Nigerian Accents of English in the Context of World Englishes

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Abstract

Despite the simmering rage over the reality of any variety of Nigerian English in some circles, the major varieties are being presented as the core regional dialects of a World English in this article. This paper is a thesis statement which is purposed to project a convincing defense of Nigerian English varieties as dialects in their own rights. This paper has adopted the contributions of Trudgill (1986), Preston (1989), Ferguson and Gumperz (1970) among others in forming a framework for the analysis of the phonemes of Standard English as they were rendered by the selected Nigerian subjects for the study. Speeches of one hundred and fifty (150) Nigerians who are of the Northern, Western and Eastern origin were sorted for perceptual and acoustic analyses. The three ethnic groups had 50 participants each, to ensure a national outlook, excluding the minority groups. The formal and casual styles in relation to variability were considered in this research, taking a cue from Labov (1966).The articulations of the subjects used for the experiment suggested varying dialectal traces. This formed the basis for the identity markers of fricatives, stops, sonorants, liquids and other obstruents emphasized in the study. The findings in this study further suggest that different regions in the world may have areas of convergence and divergence of phonemes from the Standard English. These possibilities have informed our conclusion that regions thus have areas of comparative advantage over others in phoneme articulations.

Keywords: *accommodation; fossilization; accents; dialectology; inter-dialectism; hypercorrection; hypocorrection*

1. Introduction

In native language speakers' communities, there exist several pronunciations which are either termed 'standard', 'prestigious' or even 'non-standard' (cf. Labov, 1972:65). Some pronunciation habits are referred to as dialects (Preston, 1989:91). Thus, there are social dialects, local dialects and prestige dialects (Trudgill, 1986: 67-8). In the words of Halliday (1978: 179), 'a social dialect is the embodiment of a mild but distinctly different world view.' The functional linguist perceives a dialect as one which is potentially threatening to the others if it does not coincide with them. This is undoubtedly the explanation of the violent attitudes to nonstandard speech communities held by speakers of standard dialects across the world and often caricatured with the expression: "I don't like their vowels …."

The linguistic implication of Halliday's (1978:179) expression, as indicated above, is evident in research findings of scholars in the phonology of English world-wide. In the literature of world Englishes, African Englishes (e.g. Kenyan English, Ghanaian English, South African English, Cameroonian English, Nigerian English and many others), which belong to Kachru's (1997) Outer Circle Englishes (OCE), or Jenkin's (2000) Expanding Circle Englishes (ECE), there are findings to support Halliday's (1978: 179) discovery of 'social dislike' for the disparity in the pronunciations of other speakers of English (cf Schmied, 1989:23).

It seems obvious that linguistic variety is a feature of the human life in both the social and the individual spheres (Berñardez, 2008:138). In Nigeria, for instance, there are between 394 and 513 estimated linguistic groups (Elugbe, 1990; Bamgbose,1978;1982; Bobda, 1995; Eka, 2000) culminating in the multifarious accents, dialects, varieties and diversities of the spoken English in the country. However, three major-group languages assume dominance over all the others (if considered from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria). Brann (2006: 32,56), along with other sources,

observe that the three major-group languages result in such Nigerian English varieties as Hausa English, Igbo English and Yoruba English which are recognized in academic circles as the major non-native varieties of English existing in Nigeria. Apart from being celebrated owing to their dominance in population (Ulrike, 2009), the three sub-varieties of Nigerian English symbolically represent the semiotics of the Nigerian existence. In this paper, the salient features which qualify the trio to be termed Nigerian English dialects are investigated in order to position the major varieties of Nigerian English as dialects of, not only Nigerian English, but also non-native varieties.

2. The Notion of Dialect and Accents: Conceptual Clarifications

The dialects of a language are other tongues of the same language expected to be mutually intelligible to all speakers of the language. Lack of intelligibility of such language varieties to would-be speakers will identify such as new languages. The boundaries of dialects are difficult to delineate because they merge into one another. But a distinction is usually made between a standard dialect and other "local" dialects of a language.

A standard dialect enjoys social prestige than other dialects (i.e. the Received Pronunciation, RP). Generally, a standard dialect draws an unbiased social attitude from all speakers of a language and is usually associated with educated usage and the model for writing and speaking a language. It provides a basis for codifying and teaching the language because it is assigned formal and more sophisticated roles than other dialects of the spoken English.

A study of dialects of a language in terms of its boundaries and linguistic features is referred to by the term "dialectology". A study on dialectology often reveals a lot of information about the history and culture of speakers of a language. Each dialect is set off from others in the language by a complex set of features of pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary. In the words of Preston (1989: 103).

> an approach to dialect forms which resembles those taken to phonological systems in a developing inter-language is lacking because so much dialect study has taken place within a static framework. That is particularly ironic since dialectology had its origin in historical linguistics.

