

## Nigerian English Varieties; The Sociolinguistic Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

Nigeria, which is a multi-ethnic society with different languages and cultures, has none of these indigenous languages accepted as the national languages among other reasons: one of which is. The fear of domination of one ethnic group over the other. As a result of this, English language was accepted as the official language and given the pride of place over all other indigenous languages consequently, each of these ethnic groups uses the English language in a way to depict their culture and world-view, hence, English language tends to go through notarization, indigenization, etc, leading to different varieties (Nigeria English), this study discussed the varieties of Nigerian English from the sociolinguistic perspective. The first chapter introduced the study, the second reviewed the opinion of linguists on Nigeria English varieties (nev) the third showed the method of data collection, the fourth analyzed the findings while the fifth concluded the study and suggestions made for further studies.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the world today, approximately 375 million people speak English as their first language. English today is seen as third largest language of number of native speakers, after mandarin, Chinese and Spanish. However, combining native and non-native speakers, it is probably the most common second languages in the world. though possibly second to a combination of the Chinese languages depending on whether or not distribution in the later are classified as "language" or "dialects"(www,Wikipedia.com). the same source notifies that some claim that non-native speakers outnumber native speakers by a ratio of 3 to 1.with this in mind, it will be unreasonable to assume that the English speaker in these areas are or ought to be the same in all ramifications considering the socio-linguistic factors prevalent in the areas. This language which is indigenous to Britain is seen to be no longer based on British culture as now used in different facets of life and diverse of cultures, however, the development of regional and local varieties of the English language results from its domestication in non-native environment and this has been found to be a sociolinguistic reality. Considering Nigeria's linguistics nature briefly, the country known as Nigeria today, was politically nonexistent as its different geographical regions were peopled by different tribes, empires e.t.c. who spoke unintelligible languages, coupled with diverse cultures. Though language is one of the enduring artifacts of culture, these groups of people were not only different in their non linguistic aspects, such as religion, trade agriculture, e.t.c. The amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates into one entity in 1914 by Lord Lugard did not solve the problem of linguistic diversity and culture as members of the various provinces still spoke different languages with their diverse cultures.

As a result of the socio-cultural factor and the geographical distribution of Nigeria linguistic context, with over 400 multi -ethnic multi-lingual groups, the majority of the cultural and linguistic divergence influences the English language with each tending to use it in a way to depict or reflect its cultural and world view. Consequently, the English language goes through the linguistic processes of nativization, indigenization, acculturation and interference. This is to say that, since English is culture-bound most Nigerian speakers of English language, tend to nativize the language thereby forcing it to accommodate the variation of locality and culture.

### The Study Problem

In a heterogeneous linguistic community like Nigeria where the English language is used as a second language, there the tendency of the language spoken and used in a particular ethnic group differing from the one in another group due to sociolinguistic factors. In the light of this, the following problems necessitated this study:

1. The quest for succinctly analyzed Nigerian English varieties resulting from sociolinguistic factors.
2. The quest for the intelligibility and acceptability of these Nigerian English Varieties.

### Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed in this study:

1. To what extent/degree is Nigerian English a reality?
2. Does a Nigerian English Variety exist?
3. What could be the factors responsible for the emergence of Nigerian English varieties (NEV)?
4. What linguistic features characterized these varieties that emerged as a result of sociolinguistic factors?
5. What is the level of acceptability and intelligibility of these varieties?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Views of linguistics both foreign and local on the subject matter for Simplicity and clarity, this is handled within subheadings.

#### The Concept of New English

The concept was propounded by professor Braj Kachru: "world English" "the Alchemy of English" an Indian professor of socio linguistics. It is a result of observations about creativity in English, established local identities in style, in culture and in linguistics experimentation, Kachru (v) it could be attributed to historical educational, socio-cultural and graphical factors. New English comprises forms and usage of English other than that of the native speakers. This is to say that, the countries involved use the English language differently when compared to the way the mother tongue (MT) users do in Uzozi's "language spoken in different countries and continents" (126), furthermore, he attests that it is a sociolinguistic reality and usage" (3) . this concept has since its proposal been defended by such ethnographers and language scholars as Akere, Funso, Albert .H. Marchwardi, Abiodun Adetugbo, J. B Pride Platt, etc. listed characteristics of the 'NEW English in a second languages position as follows:

1. It has developed through education system
2. It was developed in an area where a native varieties of English was not the language spoken by most of the populations
3. It is used for a range of functions among those who speak or write it in the region where it is used.
4. It has been localized natives by adopting some languages featured of its own, such as sounds, intonation pattern, sentences, structures, and worlds expressions, This is the case with the English language in Nigeria.

#### Nigerian English

THE TERM "Nigerian English" was first introduced in the publication of 1979 in a collection of papers, which emanated from conference held at Ibadan in 1978, under the title, varieties and function of English in Nigeria" according to Jowitt.

