Tanulmány

Bebwa Isingoma

Innovative Pragmatic Codes in Ugandan English: A Relevance-theoretic Account

Abstract

The paper investigates innovative pragmatic codes in Ugandan English within the conceptual framework of Relevance Theory (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1986, Wilson & Sperber 2004). Wilson & Sperber (2004) state that an utterance is optimally relevant if it is worth the hearer's processing effort, and if it is compatible with the speaker's linguistic abilities and preferences. The reasoning behind these tenets of Relevance Theory can be used to account for the pervasive use of many expressions peculiar to Ugandan English. For example, in Ugandan English *safe house* means *illegal place of detention*; one *dirtens a place* (vs. *dirties a place*), etc. The innovative use of such expressions can be said to be triggered, among others, by the need to achieve optimal relevance, because the expressions are not only compatible with the abilities of Ugandan English speakers, but also their preference to choose them so as to satisfy the addressees' expectations of relevance. Furthermore, Ugandan English exhibits many calques, including the discourse connective *as* (e.g. *As you're brave*, which can mean *I'm surprised that you're brave*!). Ugandan English *as* directs the addressee to the recognition that the relevance of the utterance resides more in the speaker's attitude description than in the actual propositional content. This cognitive effect is unobtainable in the native English use of the connective *as*.
Keywords: Ugandan English, pragmatics, modified expressions, cognitive effects, calques, discourse markers, relevance

1   Introduction

Like other 'outer circle' varieties of English (cf. Krachu's 1997 Concentric Model), Ugandan English (henceforth UgE) is inextricably linked to colonialism, hence British English. However, despite this strong historical connection, Fisher (2000a: 39) points out that UgE is "a distinct non-native variety with its own phonology (sound system), syntax and morphology (grammar), and usage." This is quite predictable, as all other varieties of English (including native varieties) have historical links with British English in one way or another, but they are all different from it. While there have been preliminary studies (cf. Fisher 2000a, 2000b) on some of the aspects of UgE, the pragmatic aspect of this non-native variety has not yet received such attention (to my knowledge). This study therefore seeks to bring this aspect to the limelight. UgE is characterized by lexical innovations (e.g. *safe house* meaning *illegal place of detention*; *to dirten* for *to dirty*) which permit its users not only to express themselves in a more expedient way, but also to achieve greater relevance, since the hearer (i.e. a speaker of UgE) does not have to expend greater processing efforts in the comprehension process. For

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example, with the lexical coinage *dirten*, the UgE user is capable of signaling that it is a verb that encodes an inchoative aspect, a change of state from clean to dirty, because the English suffix *–en* is a general marker of inchoative aspect. *Dirty*, used as a verb, is considered infelicitous in UgE, because this form is known as an adjective.[1] This innovative use of UgE expressions can be viewed from the perspective of Relevance Theory (Wilson & Sperber 2004); namely, the innovative use is triggered, among others, by the need to achieve optimal relevance, because the expressions are not only compatible with the linguistic competence of UgE speakers, but also they achieve greater relevance with less processing efforts by the hearer.[2] In addition, some of the expressions achieve greater cognitive effects, i.e. they provide additional assumptions not present in native English (see discussion in section 2).

According to Relevance Theory (Wilson & Sperber 2004: 608-610), an utterance is optimally relevant if it is relevant enough to be worth the audience's processing efforts; that is, if it yields some positive cognitive effects without expenditure of undue processing effort. Also, an utterance is optimally relevant if it is compatible with the speaker's abilities and preferences (also see Vega-Moreno 2007: 30-34). This means that when a communicator is packaging his message, he should bear in mind that the hearer will only conditionally devote her efforts to process it.[3] Thus, the communicator should ensure that he uses a code that the hearer knows well, so that the latter does not have to engage in gratuitous processing of the verbal stimulus. Added processing efforts reduce the relevance of an utterance unless they lead to an added cognitive effect, i.e. unless they add something to the hearer's current knowledge of the world. In other words, using greater processing efforts without added cognitive effects makes an utterance less relevant (cf. Wilson & Sperber 2004: 609). In addition, the communicator should use a code that is compatible with his own abilities and preferences. We can appeal to the reasoning behind these tenets to account for the ubiquitous use of many expressions peculiar to UgE. The UgE expressions under consideration were formed either by modifying an existing native English expression (e.g. *to dirten* vs. *to dirty*) or by calquing an indigenous language expression (e.g. *to detooth* used informally to mean *to fleece/gold-dig* – a calque from Luganda (a major Ugandan Bantu language)).