Dialectology became popular during the late 1980's. According to Preston (1989: 103), dialectology was an attempt to incorporate Second Language Acquisition (SLA) understandings into dialect research. Trudgill (1986) is said to have regarded the appearance of certain dialectal forms as "fudged lects". These dialectal forms, according to Trudgill (1986) cited in Preston (1989:103) are termed instances of interdialect – after interlanguage, a term introduced by Selinker (1972) to cover a wide range of phenomena which occur in the process of SLA. Trudgill (1986) notes further that dialect contact may lead to intermediate forms (e.g. the /ɜ/ of the Norfolk area) or the /e/) used to replace the long Schwa, mid vowel /ɜ: / in R.P. by many Nigerians in examples of words such as bird, work, girl, and so on.

Accent, on the hand, refers to the differences between varieties only in terms of pronunciation (see Awonusi, 2004: 204). An accent, therefore, shows certain phonetic realizations of phonemes associated with another. Most phonologists describe accents' development as originating from phonological interference. The English language spoken in Nigeria appears to acquire a peculiar accent, different from the standardized British accent, the RP. This is the way accent is conjectured in this study and our concentration is on the synchronic perspective, not diachronic.

3. Research Design

One hundred and fifty (150) educated Nigerian speakers of English had their voices recorded in formal contexts. These Nigerians included eight (8) newscasters of the Nigeria Television Authority, (NTA) Lagos; eight (8) newcasters of the Abuja network programmes and four (4) staff of NTA, Ilorin together with four (4) newscasters of the Kwara State Television Service. Spontaneous group seminar presentations of twenty one (21) post-graduate students of the University of Ilorin and fifteen (15) lecturers who are members of the Nigeria English Studies Association (NESA) were also recorded. To ensure equal ethnic representation, the researcher recorded voices of people from the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. Speeches of 21 penultimate-year undergraduates from the University of Jos, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto, University of Port Harcourt as well as University of Ilorin (all within Nigeria) were also recorded. There were seven (7) students each from the three ethnic groups. Speeches of professionals such as doctors (15), lawyers (15), architects (15), politicians (12) on Television interviews and fifteen (15) Journalists were recorded without their knowledge to ensure a natural speech condition.

4. Data Elicitation

The 150 voices sorted for analysis in this research are from Nigerians who are of the Northern, Western and Eastern origin. The three ethnic groups had 50 participants each, although excluding the minority groups since all the linguistic groups could not be employed in a single study. The participants whose voices were chosen for acoustic analysis were those whose ethnic backgrounds were known. We have considered the formal and casual styles in relation to variability in this research, since Labov (1966) has shown that phonological variation in the prestige variant occurs more frequently as style rises in formality. Labov's hierarchical ordering of styles in terms of formality places minimal pairs, word lists and reading (of a connected passage) at the top while most formal and informal conversations (such as that usually elicited in Linguistics and other interviews) are next in informality followed by casual speech. Labov's 'channel cues' – that is, his techniques of eliciting particular style from his informants – have been criticized as not being fool-proof because a speaker's style keeps varying, no matter what the interviewer does.

5. Theoretical Issues

Some interdialect forms arise in dialect contacts. They are hyper-adaptation, hyper-dialectism and hypo-correction. Hyper adaptation is a language or dialect contact situation, which results from the learner's faulty category assignment (Preston 1989:103) in geographical linguistics. Hyper adaptations might be called hyperdialectisms. In the northern advances of R.P, speakers in areas where /ʌ/ forms are not yet under control may assign words to the wrong phoneme class, e.g. (bʌtʃr/ (butcher) Trudgill (1986: 66). In such a case, Preston (1989:103) submits that hyper-dialectism is a case of hypercorrection. This is, however, a situation of an unprecedented form in an attempt to "accommodate towards the encroaching standard" (Preston, 1989:103). The last contact situation listed above is hypocorrection. It is an almost deliberate but subconscious resistance to the standard.

"Fossilization", the arrest of progress, is like the creation of a new variety. "Backsliding" is the use of older forms after evidence that a new rule has already been learnt. It is like some hyper and hypo corrections, though their source is clearly in the general psycholinguistic area of overgeneralization. Such low-level psycholinguistic accounts of processes, however, do not explain why inter-dialect forms should have a greater chance of stabilizing in one area than another. Trudgill (1986) offers two explanations, one – "accommodation" – a linguistic situation "perceived in terms of mutual phonological intelligibility and acceptability" between interlocutors from varying sociolinguistic backgrounds (see Jenkins, 2000) cited in Josiah and Babatunde (2011:536). In other words – a new dialect is stable in some areas because the older dialect has features not strange in the new one. Familiarity thus enhances easy accommodation of the new inter-dialect form.