The book was the first in history to devote itself to the specific subject of English in Nigeria, and the first to treat as an undeniable and unregrettable fact the claim that there exist varieties of English found elsewhere and which deserve the appellation Nigerian english" (27). Since the 1990's the fact that Nigerian English exists is no longer a myth or contending phenomenon, Bamgbose state

sternly that “the question of whether a Nigeria English exists should by now have become a non-issue” (47), so many linguistics both Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike, have argued favorably to the reality of Nigerian English. Adetugbo state that “Nigeria has evolved an almost distinctly Nigerian variety of the English language, which we call Nigeria English and which at present has much vitality as any other variety of English” (16) on the same note Achebe perceptively described Nigerian English as a new English still in full communion with its ancestral home but uttered to suit its new surroundings “(5), Bamgbose also described Nigerian English as the English language nativised in Nigeria. He notifies that this nativisation is not limited only to the usual or common features levels of transfer of phonology semantics, syntax, and lexis rather: it is also concerned with the creative development of English including the evolution of distinctively, Nigerian usages, attitudes and pragmatic use of languages” “(11). To Jowitt “Nigerian English is fundamentally the English usage of Nigerians in its totality” (47). Similarly Kajore is the opinion that:

*Nigerian English are those varieties observed in the speech and writing of the average Nigerian speaker or writer of English as reflected in ordinary conversation, personal letters, newspapers and magazines, radio and official minutes and so forth (XIII).*

Furthermore, Brighton (40), argues that Nigeria English is one dialect among many, each of which encapsulates local culture patterns and serves local needs. This point of brought on can be further accounted for using the ecological factor. That is to say that the English language, as a living language, behaves like living organisms which adapt to any environment or culture, it is planted, Uzozie (172) and Ikara (22) have put forward the sociolinguistic factors of bilingualism and language contact as factors responsible for the emergence of Nigeria English. Both concur that English language interacts with every indigenous language in Nigeria, and with all of them at the same. The significance of this is that when these set of language come into contact through their users: they affect each one another reciprocally, that is shedding their qualities into one another, in a similar opinion, Bamgbose (9) states:

The present form and status of English in Nigeria today are a result of the contact between English and the Nigerian languages in the socio-cultural and political situations.

In continuation, he notifies that: In a language contact situation, influences, result are bound to be mutual. Just as English has influenced Nigeria language so also have these languages influenced English (11). Ahmed Ikara, reiterated the same point in the following ways: We must bear in mind the fact that no matter how hard Nigerians try, they can neither be as the English because of different in cultural background, nor speak exactly as native speakers of English, just as no English man can speak a Nigerian language (9). To him, our study of English in Nigeria must account for our socio-cultural condition, Femi Akindele and Wale Adegbite (145) also ascertained the existence of Nigerian English when they said, “the phenomenon of know as the Nigeria English is that variety of English that has developed in the Nigerian non native situation”, they see Nigerian English as that variety that reflects the phonological, structural and

semantic properties of a Nigerian language. This point could also be justified to have bilinguals who are very competent in the two languages.

### **Varieties of Nigerian English**

In the course of studying the behavior of the English language in Nigeria, it is observed that arguments have moved from whether Nigeria English exists to its descriptive measures and then the emergence of its varieties. In Uzozie's words: arguments have moved from whether Nigerian English exists or not in the 1950's to be methodological and parametrical considerations for identifying and describing Nigerian English, in the 1970's and the possibility of Nigerian English in the 80s (168). He is of the view that this shift in focus must have been aided by sociolinguistic insight gained from the behavior of language even in non-native environments, however, this variety of language is said to be one of many languages systems, each used by a good number of people and each tends to have characteristics different from other systems still maintaining a part of one language.

In Jowitt's definition:

A variety of a language can be thought of as one many general and complete language systems, each used by a substantial number of people and each possessing characteristics that distinguish it from other systems without requiring it to be classified as a different language (37).

Based on this, it is worth stating that the existence of Nigerian English varieties is no longer an assumption but a reality. Femi Akindele and wale Adegbite (145) affirmed the existence of varieties when they said: Because of this orientation and because of the multiplicity of ethnic group in the country, various types and sub-varieties of Nigerian English can be identified respectively. Along the parameter of dialects, we identify ethnic dialect, Viz Edo English, Hausa English, Igbo English, Yoruba English.....

In view of these, so many factors could be said to be responsible for the emergence of Nigerian English Varieties. They include educational factor, historical factor, and sociolinguistic factor. As the title rightly suggests, this study focuses on the educational variety, Jowitt notifies that:

*The type of English spoken and written by Nigerians manifestly varies according to the level of general education attained and also because there is an obvious rough correlation between the level of proficiency in English (38)*

Funso Akere (120) and Okoro (72) also suggested the existence of Nigerian English varieties as a result of educational factor. Monitoring the implantation, permeation and dispersion of the English language in Nigeria, one observes that it was not simultaneous and uninformed. For instance, Uzizie (164) notifies that the southerners received the western language and culture earlier than the northerner's and more schools were established in the former than in the later around 1914 and consequently a correspondingly smaller number of native speakers of English moved from the south to the north. Adetugbo (21) also attests to this fact. This resulted in the varieties of usages and forms of the language as mode of acquisition/ learning differed.