The examples which constitute the data in this study were gleaned from local newspapers published in English (i.e. The New Vision, The Daily Monitor, The Red Pepper and The Observer). A few examples were obtained from field observations based on day-to-day oral discourse. The study relies on the author's intuition (as a speaker of UgE), as well as the intuition of other speakers of UgE who were contacted in order to test whether the author' views were compatible with those of other speakers of UgE.

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[1] Apparently, *dirty*, as a verb, may not be a run-on-the-mill lexical item among native speakers. A Google search of *dirty* as a verb (cf. www.englishforums.com) shows an ongoing debate as to whether it is appropriate to use this well-known adjective with the syntactic function of a verb. Nevertheless, there are clear indications that a section of native speakers use it as a verb.

[2] The terms 'addressee', 'audience' and 'hearer' are used in this paper interchangeably, even though we are aware that they are to some extent different (cf. Green 1996: 1). The same holds for the terms 'communicator' and 'speaker.'

[3] I use the pronoun *he/his* to refer to the communicator and *she/her* to refer to the hearer.

2 Pragmatic Functions of UgE Expressions

2.1 Modified Expressions

Modified expressions in UgE include native English fixed expressions which have undergone internal transformation, by adding or replacing some lexical items, e.g. *to go for a short/long call*[4] for 'to answer the call of nature/to pay a call', in (1); *to run mad*[5] for 'to go mad', in the sense of 'to become insane', in (2):

(1)(a) This came after the two pupils requested for permission *to go for a short call* but Nakabazzi kept on stopping them.[6]

(The New Vision 19th April 2011)

(b) When she disembarked from a *bodaboda*, Grace rushed to the latrine *for a short call*.[7]

(The New Vision 17th June 2011)

(2)(a) Kinyanda says teachers may not *run mad*, but may suffer from depression, anxiety…

(The New Vision 17th July 2011)

(b) Pastor Samuel Kakande of the Synagogue Church of all Nations has refuted media reports that he *ran mad* and was admitted at Butabika Hospital.

(The New Vision 25th November 2008)

Another set of modified expressions in UgE comprises expressions derived via affixation, e.g. *to dirten* for 'to dirty' in (3) – a verb derived from the noun *dirt* + the affix *–en*; *to cowardise*[8] for 'to behave like a coward' in (4) – a verb derived from the noun *coward* + the affix *–ise*:

(3)(a) I hope God doesn't take me in a hurry before I *dirten* myself.

(The New Vision 7th July 2010)

(b) Would you let your children play in the mud and *dirten* themselves?

(The New Vision 18th July 2008)

(4)(a) "I'm not going to *cowardise* in implementing what council has approved…" Prof. Baryamureeba said.

(The Daily Monitor 20th May 2011)

(b) Be strong, don't *cowardise*.

(Field Notes)

Semantic extension also gives rise to modified expressions in UgE. Here the meaning of an existing native English expression is broadened. Examples include: *safe house* for 'illegal place of detention'[9] in (5), *to extend* for 'to move up' in (6), *stage* for 'taxi rank' in (7):[10]

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[4] Also see Schmied (2004: 943).

[5] Note that *to run mad* has been reported in native English, but it seems to be used marginally. My BNC search returned 9 hits, as opposed to 118 hits for *to go mad*. If there were a UgE corpus, the results of a similar search would be the other way round.