Accommodation must be fine-tuned to its reception (Preston 1989:104). Total accommodation may arouse suspicion in the New Speech (NS) community if, for some reasons, the acquirers are not expected to use the native forms. Total accommodation from the point of view of the Non-Native Speaker (NNS) may result in anomie, low self-concept, or loss of identity. Those factors may be complicated, of course, by the reception of new forms in the old community. Two, the earliest learners of the new form may be seen as people 'putting on ours' if the change is in the direction of an external standard or prestige variety. From this point of view, "fossilization" may be negative (an individual's reaction to the danger of loss of identity) or positive (a community's emerging compactness).

6. Data Analysis

The approach to the analyses of Nigerian English phonemes in this paper is dialectal and not the wearing perceptual or corroborative acoustics alone. The vowel systems of the three major Nigerian English varieties are said to coalesce at some educated levels. There are, however, the 'Basic' Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba English vowel systems. There are also two variations of the 'Basic' systems: one in the direction of R.P. and the other in the direction of Igbo-Yoruba English. Most Hausa speakers of English have a system similar to the basic, sophisticated or educated speakers, especially Katsina, Kaduna, Nassarawa, Kano, Jigawa, Sokoto and Kebbi (cf Jibril, 1982). Some educated people, including broadcasters, have a system that is modified in the direction of R.P and away from the mother-tongue while young Southern-influenced speakers have a system that is modified in the direction of Yoruba-Igbo English (Jibril, 1982). The discussions below are presented in the light of the dialectal features of accommodation, fossilization, hyperdialectism, and hypercorrection, among others.

7. Phonemic Accommodation in (Educated) Hausa English

Hausa English is being appraised to seem closer to R.P., in comparison to Educated Yoruba English (EYE) and Educated Igbo English (EIE) (Olaniyi, 2006). But for the shibboleths or markers of the Hausa English, it has more phonemes than the SBE (Jibril, 1982). However, in our perceptual study of Educated Hausa English (EHE) Experimental Group, we discovered a very high level of linguistic accommodation than in the others. For instance, in the phrasal verbs below, the EHE version seems closest to SBE in the realization of the central, open and low R.P. vowels.

(i) S.B.E - / Kən'frʌnt əz/ (confront us)
EHE - / Kʌn'frʌnt ɛs / (confront us)
EIE - / Kɔ□frɒnt ɔs / (confront us)
EYE - / Kɔ□frɔnt ɔs / (confront us)

To characterize variation in interlanguage phonology, accommodation must be considered (Preston 1989:255). We observe that a reason for the level of accommodation or hypo or hyper correction in a local dialect of a second language is the numerical strength of the latter's phonemic inventory. A language such as Hausa has thirty consonant phonemes and a twelve- vowel system. The language also has all five pairs of monophthongs distinguished by length alone.

Of the thirty consonant phonemes in the Hausa phonemic inventory, 17 have cognates in English. In fact, Hausa also has (ŋ) as a variant of (n) "before velars and glottals… and in final positions" (Hoffman and Schachter, 1969:76). Six of the vowels noted by Abraham (1959:127-128; 1959), have almost identical qualities to those of English. Hausa /a/, which is peculiarly northern English /a/ surfaced as /ʌ/ more often in the articulations of the sound by 80% of our EHE subjects. Hausa /ʌ/ resembles English/ʌ/ as in 'cut' in some environments. Hausa L1 phonemic system accommodates many English L2 phonemes due to the latter's comparative advantage of the number of phonemes over all other languages in Nigeria.

In this corpus, only the Hausa subjects had a close representation of /ʌ/ in comparison with the other Nigerians. The word 'multilateralism' was produced thus by almost 90% of our subjects.

(ii) SBE: /mʌlˊtIlætərələzm/
EHE: /mʌlˊtIlatarələzm/

The slight difference in the sounds above exists in /æ/-/a/ and /ə/-/I/ differentiations. However, a very high sense of accommodation is observed in EHE. In another example with the word, "common", the SBE and EHE versions are as below:

(iii) SBE: /ˊkʌmən/
EHE: / ˊkʌmɔn/

We observe that EHE speakers, as much as they avoid their convenient forms, still falter occasionally. In this study, Hausa orthography of the sound /p/ is represented with /f/, which is supposed to be a bilabial plosive phoneme. To learners of English from EHE teachers, the /f/ might be considered the correct form. Hoffman and Schachter (1959: 127-128) posit that /f/ is the phoneme intended by Hausa, but Kraft (1973) and Nuttal (1961:90) recognize that /f/ is only a convenient symbol but that /Φ/ is more indicative of what Hausa people say when they pronounce the phonemes in question.