### **Nigerian English The Sociolinguistics Perspective**

Before the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorate in 1914, Nigeria as a country was politically non-existence in Uozie's words:

*The territory that today makes up our county was peopled by difference tribes' and empires of varying sizes, ethnic configurations and territorial control (163).*

Hence the amalgamation produced a multilingual and multiethnic Nigeria on which was superimposed the English Language. In the light of this, the sociolinguistic realities lead to the emergence of the Nigerian English varieties. Uozie discussed this extensively. He states that:

*There are four hundred, or so, ethnic groups in Nigeria, each with an indigenous language on which English is also superimposed. So English in Nigeria is continuously undergoing processes of nitivezation, domestication, acculturation both at the national level and within ethno-linguistic context. This posits the probably existence of Nigerian English (173).*

Each of these indigenous languages affects the English language in its own way. Consequently, the English usages of these groups differ. For Ikara (22) notifies that when set of languages come into contact through their uses, they reciprocally affect each other/one another, that is shedding their qualities into one another and more s, languages is contact are bound to develop varieties and mutations. This is that Nigerian English have developed along ethnic linguistic lines. These ethnic varieties developed are identified by the features of ethnic languages transferred into English. These are seen at the level of phonology, such as semantic sounds, as well as prosodic features. At the lexical level, we have lexical borrowing, lexical transfer and coinages of lexical items. More so, at the syntactic level, such features as omission of articles, wrong use of prepositions and non application of rules of concord, tense, voice e.t.c are observed. At the semantic level, the ethnic varieties exhibit features which differ from native English varieties in items of semantic extension or restrictions. Apart from features which distinguish ethnic varieties, there are other features which are shared by these groups. Such features shared by these groups. Such features shared by them, according to Femi Akindele and Adegbite (146) "'constitute features of Nigerian English''

*Akere (284) is also of the same opinion that Nigerian English is also concurrently developing its varieties' that may be understood as dialects. The dialects according to him are not only in the strict sense of regional dialects but also in the terms of sociolinguistic variations as a result of the interplay of English and the indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria.*

Similarly, Jowitt states that:

*An obvious attractive parameter for determining varieties within (NE) Nigerian English is the ethnic one, i.e; distinguishing the various kinds of English that resulted from the interference of the mother tongue(38).*

Discussing socio-culturally, Ikara (22) state sternly that:

*There is a range and variety of Nigerian English, each reflecting the cultural experiences of particular users and linguistic influence of their first languages.*

Uozie (172) states that:

*There is a range and variety of Nigerian English, each reflecting the cultural experiences of particular users and linguistic influence of their first language.*

Uzozie (172) states that:

*It is a sociolinguistic reality that a living language has a tendency to adopt itself to the socio-cultural milieu within which it operates, whether such languages is spoken as L1 L2 Or L3.*

More so, Anne Corell Newton asserts that language as a product of the society that uses it, is always in the "the process of recreation" and must "reflect the culture, the folk ways and the characteristic psychology of the people who use it (22). This means that since various ethnic groups in Nigeria have their different cultures which are the totality of their experiences, they tend to use the English language to solve their various needs (Culturally), hence resulting to the various varieties of the Nigerian English. Considering lexis, geographical factor comes into play. Since the various ethnic groups in Nigeria have different geographical areas, the English languages they speak tend to differ in lexical repertoire. This is as a result of the need to identify certain things peculiar to present in their areas which may not be found in other peoples area.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sources of Data**

The sources/ method of data collection is mainly literature review and observations. The former involves eliciting information from literature in Nigerian English and the English Language in general collected from the library. The later are observations made personally on the day to day usage of the language (English) among the English speakers of these three tribal groups

### **Data Analysis**

The method of data analysis is the interpretation of the literature reviewed and the analysis of the observations. Since this method of research gives room for authenticity, the study is result oriented. The variations found in Nigerian English are mostly attributed to mother tongue interference. The reasons for this are quite obvious and the features of these varieties are seen at different levels of linguistic analysis such as phonology, semantics, syntax, and lexis etc. It is work reiterating here that the varieties discussed in this work are delimited to the three major indigenous languages in Nigeria-Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba and the areas of discussion are phonology, semantics, syntax and lexis

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Mother -Tongue Interference**

#### **Phonology**

The interference phenomenon of the different mother- tongues is mostly reflected in the spoken varieties of the Nigerian English. This is the major factor for recognizing where a speaker of the Nigerian English belongs. These variations in phonology emerge due to the differences among the speech sounds (phonologies) of the individual language (English). For instance, considering the phoneme inventions of these languages with regards to the English Language, notable differences exist. This can be seen in the different vowel.