[6] The use of the verb *request* followed by the preposition *for* is also a feature of UgE (see Fisher 2000b: 59-60).

[7] The word *bodaboda* is a borrowing in UgE and means *motorcycle taxi* or *bicycle taxi*.

[8]   Native English has *to cowardize*, as a transitive verb meaning *to render cowardly*, but the word is seldom used nowadays (Webster Online Dictionary). It is therefore unlikely that the UgE intransitive use was extended from this rare native English transitive verb.

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(5)(a) Security minister Amama Mababazi, however, said, "There are no *safe houses*, to my knowledge, in Uganda that are used as detention or torture centres."

(The New Vision 21st May 2009)

(b) We have *safe houses* but not for torture – Minister.[11]

(Daily Monitor 15th February 2012)

(6) I would like to sit here; please *extend* a bit.

(Field Notes)

(7)(a) Taxis have their *stages*, which means where they can gather and load passengers.

(The New Vision 1st March 2012)

(b) At the Jinja-Iganga *stage*, only two taxis had left the *stage* by mid day [midday] to-day…

(The Red Pepper 12th January 2012)

The UgE expression *to go for a short call* in (1) or its closely related expression *to go for a long call* is a modified idiom from the native English idiom *to answer the call of nature* or *to pay a call* (cf. OED[12], OALD[13], Free Online English Dictionary). As can be seen, the key lexical item in both UgE and native English is *call.* Vega-Moreno (2003: 304-307, 2007: 146-148) posits that some idioms can be quantified, as in (8b) vs. (8a):

(8)(a) *Strings were pulled* but he was never elected.
   (b) *Many strings were pulled* but he was never elected.

(Vega-Moreno 2003: 304, 2007: 146)

The inclusion of *many* in (8b) makes the idiom yield more cognitive effects, i.e. the assumption about quantity, that is, the level of efforts expended in the undertaking – something not available in the original variant in (8a) where the quantifier *many* is not included. This could explain the modification of the native English idiom *to answer the call of nature/to pay a call* into the UgE idiom *to go for a short call* or *to go for a long call. To go for a short call* entails spending little time in the bathroom, i.e. when one just goes to 'take a leak', while *to go for a long call* entails spending a lot of time, as one goes to the bathroom to 'have a crap.' Thus, the inclusion of *short* or *long* has a bearing on extra cognitive effects, because the concept encoded here enables the addressee to approximate the time required for the referent to 'accomplish his/her mission.' In other words, the assumption about time – conspicuously absent in the native English form – becomes highly accessible when the UgE idiom variant is used. Note that what I refer to here as an 'extra cognitive effect' cannot be evaluated independently of the fact that the intended euphemistic effect is retained. This may be regarded as some sort of cognitive effect in its own right, because the level of decency indicated by these factually indirect UgE expressions informs the addressee that the speaker deliberately avoids reference to 'piss'/'leak' or 'crap' so as to avoid being branded as a 'rude' or 'crude' person. However, this euphemistic effect is the very reason why native English has *to answer the call of nature* or *to pay a call*. Hence, the assumption about time encoded in the UgE expressions is the only actual cognitive effect that differentiates the UgE expressions from the native English vari-

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9   But see discussion in subsequent text for a close native English meaning.
10 UgE *to extend* and *stage* are also reported in Fisher (2000b: 59).
11 This is the heading of an article.
12 OED = Oxford English Dictionary.
13 OALD = Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

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ants. Lexical flexibility is clearly possible even in the native English variants, viz. *to answer the call of nature* vs. *to pay a call.* In fact, since the key lexical item in the idiom is *call*, both *to answer* and *to pay* can be replaced with a different verb in native English (9), and the verb *to go* in the UgE variants can be dropped (cf. (1b) and (10)):

(9)   He would suggest dropping in at the Monico, *pretext a call of nature*.