We submit that the alternant used in the artificially explicit speech style relatable in most cases to Hausa/English bilingual or pseudo- bilingual speakers is /f/, the careful speech style alternant is /p/ and the casual or fast speech alternant is /Φ/. Evidence from our present study reinforces the conclusion that the phoneme is /p/ rather than /f/. In this corpus, only twenty three (23) out of the 50 Hausa subjects realized the /f/ almost like a native speaker and not as either as /p/ or /Φ/ in the proportion of 46% of the subjects.

This is to suggest that more difficulty is experienced with English /f/ than /p/ and that /f/ is more alien to the Hausa phonological system. Only four of the consonant phonemes of English seem to have no counterparts in Hausa: /f/, /v/, /θ/. /ð/ and /ʒ/. Thus, phonologically, the alternative realizations of these phonemes in EHE constitute indexical features of this variety of English and are, therefore, fossilized forms.

8. Phonemic Accommodation in (Educated) Yoruba English

From our perception, there are four consonantal Shibboleths of Yoruba English: [ʃ] for /ʧ/, [Φ] for initial /h/, [s] for /z/, even when spelt /z/ among the secondary school teachers, civil servants, and students, and [f] for /v/. From our observation, /ʧ/, /z/ and /v/ appears excluded from the Yoruba consonant inventory. This is because Yoruba language does not have /ʧ/, /z/, /v/ in its phonemic system and Yoruba people tend to substitute the nearest equivalents of these in English. The case of /h/ and why it is eliminated word–initially in Yoruba English is less straightforward (cf Awonusi, 2004). Virtually, all our Experimental Group subjects could not audibly realize the voiceless glottal fricative /h/ in its full quality in cases of its occurrence in our corpus. For example, five (5) of our Yoruba newscasters were heard to approximate the quality of the glottal fricative /h/, while the remaining forty-five (45) Yoruba speakers could not realize it accurately. Obviously, extra effort is exerted in the ejective process of the pulmonary air to produce the sound.

However, in this discussion, we have examined only two of these variables, /ʧ/ and /h/ because /f/ has not been attested as a variant of /v/ in the corpus and because the over-lap between /s/ and /z/ is a general characteristic of Nigerian English. The only cases where definite Yoruba influence can be established are those where /z/ is actually spelt 'z' (and words with such spelling forms were very few in this corpus) among the EYE speakers. Our observation in defence of the dearth of misrepresentation of the voiced post-alveolar fricative /z/ is that cognitive language acquisition skill was at play. In other words, our educated subjects adequately proved that there is compatibility between Krashen's monitor and model. They possess dual knowledge of the L1 and the L2 norm, that is., their level of attention to form was quite higher than what the case would have been for Basic Yoruba English Speakers. It should be noted, however, that the phonemic behaviours being expatiated in this paper culminate in the dialectal distinctions which we propose. Table 1 below further illustrates this fact clearly.

Table 1: The Distribution of /ʃ / and /φ/ as Variants of / ʧ / and /h/ Among Yoruba Speakers of English

Variables	**/ʧ/**	**/h/**
Speaker number	/ʃ/ tokens	**/Φ/ tokens**
50	4	**1**
18	1	**-**
19	1	**1**
21	1	**7**
38	1	**-**
46	1	**-**
33	**-**	**1**

The figures on Table 1 are actual tokens and not percentages. The table shows that 3 of the 4 speakers who have /φ/ as a variant of /h/ also have /ʃ/ as a variant of /ʧ/ and only 1 speaker (33) has /φ/, but not /ʃ/.

In our corpora are a group of educated speakers of English who have attained some level of education, training and motivation above Nigerian mother-tongue accent varieties of English (Eka, 1985). Some of the subjects reflected L1-influenced phonemes. Table 11 illustrates this:

Table 2: Shibboleths of Yoruba English

Speaker number	**Words**	**Sound/ Phoneme**	**EYE Version**	**Number**	**Percentage**
1.	Girl	/3:/	ɛ	128	**85%**
2.	Fun	/ʌ/	ɒ	135	**90%**
3.	Cook	/ʊ/	u	180	**60%**
4.	People	/i: /	I	60	**40%**
5.	Pleasure	/ɛ/	I	75	**50%**
6.	Kingly	/ŋ/	g	128	**82%**
7.	Pleasure	/ʒ/	ʃ	53	**35%**
8.	Plumber	/m/	mb	135	**90%**

9.	Future	/ju: /	u	63	**42%**
10.	**Handsome**	**/ə/**	**ɒ**	**90**	**60%**

The table above shows both the Standard English versions of some phonemes that are said to be difficult for non-native Yoruba speakers of English. The central mid long, tense R.P vowel /ɜ:/, pronounced with lip spreading neutrally, commonly known as the long schwa, is one of such. It is found in word contexts such as girl, furl, shirt, skirt, firm, and so on. It is one of the most difficult phonemes to pronounce by Yoruba speakers of English. In fact, 85% of the EYE subjects rendered it as /ɛ/, which is the closest alternative in the Yoruba language phonemic inventory. Our educated Yoruba speakers of English pronounced /gɛl/ rather than /g**3**:l/; /skɛt/ rather than /s k**3**:t/; /fɛm/ rather than /f**3**: m/, etc. Thus /ɛ/ forms one of the Yoruba English Shibboleths.