a. RP Vowel Chart

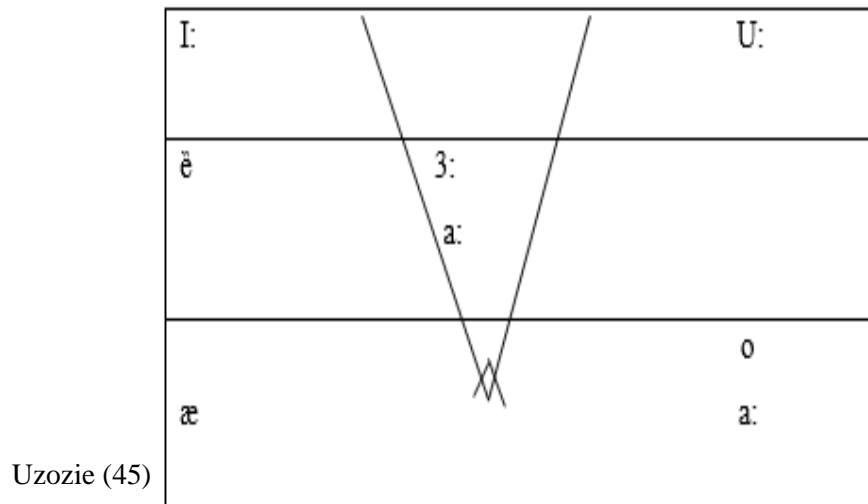


Fig 1. RP Vowel Chart

RP has a total number of 44 sounds which consist of( 20 vowels twelve Monothongs and eight diphthongs)with 24 consonants. The central vowels, except () in Hausa, are completely absent from the vowel inventions of the three indigenous languages.

b. Hausa Vowel Chart

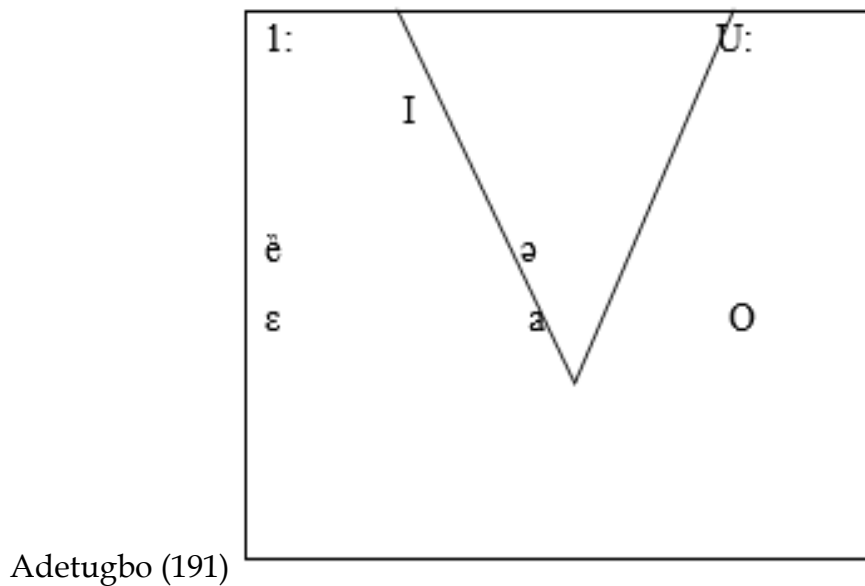
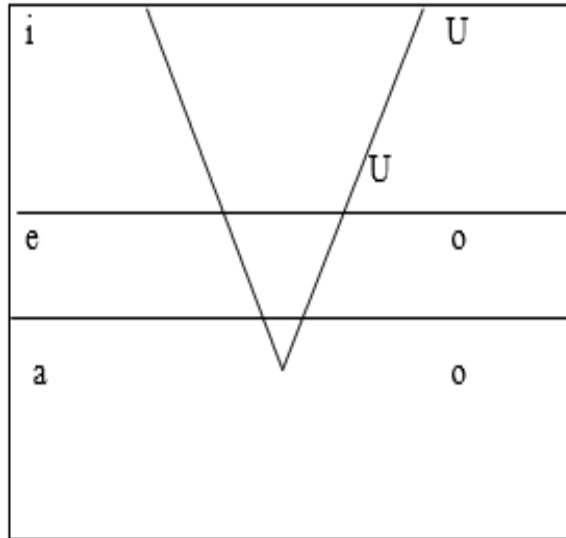


Fig 2. Hausa Vowel Chart

Hausa has a total number of 41 sounds (phonemes) consisting of 12 vowels (Five Tense and five lax and two tone phonemes) Hausa also operates with two diphthongs and central vowel for which a majority of Hausa speakers of English Substitute for the low central vowel /a/. Adetugbo (191)

c. Igbo Vowel Chart

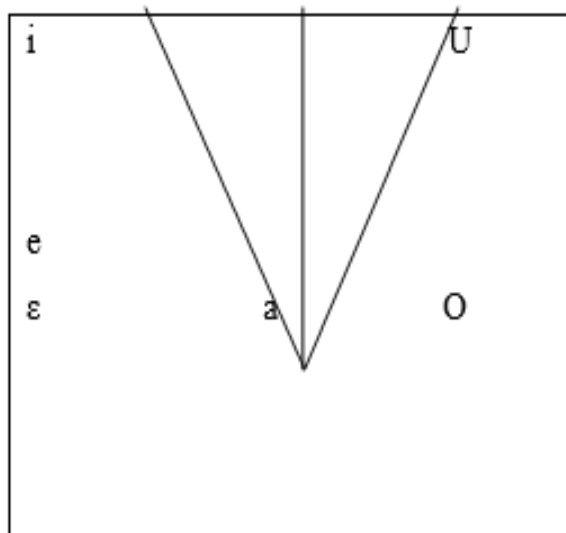


Ezikeojiaku (26)