(OED)

(10)   In Uganda, there is an important distinction to be made between *needing* a '*short call*', and *requiring* a '*long call*.'[14]

(The New Vision 3rd July 2011)

We could also extend Vega-Moreno's (2003) account for the internal transformation of idioms to the UgE fixed expression *to run mad* (cf. (2)) (which seems to have failed to meet the test of survival in native English, but is very common in UgE). UgE *to run mad* can also be said to encode additional assumptions compared to native English *to go mad*, i.e. the gravity of the state of affairs expressed by the use of the verb *run*, as opposed to *go.* In fact, the now obsolete *to fall mad* (OED) can be regarded as being closer to the UgE variant than the native English one. *Fall* and *run* entail some ballistic motion, while *go* does not specify the kind of motion involved and can therefore be assumed to entail ordinary motion. Hence, the preference of *to run mad* in UgE over *to go mad* can be associated with the assumption that *run* reflects a more serious situation than *go*. Crucially, this comports with Vega-Moreno's (2003: 318-319) postulate that the substitution of the word *pour* in (11b) for *spill* in (11a) provides additional assumptions:

(11)(a)   He absolutely hates me, so if it is true that he has found out about my affair, he must be in my house *spilling* the beans to my wife.
   (b)   He absolutely hates me, so if it is true that he has found out about my affair, he must be in my house *pouring* the beans to my wife.

(Vega-Moreno 2003: 318)

Accordingly, Vega-Moreno (2003: 318) argues that assumptions about intentionality are derivable from (11b), while in (11a) such assumptions are absent. It is true that in Vega-Moreno's (2003: 318) example in (11b), *pouring the beans* is a nonce expression, depicting an innovative way of conveying that the secret was not divulged accidentally but quite deliberately, while UgE *to run mad* is a regular way of communicating what is otherwise referred to as *to go mad*. Although I cannot ascertain whether UgE *to run mad* started as a nonce expression or as a vestige of the now seemingly obsolete native English *to run mad*, it might be right to assume that its use was sporadic at the start (in the same way a nonce expression such as *to pour the beans* can be used) and later became entrenched as a norm.

The use of lexical items such as *to dirten* for 'to dirty' (cf. (3)), *to cowardise* for 'to behave like a coward' (cf. (4)), *to extend* for 'to move up' (cf. (6)), and *stage* for 'taxi rank' (cf. (7)) not only satisfies the addressee's (i.e. a speaker of UgE) expectations of relevance based on her encyclopedic entries of the lexical items, but also it is in line with the communicator's (i.e. a speaker of UgE) linguistic abilities and preferences. A good communicator in Uganda

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[14]   The expressions *short call* and *long call* are placed in inverted commas in (10), because the sentence is part of a newspaper article written by a native speaker of English in Uganda.

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will prefer the use of *stage* over *taxi rank* even if he is aware that in native English the word *stage* is not used in the sense of 'a place where taxis park while waiting for passengers.' His choice of *stage* is meant to make his utterance relevant in order for it to yield positive cognitive effects during the comprehension process. This is achieved by using a code that the addressee knows well (i.e. UgE) in lieu of using the native English expression *taxi rank*. We should also take into account in-group preference considerations on the part of the communicator. The use of *taxi rank* or a similar native English term might be interpreted as a signal that the communicator considers himself to be an outsider, someone who consciously avoids being associated with those who use UgE. This may be socially unfortunate. It would actually be comparable to a native English speaker's preference of a Standard English term at the expense of a dialectal expression that he is reasonably sure the addressee would have used in the same situation. Hence, while the use of the UgE expression such as *stage* aids in yielding positive cognitive effects, it is also important for a communicator to flag up his cultural and social allegiance with his conversational partner. In addition, if the communicator quintessentially speaks UgE, his use of the UgE expression *stage* will not be a matter of choice or preference, but it will be compatible with his linguistic abilities, which will coincidentally gratify the addressee's expectations of relevance in the Ugandan context.

