contemplated Bleaching After Mide Martin's Insult – Habibat Jinad by Acidosis(m): 2:42pm On Mar 27, 2024. [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com)]

In this excerpt the phrase *no gree* is used to express confidence in oneself and a refusal to bow to pressure or low self-esteem.

## ***No gree* as a marker of resilience and determination**

### Excerpt 4:

Cardoso *no wan gree ooo* ... This man is gradually outperforming EmefiOle! If I were president, I'd have regular meetings with Cardoso, HRH Sanusi Lamido & Okonjo Iweala. That combo would be amazing for economic recovery.

[Politics / Re: CBN Uncovers \$2.4bn Foreign Exchange Scam by santaclaws: 10:24pm On Mar 26, 2024. [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com)]

Cardoso whose full name is Dr Olayemi Michael Cardoso is the newly appointed governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria who has continued to uncover several frauds under the previous administration. This persistent moves has brought him to the limelight and some believe he will achieve a lot during his time as governor of Central Bank of Nigeria. As Carston says, procedural encoding acts as clues (“Thoughts” 61). Pragmatic markers are clues that narrow or constrain the hearer's interpretation of the speakers intended meaning. The new Central Bank governor is working very hard to change the narrative in Nigerian banking sector and change the negative perception created by the previous administration of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

### Excerpt 5

We have been saying *no gree for anybody* since this year, but the Nigerian 4x100m teams took

it to another level competing in the men and women's races at the University of Ghana Stadium.

Nigeria's women's 4x100m team led the way against the Ghanaian team, only for the Nigerian men's team to put the final nail on their national teams.

This *no gree for anybody* was personal... Naija came to Ghana to beat them on their turf!!

[Sports / Re: Team Nigeria finishes second at The All African Games [Full Highlights] by Peterpaul96: 5:16pm On Mar 22 www.nairaland.com]

Here, the phrase "no gree" is used to express confidence arising from the victory of the Nigerian male and female teams over the Ghanaian teams. This supports the assertion that the use of discourse markers facilitates the hearer's task of understanding the speaker's utterances. Discourse markers serve as guides or cues in the interpretation of utterances.

### **Analysis of *oya***

"Oya" on the other hand is a Yoruba expression which means "now" or "quick". "No Gree..." and "Oya" are two expressions in Nigerian English usage that are analysed in this paper. The addition of local expressions from local languages in Nigeria has led to the expansion of the the English language in Nigeria.

## ***Oya* as a marker of challenge**

Excerpt 6, unikprince:

*Oya* stop crying and go and help the USA to withdraw their support na.

You're not disputing that it's US that's propping up isreal. Isreal has the right to exist as a nation and Palestinians have the right to free themselves from isreali oppression.

Foreign Affairs / Re: US To Send More Bombs And Warplanes To Israel by mu2sa2: 4:44am On Mar 31, 2024. [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com)]

In this excerpt Unikprince challenges the addressee to make USA to withdraw their support from Israel using the discourse marker "oya". This adds to the inferential process in the interpretation of the meaning of the utterance.

## ***Oya* used as marker of time sequence**

Excerpt 7:

32 years you say? Full time or part-time job? *Oya*, answer dat simple question before I advice you further.

[Celebrities / Re: Don't Let Me End Like Mohbad, Wasiu Ayinde Is After My Life – Kunle Ayanlowo by papamalik(m): 5:07pm On Mar 26, 2024. [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com)]

The sequence of time in the above discourse is signalled by the pragmatic marker because the addressee's response is a prerequisite for the next comment.

Excerpt 8:

Politicians dey flaunt, law enforcement dey flaunt, bandits and terrorists too dey flaunt, *oya* masses, over to you....

[Phones/Re: Police Officers Flaunt Expensive iPhones (Pictures, Video) by magnum247: 7:28pm On Mar 26, 2024. [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com)]

Since politicians, law enforcement agents and even bandits are flouting the law, it is now the turn of the masses to also flaunt the law. And this ultimately leads to lawlessness.

### ***Oya* as a marker of promptness**

Excerpt 9:

I'm here waiting for you in Brazil, so as to show you the easy route to use to the USA & Canada, just so you won't be kidnap or killed "K+K" while journeying to the Mexican border... shocked.

No shades! No offense!!

if you are in this same Brazil I'm in, and you are talking about this country like this? Shame on you!!!!

How dare you talk about Brazil like that, how can you even compare Brazil to Nigeria? *Oya* go back now

If you can't see the opportunities, you are simply blind.