Fig 3. Igbo Vowel Chart

The Igbo Language on the other hand has 36 phonemes which comprise of 8 vowels (four tense and four lax) and 28 consonants. Vowel harmony is a feature of Igbo sound system whereby the vowel system is divided into two, tense and lax as follows: Tense: /iaou/. Co -occurrence of vowels in a morpheme/word is restricted to membership of the same subset, i.e, either tense or lax. This phonological restriction rule is sometimes carried to the igbo's performance in English.

d. Yoruba Vowel Chart



Adetugbo (192)

Fig 4. Yoruba Vowel Chart

Yoruba has a total of 25 phonemes which comprise 7 vowels (nasalized). Unlike the others, Yoruba lacks the operation with tense lax in the high vowel sense. It also has 18 consonants. Generally on the vowel analysis, RP has more central vowel while the three indigenous languages favours peripheral vowels. Due to the complexity of the English syllabic structures, the rate of phonological interference is high.

This is as a result of some sounds present in the English language (RP) which are absent in the indigenous languages. However placing the indigenous vowel sounds side by side, one would realized that notable differences exist. Hence;

Table 1. Some Sounds Present in the English Language (RP) which are Absent in the Indigenous Languages

Hausa	Igbo	Yoruba
I	I	I
I	I	-
E	E	E
E	-	E
A	A	A
Ú	-	-
Ū	U	U
Ō	U	-
Ɔ	O	O
-	O	O

A comparative consonant chart of the three major indigenous languages.

Table 2. Difference in the Phonologies of the Nigerian Language (i.e consonants) in the Sense that Some Sounds Occur in a Particular Language but do not Occur in Another, some Occur in Two Languages and Some don't Occur in One

Hausa	Igbo	Yoruba
B	B	B
D	D	D
P	P	-
T	T	T
K	K	K
Kw	Kw	-
K'	-	-
K'w	-	-
K'j	-	-
-	Kp	K
G	G	G
Gw	Gw	-
Gj	-	-

-	Gb	Gb
H	H	H
J	J	J
L	L	L
M	M	M
N	N	N
ɒ	ɒ	-
		-
ϕ	-	-
ϕj	-	-
R	R	R
S	S	S
Ŝ	-	-
ʒ	ʒ	ʒ
T	T	T
Tʂ	Tʂ	-
-	V	-
D	D	D
W	W	W
Kj	-	-
Z	Z	Z

In the above table, there are difference in the phonologies of the Nigerian language (i.e consonants) in the sense that some sounds occur in a particular language but do not occur in another, some occur in two languages and some don't occur in one, hence it will be unreasonable to think that members of these different groups will use the English language in the same way. There are bound to be differences in their pronunciation of English words etc.

Table 3. A comparative of RP vs major Nigerian Language (consonants) - Jubril (15)

Sounds	RP	Hausa	Igbo	Yoruba
P	√	√	√	+
B	√	√	√	√
T	√	√	√	√
D	√	√	√	√
K	√	√	√	√
G	√	√	√	√

Tʃ	√	√	(tj)	+
D	√	√	(dj)	√
F	√	√	√	√
V	√	√	√	√
θ	√	+	√	+
ô	√	+	√	+
S	√	+	√	√
Z	√	+	√	+
O	√	√	√	√
š	√	√	√	3
H	√	√	√	√
M	√	√	√	√
n(allophonic)	√	√	√	√
ŋ(allophonic)	√	√	√	√
R	√ (j)	√ (?)	√ (r)	√ (?)
W	√	√	√	√
J	√	√	√	√

From the above table, it is obvious that the three indigenous language lack the dental fricative (θ, æ ), the /r/ sound also differ phonetically in all the language, and Hausa has the largest number of sound while Yoruba has least. Due to these differences, the realization of some vowel and consonant are affected, some of the phonemes present in both English and the indigenous language are pronounced correctly in some case though with difference in accent, those affected are either lacking in the indigenous language or are in phonological environments which are not permissible in the indigenous languages. As a result of these, the speakers realize some ways of pronouncing them by using corresponding related vowels and consonants close to the ones in the English language that is, substituting them with the nearest phonemes found in the mother tongue (MT).

The following corpus collected from a direct observation of speaker of English from the different tribes, attest to the point above.