Remarkably, the use of some of the lexical items above is so categorical among speakers of UgE that using native English alternatives is viewed as making mistakes. For example, native English expressions such as *to dirty* and *to move up* are perceived as unidiomatic in Uganda. For example, I asked some speakers of UgE (including teachers of English) whether the string in (12a) was correct. They overwhelmingly responded that it was incorrect and 'corrected' the string using *dirten*, as in (12b):[15]

(12)(a) Don't lean against the wall, because it will *dirty* your shirt.
   (b) Don't lean against the wall, because it will *dirten* your shirt.

Within Relevance Theory, what is unidiomatic detracts from relevance, namely, it may not be worth the addressee's processing efforts since it will require extra processing efforts with no compensation by way of added cognitive effects. Crucially, the use of unidiomatic expressions does not conform to what Carston (2002: 45) dubs 'the least-effort strategy', whereby "the speaker is expected to have found a vehicle for the communication of her thoughts which minimizes the hearer's effort." Thus, a good communicator will have to use UgE *to dirten* and *to extend* in order to not only maximize relevance, but also optimize ease of processing by the Ugandan audience (of course here we exclude Ugandans who, for example, live in the US and have adopted native English). Note that for the case of *to dirty*, a communicator can choose the complex predicate alternative *to make dirty* if he does not want to use UgE *to dirten.* Unlike *to dirty*, *to make dirty* is acceptable in Uganda. Apparently, *to make dirty* is also quite likely to be more acceptable than *to dirty* to native speakers of English for whom **to dirten* is evidently not a lexical alternative.

In native English, the expression *safe house* (cf. (5)) nowadays means 'a sanctuary for criminals, secret agents, or people in danger' (cf. OALD). In UgE, the expression is mainly used in the sense of 'a building where treason suspects are illicitly detained', purportedly for interrogation. According to OED, one of the meanings of *safe house* is "a secure place used to

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[15] Even though I have pointed out in section 1 that some native speakers seem to be uncomfortable with the use of *dirty* as a verb, others, of course, find such usage acceptable.

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confine or imprison a person, especially a criminal", as in (13) below. This meaning is close to the UgE meaning. However, OED notes that this meaning is now rare. Given this characterization and since UgE is a relatively recent development (as its origin stems from the advent of British colonialism around 12 decades ago), one can assume that the UgE usage (as in (14) and (5)) is a case of semantic extension rather than a case associated with this rare native English usage in (13). Moreover, this rare native English usage does not include the element of illicitness eminently associated with the UgE usage:

(13) There are no traces in the patriarchal age, nor for weary years after, of any *safe houses for the detention* of criminals…

<div align="right">(OED)</div>

(14) The Government should abolish *safe houses* and stop detaining suspects illegally, because it violates people's human rights and freedoms.

<div align="right">(The New Vision 9th August 2006)</div>

Significantly, a hearer who is not conversant with the UgE usage of the expression *safe house* in (14) may search for relevance bearing in mind that the connective *and* conjoins two independent propositions, i.e. the one of 'abolishing safe houses' and the one of 'stopping the illegal detention of suspects.' The reason for this unintended interpretation is that, in accordance with the current use of the expression *safe house* in native English (which connotes safety), there is no logical connection between *safe house* and the 'illegal detention of suspects.' But for a speaker of UgE, the connective *and* encodes consequentiality in the second proposition, i.e. 'the abolition of safe houses will make the government stop detaining suspects illegally.'