The second phoneme in the table above, i.e. a central, just above fully-open, short, lax R.P vowel /ə/ pronounced with a neutrally-open lip, forms another Shibboleth to the R.P standard. Virtually, all the Yoruba speakers of English in our corpus pronounced the /ɔ/ and /a/ (as the case may be) as alternative phonemes in Yoruba language instead of the English /ə/. Both the /ɒ/ in English and the /ɔ/ in Yoruba are pronounced with lip-rounding. Unlike Hausa, where the /ʌ/ has an L2-like alternative, Yoruba speakers replace /ʌ/ with the /ɔ/ alternative in Yoruba language. From our observation, a least, 90% of the Yoruba subjects rendered /ʌ/ as /ɔ/.

The third phoneme in the table above is a half-close, short, back (centralized), lax R.P vowel, pronounced with the shape of the lips closely but loosely rounded. /ʊ/ has a very close alternative in Yoruba. So, 60% of the subjects pronounced it as /u/ in Yoruba. The difference between the Standard English /ʊ/ and the Yoruba /u/ is in the position or place of the articulatory organ. In /ʊ/, the lips are loosely rounded, while /u/ is firmly or closely rounded, just almost like the long /u: / in Standard English. So Yoruba English speakers have no distinction for /u:/and /ʊ/. In some cases, the /ʊ/ is set up as an archiphoneme [U], or sometimes, neutralized as a variaphone [u].

Another phoneme that Yoruba speakers find difficult to articulate exactly like it is in Standard English is /i:/, i.e. 'a close, long, front, tense R.P vowel pronounced with lip-spreading. A Yoruba speaker produces /i/ or /I/, the Yoruba language alternative for the long /i:/ and short /I/. 40% of the EYE subjects produced it wrongly. The last vowel phonemes on Table 2 is /ɛ/. This is not in the correct environment such as /bɛt/, /lɛg/, and /tɛl/. In the Yoruba orthography, /eI/ in the context above is correct both as /ɛ/ and /I/. This is because both sounds have their equivalents in the Yoruba language.

The remaining phonemes: /ŋ/, /ʒ/, /m/ are consonants, but EYE speakers rendered the phonemes as /g/, /ʂ/,/mb /. Besides, the glide /j/ was rendered /u/and /ɔ/ respectively. The EYE subjects succeeded in replacing the R.P. phonemes with their M.T. alternatives. But for the /m/ in plumber, the EYE subjects had a consonant cluster rather than a single bilabial nasal R.P. consonant. 90% of the EYE subjects produced the cluster. The schwa /ə/ forms another Shibboleth, since not many EYE-English bilinguals produced it correctly. Apparently, Yoruba speakers replaced it with alternatives like /ɔ/ and /a/ in some contexts such as failure, /feɪljə/, pure, /pjʊə/, tour, /tʊə/, chair, /ʧɛə/; centre, /sɛntə/, fear, /fɛə/, among others, respectively. 60% of the EYE subjects produced it as /ŋ/ in the M.T. We shall do a harmonization of the phonemic Shibboleths of the three regions to see their coalescent instances.

9. Phonemic Accommodation in Igbo English

Our Igbo subjects gave a good account of the training and education they have acquired as they attempted to approximate the Target Language (TL) phonology. However only an L2-like variety was achievable as their MT influence and identity posed difficulty, especially in the Igbo Shibboleths already discussed earlier.

Twenty (20) consonant phonemes: /p, b, t, d k, g, f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h, m, n, ŋ, l, r, w, j/ are conveniently accommodated by the Igbo language. These are aspects of high convergence. There are only two areas of low convergence or high divergence - /θ, ð/ in the consonant inventory. A major area of low convergence, or safely put, 'divergence' is the Igbo vowel system. The controversy in the Igbo vowel system is the existence of a mutually 'exclusive tense' and 'lax' sets of vowel. Educated Igbo speakers of English in our corpus were also found wanting in their attempt to reconcile the two allophones of /e/-[ę] and /ɛ/ in Igbo language. Our subjects pronounced vowel /e/ and /ɛ/ as replacements for both the mid, short, front, lax (but sometimes tense) R.P. vowel /ɛ/, and the glide from /e/ to /I/, as diphthong /eI/. The performance of our Educated Igbo English in the production of /ɛ/ and /eI/ is tabulated below.