Table 4. The Corpus Collected from a Direct Observation of Speaker of English from the Different Tribes

WORD	RP	HAUSA	IGBO	YORUBA
Morn	(mɔ:n)	(mɔ:n)	(mɔn)	(mɔn)
Pot	(pɔt)	(fot)	(pɔt)	(pɔt)
Girl	(g:l)	(ga:i)	(gel)	(gel)
Sir	(s: (r))	(sa)	(sa)	(sa)

Money	(m^ni)	(manl)	(mɔni)	(mɔni)
Word	(w :d)	Wa:d)	(wɔd)	(wɔd)
Haul	(hɔ:l)	(ho:l)	(hɔl)	(hɔl)
Actor	(æktə(r))	(akto)	(akaɔ)	(aktɔ)
But	(bət)	(bet)	(bɔt/bet)	(bɔt)/ (be)
Possible	(posəb)	(fosibl)	(pɔsibl)	(pɔsibl)
Cucumber	(kju:knmba)	(kju:kɔmba)	(kju:kɔmba)	(kju: kɔmba)
Father	(fəə-a)	(fə-da)	(fə-da)	(fə-da)
Poor	(p: (r))	(fo:r)	(pɔr)	(pɔr)

Another reason for having interference at the level of phonology is a result of fossilization of the organs of speech of Nigerians towards the English language. This is the halting of acquisition before the native speaker competence is reached. This means that Nigerians experience interference in the area of phonology because their acquisition capacity for the target language is atrophied. In addition, other aspects of accents-intonation, stress, voice quality, speed of pronunciation, etc intensify the prominence of these variations.

### Syntax and Semantics

Another aspect of mother-tongue interference variations are seen at the level of syntax and semantics the syntax structures of these indigenous languages and the English language.

This is evident in the general analysis of the components of the sentence in terms of its subject-object structure. Since the various indigenous languages have their different structures, they tend to interfere in the analysis of the English language by Nigerians. There are also problem of overgeneralization of mass nouns by Nigerian user of the English language. As such words as equipment, accommodation, stationary, machinery, staff etc.

When used in the singular refers to one of the items making up the mass, in such a way that, a staff means a lecturer, an equipment, means one of the instruments, a cutlery, means a spoon or fork etc.

Hence the mass is denoted by pluralization of those mass nouns (the staffs are here, the cutleries are in the kitchen, the equipments are in the laboratory). This is different from the cases of RP pluralization which talks of different kinds of these nouns in question. (E.g equipments, staffs, furniture's, cutleries etc).

More so, these ethnic groups that make up Nigerians are nations, as a result of this, they have their different world-view, culture, belief etc. Due to these, interference are often seen as the works of Nigerian literary writers who are reasonably bilinguals. They tend to have their behaviours, thoughts, languages, and rhetoric's molded and shaped by their tradition. In the same way, their world-view are nurtured by their traditional. In the light of this, certain syntactic and semantic expressions could be rightly judged as belonging to different ethnic varieties or a particular tribe such as Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. This is mostly achieved through semantic shift and first language induced

syntactic structures. The following examples illustrate these points. Achebe (26) in his literary work, *Arrow of God* used the following expression:

*Almost everyone who spoken said that although it was not right to blame a corpse, it must be admitted that their kinsman did great wrong. Many of them especially the older men, asked Umuaru to let the matter drop. But there others who, as the saying was pulled out their hair and chewed it. They swore that they would not live and see Umuaru spat upon.*

The British equivalent of this is:

*Almost everyone who spoke said that although it was wrong to blame the dead, it must be admitted that their relative did something wrong. Some of the elders asked the people of Umuaru to overlook the case. But there were others who were adamant. They insisted on not letting the people of Umuaru be disrespected.*

The above material are the same, passing across the same message but could be said to have syntactic and semantic varieties. Achebe incorporated the Igbo speech pattern into English without outright dictation of the general syntactic grammar of English. The expression "pulled out their hair and chewed it" is a direct induction of the Igbo syntactic structure "horontutu taa" and also semantic dislocation/shift. They do not suggest the literal pulling out of hair and eating it but their insisting on revenge.

We also have instance where indigenous idiomatic expression is translated into English in the following expression:

*They told it because they wanted to teach us that no matter how wrong or great a man was, he should not challenge his chi.... The fly that has no one to advice it follows the corpse into the grave (27). The underlined sentence is an idiomatic expression translated into English.*

The next example is from Ike (72), *The naked gods*:

*I will sit since you ask me to sit. I hope you will not blame me for behaving like that. Did I sit on such chair yesterday? Our people say that when a pot is full of palm oil even the lid gets a share of the oil. I can sit on this chair because God has blessed my brother and I can partake of the blessing. Thanks to God.*

The whole context, though in English has Igbo cultural flavour. The idioms are distinctively Igbo and what we have here is like translation of what could be said in Igbo into Igbo-like English. An example from Tutuola's *simbi and the satyr of the dark jungle* presents an expression with Yoruba syntax in English:

*For she thought as those animals were not human, they could not be taken to make any promise, and for that reason she would free from their blame. If she took out only the hunter (21).*

Here, among other contact elements we have the underlined clause which could be said to be un-English. It is a direct translation of Yoruba's syntax into English language. This is the use of primary language morpheme type in the second language system. For in Yoruba for instance, bere that is to ask' takes the preposition Íowo 'from that is 'bere' Iowo which literary translates ask from him". This accounts for the following usage in Nigerian English, "discuss about the presidency".