[Travel / Re: Study In Brazil: Admissions And Visa Procedures by GlobeTrotter2: 10:44am On Mar 25, 2024. [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com)]

Here the speaker asks the addressee to return to Nigeria immediately if he feels that Nigeria is better. The pragmatic marker comes at the beginning of the sentence and it helps to signal the relationship between the basic message to the foregoing discourse. The word "now" shows promptness which is signalled by the pragmatic marker in the utterance. This confirms the assertion that pragmatic markers encode "procedural meaning by constraining the inferential process in a way that maximizes relevance" (Ogoanah, 200).

### ***Oya* as a marker of humour**

Excerpt 10. Wawelexy:

Let's assume the upkeep money is on monthly basis... That's 60milli in a year for a ho\*. (Some of them have two or more ho\*s), plus the amount they spend on hotels and clubs yearly, including the ones they spend on their own family...

Now this people will drop a project that is worth not more than 500million throughout the four years of their tenure while embezzling billions, yet gullible followers will still cheer them up and say they really tried.

If you get opportunity to move, my brother don't dull.

So you believe Him? *Oya* my mother is still a virgin!

[Romance / Re: I'm Dating A Nigerian Minister Who Gives Me N5M For Upkeep — Jay Boogie by Brownemeka: 1:04pm On Mar 28, 2024. [www.nairaland.com](http://www.nairaland.com)]

Here the phrase *oya* is used ironically and this elicits humour when the speaker sarcastically refers to his mother as a virgin. This corroborates Andersen's argument that "discourse-pragmatic markers encode propositional attitude" (Corpus Pragmatics, 156-159). This means that they convey attitudinal meanings in a text which add to the inferential processes of utterance interpretation. The attitude of the speaker reveals that the statement is not to be taken literally and this is signaled by the use of the word *oya*.

### **Discussion of findings**

From the analyses the functions of the selected discourse markers are as follows: (a) *no gree* ... expresses resistance, violence, resilience, confidence and determination while *oya* helps to signal challenge, promptness, humour and time sequence. Both markers

encode procedural meaning and/or the propositional attitude of the addresser.

The context in which the utterances are used clearly demonstrate their relevance. In the first excerpt, for instance, the natural propensity towards violence is reflected in the sentence "*Niger Delta, people believe in the use of force.*" This statement is followed by the phrase *no gree for anybody*. This statement is arising from the recent killing of Nigerian soldiers in Okuama community in Delta State. Similarly, in excerpt 3 the war in Gaza is contextualised on the bases of the religious conflict between the Jews and Muslims. This conflict is reflected in the phrase *no gree* which literally means resistance to domination by another faith.

In the 4x100m race between the male and female teams of Nigeria and Ghana in excerpt 6, the phrase *no gree for anybody* is used to express resilience and a determination to win. The phrase is relevant in this context because as Sperber and Wilson remarks "human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance" and "every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance" (260)

Furthermore, *oya* is contextualised in the different instances in which it is used in the examples above. It is used to signal challenge, promptness, humour and time sequence. In excerpt 9, for instance, the promptness is represented in the word "now". *Oya* which comes at the beginning of that sentence signals the same thing.

Again, in excerpt 12, the phrase *Oya my mother is still a virgin!* is used sarcastically to mock the gullibility of Nigerians who sing the praises of unscrupulous politicians who embezzle public funds and spend it on frivolities. In this example "oya" is used to ridicule citizens who are blind followers of corrupt politicians.

*No gree* and *oya* are related in terms of their pragmatic effect. They are expressions which prompt the addressee to take action and to resist oppressive tendencies that undermine one's rights, views and interest. They are expressions that carry the force of action against oppression and resistance against domination.

## Conclusion

This study has explored two pragmatic markers: *no gree* and *oya* in Nigerian English. It has shown that *no gree* is a pidgin English expression while *oya* is a local expression from Yoruba. *No gree* expresses resistance, violence, resilience, confidence and determination while *oya* helps to signal challenge, promptness, humour and time sequence.

Based on these findings we can conclude that, these markers encode procedural meaning or propositional attitude by showing how a piece of information is to be understood by the hearer. They mark salient boundaries in the process of searching for the relevance of a particular expression in a given context. From the examples above, it is seen that both markers are widely used, in Nigerian English to convey meanings as well as encode the propositional attitude of the speaker. Both markers add force to the meaning encoded by the conceptual properties of the text in which they occur.

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