2.2 Calqued Expressions

According to Haspelmath (2009: 39), calqued expressions involve lexical units in the target language created by an item-by-item translation of the source units. Calqued expressions or calques are also known as 'loan translations.' As Myers-Scotton (2006: 218) puts it "what is 'loaned' is a translation, not words." Some of the calqued expressions in UgE are idioms in the substrate language(s), e.g. *to eat money*[16] (15) (for *to embezzle*), *to detooth* (16) (used informally to mean *to fleece* or *to gold-dig*; see discussion below regarding the fact that the verb *detooth* was calqued from an idiom). Other calques were derived from plain expressions, e.g. *to be lost*[17] (from e.g. Luganda *kubula* meaning *not to be seen for long*), *cousin brother/ cousin sister* (used for *cousin*; the word 'brother' or 'sister' is added, because in many Ugandan cultures a cousin is viewed as a 'brother' or a 'sister'):[18]

(15)(a) "The public should know the people who *eat money* meant for people living with HIV," Mafabi said.

<div align="right">(New Vision 21st October 2010)</div>

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[16] Also see Fisher (2000b: 59). In addition, *to eat money* is not only found in UgE, since it has been reported in Nigerian English (cf. Alo & Mesthrie 2004: 825).

[17] Also, see Fisher (2000b: 59).

[18] *Cousin brother/cousin sister* has also been reported in Indian English (Dhillon: The Telegraph 16th September 2007).

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(b) Mao told this reporter… "Can't this tell he is totally in bed with NRM? Before becoming an MP he was in URA *eating money…*"

(The Red Pepper 17th June 2012)

(c) "Critics should understand that it would be silly of me to *eat* just *shs 20 million* when I can push away billions offered by dealers who…

(The Daily Monitor 16th February 2012)

(16)(a) Out of 15 interviewees, only three people admitted to ever having actively *detoothed* a woman and one of them was female.

(The New Vision 30th April 2011)

(b) A man […] amazed fellow revellers when he begged his wife *to detooth* other men and get money so that they could have something to eat.

(The New Vision 13th June 2008)

Luganda is the dominant substrate language in this respect, but many Ugandan languages present similar conceptual patterns with Luganda. For example, whereas the calque *to eat money* could be said to originate from the Luganda expression *kulya sente*, other Ugandan Bantu languages such as Rutooro, Runyoro, Runyankole, Rukiga, etc. also have the same expression (i.e. *kulya sente*) with the same meaning. Even Ugandan non-Bantu languages such as Luo and Lugbara have semantically similar expressions, i.e. *camu sente* and *nya sente*, respectively. Hence, Luganda and other Ugandan languages can be said to work in tandem in this respect. However, the expression *to detooth* seems to have Luganda as its only source, i.e. *kukuula ammanyo* which literally means 'to remove teeth.' Instead of maintaining the verb 'remove' in the calqued expression, it was replaced by the prefix *de-* which means 'remove', and instead of 'teeth' (plural), the singular form was used (i.e. tooth) in keeping with the general rules of affixation in English (e.g. 'delouse' and not 'delice'). A nominal expression derived from *detooth* also obtains, namely *detoother* (meaning 'a person who detoothes' or a fleecer/gold-digger). Note that Luganda has had an eminent influence on UgE, because it is the language spoken in the capital city of Uganda, Kampala. In addition, it has a large number of native as well as Ugandan non-native speakers compared to any of the other languages in Uganda (cf. Fisher 2000b: 57-58, Bernsten 1998: 95).

Fisher (2000b: 61) recognizes the fact that native English "does not always 'say' what is culturally appropriate at weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc." Very relevantly, native English not only lacks conventionalized means of expressing the above, but also lacks means of making certain propositions cognitively salient in the Ugandan context. The calques mentioned above (and others) come in handy to bridge this gap. Particularly, as far as the calqued idioms are concerned (cf. (15) & (16)), we are aware that within Relevance Theory (cf. Vega-Moreno 2003: 319) the use of idioms gives access to extra assumptions, as opposed to plain expressions. For example, Vega-Moreno (2001: 76) argues that the oft-cited idiom *to kick the bucket* does not mean just 'to die'; rather, it "contains information about the manner of death, the attitude involved and something imagistic, among other things." In other words, the idiom makes salient certain cognitive components not present in the plain expression 'to die.' Likewise, the calqued expressions *to detooth* (from the Luganda idiom *kukuula ammanyo*) and *to eat money* (from *kulya sente*) do not just mean 'to fleece' or 'to embezzle', respectively. Rather, they encode a few other accessible assumptions not present in the verbs 'to fleece' or 'to embezzle.' For example, *to detooth* contains information about the evil, sadistic, Machiavellic and opportunistic character of the 'detoother', while *to fleece* can be said to simply fo-