We also have this deduction from Wole Soyinka as, "The lion and the jewel" (16):

Baroka : Akowe, teacher wa, misinta lakula (as the others take up the cry “misinta lakunle” He is forced to stop. He returns and bows deeply from the waist)

Lajunle : A good morning to you sir.

Baroka : Guru morin, guru morin ngh-hn. That is all we get from “Alakowe” yo call at his house hoping he sends for beer, but all you get is guru morin. Will guru morin wet my throat? Well, well our men of knowledge I hope you have no query for an old man today.

In this dialogue, the speakers express their cultural word-view vividly because of the translation proverbs, code switching and other syntactic features present. The next corpus present in Hausa English culled from Kraft et al (325). It shows a dialogue between a Hausa speaker and an English speaker. Baka meets Haruna who is ill and on his way to get medicine.

Baka : where are you going friend?

Haruna : I 'm going to the hospital to get medicine

Baka : IS that so? Don't you have health?

Haruna : yes, my body really bothers me

Baka : Is it malaria?

Haruna : No, its stomach trouble

Baka : Boy, this isn't good

Haruna : You are right. I went to the doctor yesterday for him to check a specimen for me

Baka : Good, did he discover the cause?

Haruna : He didn't say. He said only that I should regularly come to the hospital to take medicine

Baka : Well, do you have diarrhea?

Haruna : No, my stomach is tire up

Baka : Boy that's difficult! But the doctor will give help

Haruna : Right he's a good man

Baka : Why I used to go the hospital regularly

Haruna : what bothered you?

Baka : stomach worm

Haruna : wow, I don't want at all?

Baka : that's sure unpleasant. But the medicine is strong

Haruna : you are right! A little more and the medicine itself would have killed me

Baka : so they say

Haruna : it was three whole weeks before I was healed

Baka : wow, it took a long time

Haruna : but that's okay, I'm well now

Baka : Good well, I'm going now

Haruna : that's okay. Greet those who give out medicine for me

Baka : okay they will hear, see you later

Haruna : fine, see you later

In the above dialogue Kraft et al equally incorporated the Hausa speech pattern English without an outright distortion of the general syntactic grammar of native speakers English. They are direct translation of Hausa's syntax into the English language. Generally, like phonological variations; the stimuli for grammatical variations are points of difference in the structural patterns of various languages in contact. It is obvious that this semantic variation in Nigerian English is more commonly used by less educated Nigerians which is evident in their literary works. The speakers often have low educational qualification if not at all. These speakers use it in written text as a result of imperfect learning of English or inadequate exposure from the structures of the indigenous languages. However, highly educated Nigerians may be found using such variation in speech. Notwithstanding, these variations in the different linguistic levels should not be absolutely termed ungrammatical for its attempt to adhere strictly to language pattern. They have Basic English structures but with traces of mother-tongue interference and a lot of local borrowing as seen in the works of many writers from the different tribes.

### Lexis

Lexical variations in Nigerian English are as a result of the various lexical concepts obtainable in the different speech groups present in Nigeria. However, lexis which is the sum total of people's culture, outlook, thoughts, and emotions, represents the things they see, feel, smell and hear. In our indigenous languages, there are certain lexical items and concepts which cannot be translated into the English language or be represented otherwise. It is observed that these Nigerian languages tend to have several synonyms each of which serve as the equivalent in many contexts both formal and informal, and some are used together with the English lexical items. These lexical items depict certain Nigerian English varieties depending on usage when used in Nigerian English expressions, that is, when there is an introduction of culture specific vocabulary items.

Examples of such indigenous lexical items include:

Table 5. Examples of indigenous lexical items

IGBO	HAUSA	YORUBA
FOOD	FOOD	FOOD
Nsala, oha, ogbono	Fura, kunu, suya, tuwa	Egusi, Eba
Nkwobi, Ngwo-ngwo	Nunu, akamu, fito	Agoin, amala
Okro, achara, ukazi	Kanwa, kwiri-kwiri	Ewedu
DRESS	DRESS	DRESS
Joji, mkpuru oka,	Danshiki	Abada
Ocheze, abada		Buba, damask
DANCE	DANCE	DANCE
Atilogwu, egwu ogene	Kalangu, kaakaki	Juju, owamba
Egwuawantilo, egedege	Gwmi	Gelede
TITLE	TITLE	TITLE

Igwe, Eze, Ichie ozo, Nze	Alahaji, Hajiya, Emir, Mallam	Oba Kabieze
Gods	Gods	Gods
Chi, Amadioha, Agbala, Omarika		Oduduwa
OTHERS	OTHERS	OTHERS
Osu, ogbanje, agwu	Ajuani	Abika