Table 3: Performance of Educated Igbo English in the Production of /ɛ/ and /eɪ/

S/n	Speaker number	Vowel /ɛ/, /eI/ contrast		EIE alternatives
1.	22	Paid	/peId/	**ped**
2.	25	game	/ɡeIm/	**ɡem**
3.	6	fame	/feIm /	**fem**
4.	7	rate	/reIt/	**ret**
5.	9	fade	/feId/	**fed**
6.	15	teller	/tɛlə/	**tęlə**
7.	18	payer	/peIjə/	**peja**
8	12	Pen	pɛn	**pen**
9.	1	get	/ɡɛt/	**ɡęt**
10.	**5**	**rent**	**/rɛnt /**	**Ręnt**

A few of the phonemes have been tested acoustically using the adobe timing software. Below are the results of the acoustic analyses.

Token 1: Tape 30696.wav - Vowel /ə/

Table 4: ENE and SBE Timing in Vowel /ə/ Realization

Variety	Selection	Phoneme	Begin	End	Length	Difference
ENE	**Select**	**/ə/**	**75944**	**76816**	**872**	
	View		**48177**	**157937**	**109760**	**12bpm**
SBE	**Select**		**75938**	**76822**	**884**	
	View		**48177**	**157937**	**109760**	

In a nutshell, Table 4 reveals that the SBE version of the tested vowel consumed lesser time than the ENE version. By implication, the token of the ENE speaker shows how non-native speaker of English differs from the native speakers in duration. The difference in duration between the two samples is 12 bits per minute (bpm). The tables below summarize the deviant forms of the ENE phonemes as rendered by the students, professionals, civil servants and others used as subjects.

Token 2. Tape 24728.wav

Sample: 'Any state without a virile and sustainable economy will not exist as a nation'

Source: Radio Kwara Ilorin (National news broadcast)

Table 5: Time Difference between ENE and SBE (1)

Variety	Selection	Sentence	Begin	End	Length	Difference
ENE	Select	"Any state	0.00.27	0.007.238	0.07.067	
	View	without a virile				
SBE	Select	and sustainable	0.00.26	0.007.320	0.07.053	**0.14bpm**
	View	economy will				
		not …"	**0.00.000**	**0.08.881**	**0.08.881**	

Our ENE subject whose rendition is presented comparatively with the SBE version in the table above spent longer time in reading the sample sentence. The difference between his rendition and that of the subject who is considered to be a native speaker is 14bpm. For cognitive reasons, we are exercising some sense of caution since two individuals cannot speak the same way. When it comes to timing, which happens to be a suprasegmental feature of phonology, an individual is not likely to maintain the same duration in reading a prepared script. This is not tested in the study. To further confirm our findings in this analysis, we shall examine another phrase, "cut throat prices" in Table 6.

Token 3: Tape 30696.wav

Sample: "cut throat prices"

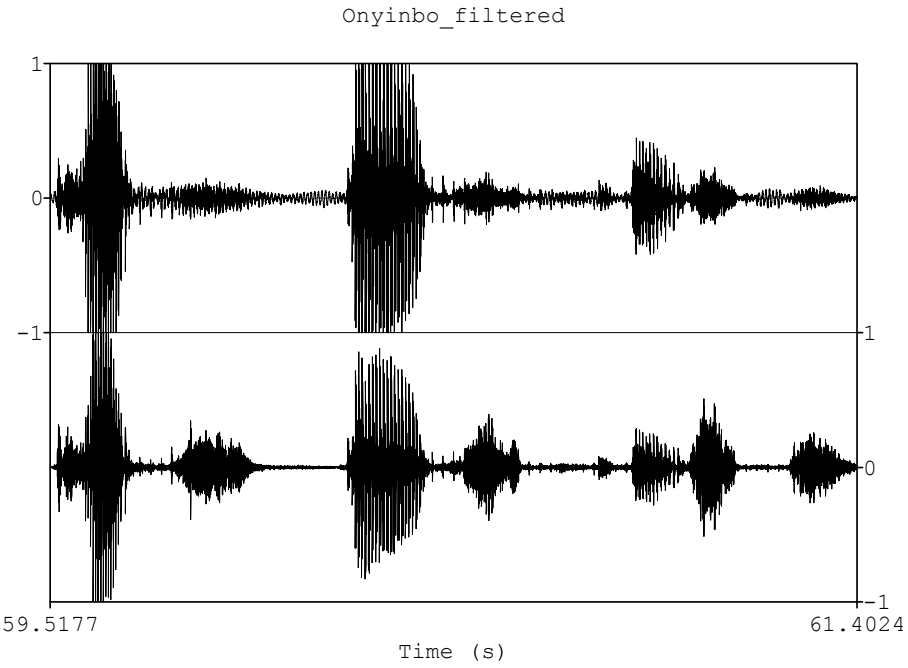
Table 6: Time Difference between ENE and SBE (2)

Variety	Selection	Token	Begin	End	Length	Difference
ENE	Select	"cut throat	7:1.00	7:4.01	0:3.01	**0.86bpm**
	View	prices"	1:1.00	18:2.06	17:1.06	
SBE	Select		7:1.00	7:3.15	0:2.15	
	View		**1:1.00**	**18:2.06**	**17:0.09**	

Table 6 shows time difference between the articulation of one of our subjects and our control subject. She (the Control) was 86bpm faster than the Nigerian subject. This goes to show the difference between the two varieties of English.