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cus on the ill intention of the fleecer (even though this meaning of *fleece* is a metaphorical extension of the original meaning that denotes clipping off wool from a sheep or a similar animal at one shearing). Presumably, *to gold-dig* provides additional assumptions on a par with UgE *to detooth*, compared to *to fleece*, but it is not a popular expression among speakers of UgE. More importantly, the fact that *to gold-dig* is a relatively new expression in native English shows that at one time native English did not have an expression that matches UgE *to detooth* until speakers of American English derived it (*gold-dig*), via back-formation, from the metaphorical use of the noun *gold-digger* in circa 1926 (cf. OED). *To eat money* also rewards the hearer with more cognitive effects, because it truly points to the fact that 'the money' has completely vanished, since what is eaten is irretrievable (although in such a case the money may be retrieved after usually long and protracted legal battles, but again we should bear in mind the fact that, in many cases, the legal battles prove futile due to the crafty nature of the 'money eater').

The fact that *to eat money* provides additional assumptions compared to native English 'to embezzle' seems to explain its popularity in Uganda, even though the verb *to embezzle* is also used in Uganda. In fact, the sentence in (15a) contains a direct quote uttered in a parliamentary committee session by a prominent and highly educated Ugandan politician and economist, while the quotes in sentences (15b) and (15c) are from the President of the Democratic Party in Uganda (who is a lawyer by profession) and the Executive Director of Kampala City Council Authority (also a lawyer by profession), respectively. It is rather highly doubtful that these highly educated Ugandans were ignorant of the non-existence of this expression in native English. Rather, it seems they felt that the use of the expression would reward their audiences with extra cognitive assumptions, compared to the native English expression 'to embezzle.' And since the audiences were typically Ugandan, the use of such an expression was not only meant to provide more cognitive assumptions, but also to gratify the audience's expectation of relevance, by guiding them towards the intended meaning so as to yield positive contextual effects. Most of the speakers I contacted in relation to the pervasive use of *to eat money* pointed out that they are aware that this expression does not exist in native English, but they feel that it drives the point home properly compared to *to embezzle*. We should note that *to eat money* can be used in both formal and informal situations. As pointed out above, (15a) contains a quote uttered in a parliamentary committee session, which is no doubt a formal event. (15b) and (15c) also contain quotes uttered in a formal situation, i.e. a news interview. There is an alternative UgE expression, i.e. *to chew money* (17a) or *to chew dime* (17b) which is used in informal situations. If the informal UgE alternative is used in formal situations, then it will bear the extra cognitive effect of humor:

(17)(a) Reliable sources from Mitoma told this reporter that Baguma had for long been complaining that Hope *chewed his money* and later married another man.

(The Red Pepper 28th June 2012)

  (b) Since you imagine Queen Elizabeth is a political monarchy [sic] by presiding over the Commonwealth, then [sic] the *dime you are chewing* will choke you one of these days.

(The Observer 11th November 2012)[19]

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[19] The sentence was extracted from a comment by a reader.

Calqued expressions in UgE not only involve nouns and verbs, but also discourse markers. For example, UgE exhibits a peculiar use of the connective *as* (18) and *also* (19). *As* was calqued from Luganda *nga*, which also occurs in UgE, as a borrowing. *Nga* is used informally as an alternative to UgE *as*. The innovative use of discourse markers is not peculiar to UgE, as a similar practice obtains in Singapore English where *what* is used as a discourse marker (cf. Mesthrie & Bhatt 2008: 136-139).

