

**Lexical Borrowing and the Construction of Identity and Politics
in Ushie's Poetry**

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Abstract

The fact that language, identity and politics are interrelated has long been established in linguistic scholarship. Working within the concept of language and culture, and how language gives expression to politics, the present article discusses the place of lexical borrowing in the construction of identity and politics. Data for the study were drawn from Ushie's poetic oeuvre, one of Africa's prominent poets of the twenty-first century. The study identifies poetic use of language as a veritable resource for the expression of identity and politics. It is revealed that when poets indulge in lexical borrowing, they do so (in most cases) to assert their identity on the one hand and to discuss the political situation of their country and time on the other. The linguistic act of borrowing in Ushie's poetry shows how Nigeria's language problem has been politicized and used as an instrument in search of identity.

Keywords: Lexical borrowing; identity; politics; linguistic hegemony; language planning