In some of our tokens, which we may not display in tables in this section because of space, we discovered disparity in the timing of the ENE and the SBE renditions. In the Tape (9752.wav.), a difference of 0.039 hms was recorded. We went a step further to measure the wave form statistics. In the statistics displayed by the Adobe software we used for the analysis, a minimum sample value of 0.6005bpm and a maximum sample value of 0.5593bpm as well as peak amplitude of 1.4.65 db were displayed. We also saw a possibly clipped sample 0.0, a DC offset of 007%, a minimum RMS power 23.56db, Average RMS power of -28.47db and a total RMS power of -27.94db. In the next section we shall test to see the articulatory differences between SBE and ENE as different dialects of English using Praat, software for phonetic analysis.

10. Spectral Analysis



Cats dogs horses

Figure 1a: Spectral Analysis of "cats", "dogs" and "horses" (SBE version)

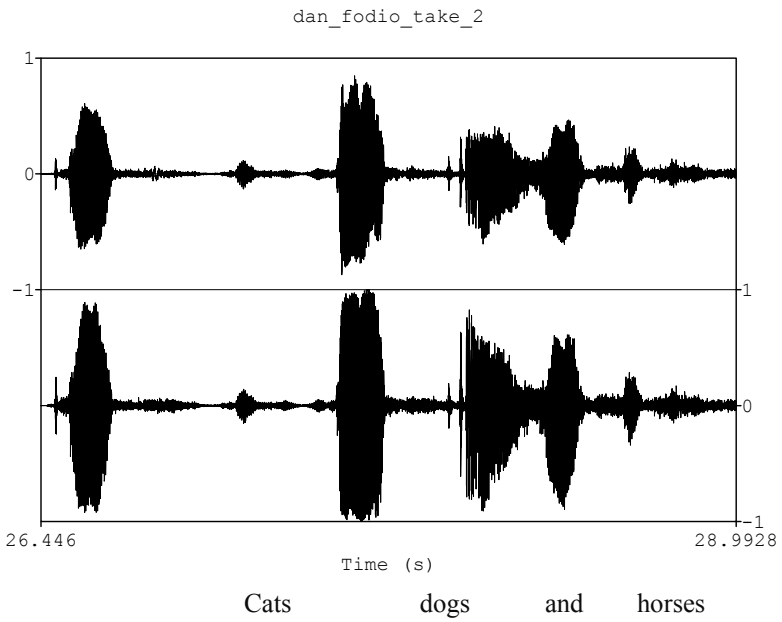


Figure 1b: Spectral slices of "cats", "dog" and "horses" (Hausa version)