(18) *As* you are brave!

(Field Notes)

(19) Jane *also* does not understand!

(Field Notes)

Relevance Theory categorizes and renders the explication of the meanings of linguistic expressions into two (cf. Blakemore 1987: 144, Carston 2002: 162-164): (a) Conceptual semantics which includes expressions that encode a concept, namely verbs, nouns, adjectives. These expressions are truth conditional, i.e. they contribute a concept to the propositional content of the utterance, as ingredients in a mental representation of a specific state of affairs. (b) Procedural semantics which involves expressions that do not encode concepts. Rather, they constrain the way the hearer's inferential computation and mental representations should proceed in the comprehension process of an utterance (Fretheim 2004a: 46); that is, they guide the hearer towards the intended contextual effects, by pointing out the most efficient route leading to an output of the pragmatic processing which is consonant with the speaker's intention to inform. Such expressions include discourse markers such as 'after all', 'so', 'actually', etc. There are other expressions with procedural semantic contribution such as 'please' that constrain the inferential process involving 'higher level explicatures', i.e. cognitive representations in which a propositional form is embedded under an attitude description (Fretheim 2004b: 128). The UgE use of discourse markers *as* in (18) and *also* in (19) is meant to achieve this pragmatic function. In (18) and (19), the connectives direct the hearer to the recognition that the relevance of the utterance resides more in the higher level explicature than in the actual propositional content. That is, in (18) the actual propositional content is: 'You are brave', while the higher level explicature is that the speaker is surprised or shocked at the referent's bravery. This procedural meaning is encoded by the connective *as.* In native English, *as* cannot perform such a function. The utterance in (19) requires a special intonation (rising) on the connective *also*. The utterance does not mean 'in addition to some other person, Jane does not understand.' Rather, the use of *also* encodes the speaker's disappointment at 'Jane's failure to understand.' Hence, *also* here constrains the propositional content 'Jane does not understand', by foregrounding the speaker's attitude. Note that even though *as* and *also* do not conjoin two overt propositions in (18) and (19) above, we are aware from the pragmatic perspective that they tell the hearer that the missing linguistic structures in front of the utterances should trigger a contextual search for the premise that justifies them.

3   Concluding Remarks

It is a well-known fact that each language (with its complex linguistic system) exerts substantial changes over time. UgE has created new ways of expressing things (relations, properties

and attitudes) which are important (and therefore relevant) to the members of the community who dynamically use this variety of English. It is fascinating how inventive a natural language can be to accommodate shared mental states, attitudes, values, feelings, world-views, etc. The collective desire to express such 'mental contents' may be a good reason for language change and innovation.

From the foregoing, it is quite difficult to subscribe to Fisher's (2000a: 41) claim that UgE is "perceived as having a lower social prestige than Standard English." We are well aware that in any natural language (including native English) certain forms are felicitous in given contexts, while others are not. For example, in American English *to screw up* is colloquial, as opposed to the neutral expression *to spoil*. Likewise, in UgE, expressions like *to detooth* and *to chew money* will usually be heard among peers, but not in formal situations, unless they are being used humorously. Recall that in the case of *to chew money*, there is a more neutral UgE variant, i.e. *to eat money*, which can be used in both formal (cf. (15) and the discussion thereof) and informal situations. Thus, there are many UgE expressions which are informal or colloquial, while others are neutral and are felicitously used in formal settings. Needless to state that it does not follow from the claims above that there is no stigmatization among users of English in Uganda. Stigmatization occurs when one deviates from what is seen as conventionalized norms, including instances where some native English forms that sound awkward in Uganda are used.

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Bebwa Isingoma
Department of Modern Languages and Translation (English Linguistics section)
University of Agder
Post Box 422, NO-4604 Kristiansand, Norway
bebwa.isingoma@uia.no
isibebwa@yahoo.co.uk