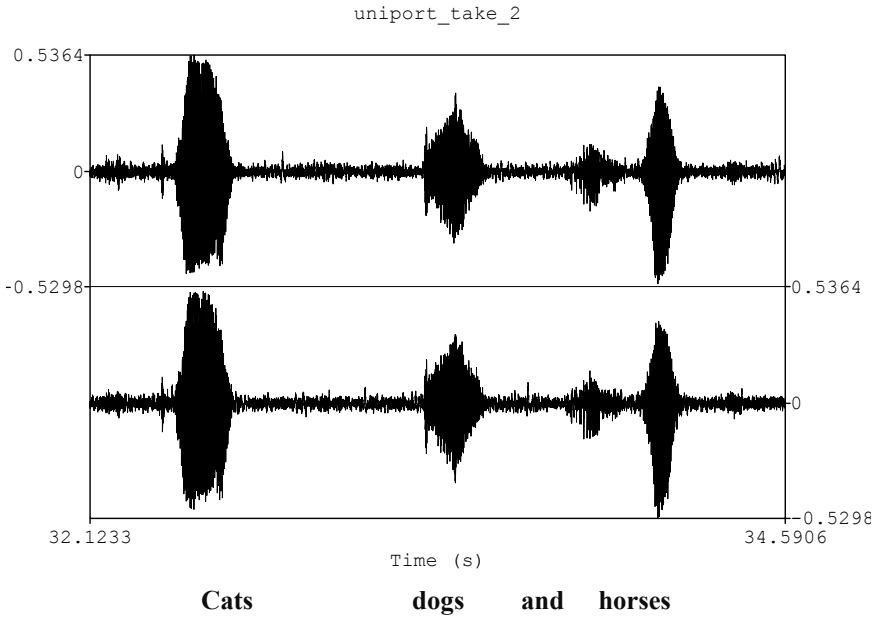
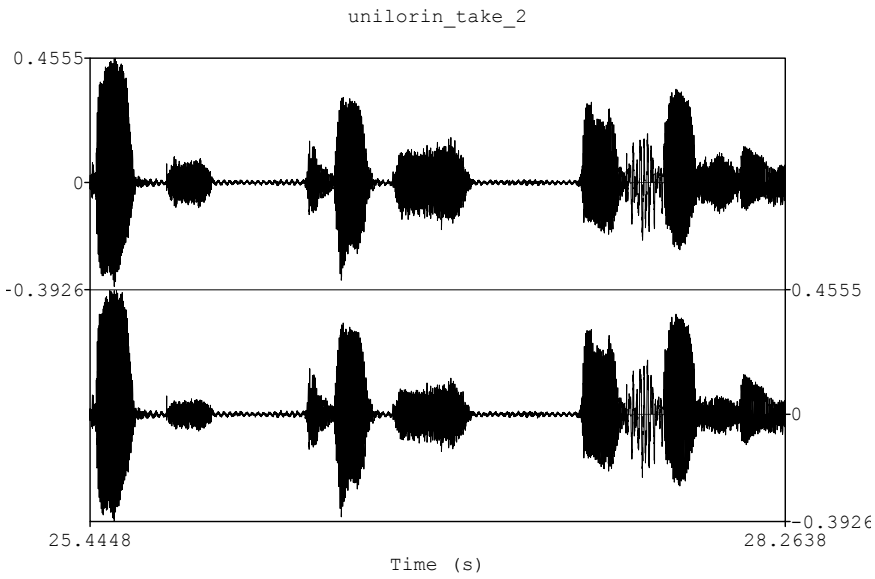


Figure 1c: Spectral Slices of "cats", "dogs" and "horses" (Igbo version)



Cats dogs and horses

Figure 1d: Spectral Slices of "cats", "dogs and "horses" (Yoruba version)

11. Tabular Analysis

Table 7: Spectral analysis of "cats", "dogs" and "horses"

Variety	Quality	Timing in	seconds	Difference	Distance from RP
SBE	Light	59.5177	61.4024	1.884684	-
EHE	Louder	26.446	28.9928	2.5468	**0.662116s**
EIE	Loud	32.1233	34.5906	2.4673	**0.582616**
EYE	**Loudest**	**25.4448**	**28.2638**	**2.819**	**0.934316**

The three pictures above reveal to us that articulatory pattern that the vocalic systems do not contrast phonemically. In other words, ENE speakers have a kind of articulatory force or quality that is heavier than that of the SBE. This weight is revealed by the relative thickness of the patches or spectral slices in the pictures while the SBE version appears lighter or fainter than the three Nigerian versions.

Table 7 shows that the articulation of 'cats', 'dogs' and 'horses' differ in terms of vocalization in relation to the SBE 'Control' subject. Although timing is not our focus in this research, it is a very important phonetic factor in the description of Nigerian English speakers in comparison to native speakers. Timing and other phonological issues are not considered negative fossilization in this research. That is why we do not support acoustic evidences which only display individual incompetence or performance at a particular time, without taking cognizance of paralinguistic factors which could lengthen or reduce the duration of segmental or suprasegmental articulations.

12. Conclusion

In this paper, our pre-occupation has been to investigate the dialectal features of Nigerian English in order to cautiously adopt the term, 'dialect' on the varieties of English as observed in Nigeria. Dialects are identified according to their phonological representations as well as the different lexical choices as opposed to the prestigious *lects* in a society. To achieve this, we have carried out both perceptual and acoustic analyses of renditions of 150 ENE speakers in partial juxtaposition with the two SBE 'Control, subjects in different situations. While we tested our subjects on the different phonemes in English, taking particular interest in those identified areas of high and low convergences as variables, and shibboleths, we also identified the possible fossilized forms and processes in L2 phonology. We may safely adjudge the variables that occur occasionally in the speech of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba speakers as dialects of Nigerian varieties of English. This declaration is a cue from Labov's (1972) study of the American varieties of Standard English.

'Accommodation' and 'Fossilization' were discovered to be two possible relationships that exist between Nigerian L1 phonemes and their contrastive L2 realizations of Standard English phonemes. In other words, we have observed that Hausa language possesses some kind of accommodative qualities owing to its comparative advantage in number of phonemes. This advantage is evident in the 'close-to-RP-articulation' of some of the vowels. Hausa speakers of English in our corpus did not exercise difficulty in producing vowel /ʌ/ and other short vowels possibly because most Hausa vowels contrast phonemically (cf Jibril, 1982). This assertion is, however, not 'eternally' sacrosanct as variations in spoken utterances are unalterable linguistic progenies.

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