Under general usage we have other lexical items, such as:

Table 6. HAUSA

N0	SENTENCE	HAUSA	BRITISH EQUIVALENT
1	I'm coming	I na zuwa	Just a minute
2	My stomach is tied up	Ai ciki ya	I'm constipated
3	I'm drinking trouble too much	Na sha wahala	I have a lot of trouble
4	Greet the mother of the compound	Uwangidanka	Wife
5	Its stomach trouble	Giwon ciki ne	Its stomach ache
6	Don't you have health?	`ba ka da lafiya	Aren't you well?
7	I don't want that even small	Bana so wa nri aam ko kadan	I don't want that at all
8	Pregnancy usually troubles her	Ciki yakan dame ta	Pregnancy is usually a troublesome experience for her
9	My back is bothering me	Bayana ya na damana	I have a back aches
10	She did pregnant	Ta yi ciki	She is pregnant

Table 7. IGBO

S/N	SENTENCE	IGBO	BRITISH EQUIVALENT
1	Does the food have taste?	Nri ahu o toro uto?	Is the food delicious?
2	He has sense	O pa ako	He is wise
3	He has long throat	O nwere ogologo akpiri	He is a glutton
4	Okeke pregnanted her	Okeke tubara ya ime	Okeke got her pregnant
5	Do you know book?	I ma akwukwo?	Are you brilliant?
6	Does he have money?	O nwere ego?	Is he rich?
7	He does not hear word	O naghị anu nti	He is too stubborn to listen
8	I'm coming	M na - abia	I will be back soon

8	The president is eating our money	Onye isi ochichi na eri ego anyi	The president is embezzling funds
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Table 8. YORUBA

S/N	SETENCE	YORUBA	BRITISH EQUIVALENT
1	I'm coming	Mo mbo	Just a minute
2	She was pregnant by Biola	Biola tifu loyu	Biola got her pregnant
3	I have seen it	Mo tiri	I have found it
4	He has arrived	Owo ti de	He has become rich
5	Please dress a bit	E sun die	Please, shift a little
6	He is my tight friend	Ore mi timotimoni	He is my close friend
7	She used long leg	O lo ese gugun	She used connection
8	Ask from the teacher	Bere lowo oluko	Ask the teacher

### Intelligibility and Acceptability

Considering the status of these varieties, they are regarded as sub-standard. In fact, when terms like Igbo English, Hausa English and Yoruba English we used, these are seen as varieties of the English language which are before standard.

However, these varieties are more likely spoken in Nigeria. A great many of Nigerians use them in their conversations. In mass media, these varieties are strenuously avoided in news reports and other formal programmes, though they are at times used in plays for entertainment and humor often in a manner that is derisive of the users. Though these usages/varieties are deemed internationally acceptable and to an extent unintelligible, most linguists accept them most often as standard Nigerian variants because they are nationally intelligible. These varieties are applauded when depicted in the literary works of some Nigerian writers as it promotes ethnic cultures and world view. Notable also is the fact that, we the non-native speakers understand the native speakers usages because we are exposed to their cultural context mostly through the media. In the same view, the native speakers of English will interpret and understand the semantic dislocation of these varieties if they first understand the traditions which gave rise to such texts and also the contexts in which the proverbs, idioms and images itself, it is not unusual for an elder sister to be called "aunties" by her younger siblings if she is sufficiently older than them.

### The Relationship Between Varieties

The internal varieties discussed in this work are indeed dialects of Nigerian English. This observation rests on the fact that all the varieties are mutually intelligible. In order words, speakers of the "standard educated" variety are able to understand the English spoken by speakers of say, Hausa - based English, a geographical variety. It can thus be said that one of the

relationships among the different varieties is one of mutual intelligibility. Many Nigerians are even capable of some of them to use the geographical varieties when they are in their "home town" and in the company of the users of the varieties in such places. However, when they are back to cities, they switch over to the more socially acceptable varieties like the "educate varieties". Similarly while the majority of the people use only one variety each, there are those who select the one they use according to who their listeners are, what subjects they are talking about and the purpose of their speaking. In these cases, the varieties serve as registers. This, in some circumstances, means that if, as a government official, one wants to speak to market woman, one may, if he can, use the variety that the market women use so that the message may get through. Hence, there is interchangeable relationship among these clauses of varieties.

### **Future of Varieties**

Examining the multi-ethnic nature of Nigeria, there is the tendency that these varieties of Nigerian English will continue to exist. What is certain about the future of these varieties is that they will change in one way or the other. There is the possibility that if certain changes take place in the current socioeconomic situation, they will trigger off changes in the existing varieties, and some of the current varieties may die.

However, the most notable factor that can bring about the changes is education, since as known; education is the major instrument of social change. Formal education is the main factor responsible for producing the ever increasing number of users of English in Nigeria. Nevertheless, if the general level of it, is in the country improves entirely new varieties may spring up. On the other hand, it may lead to a longer degree of social mixing. One of the other factors that can bring about changes in the existing varieties is foreign influence. This can come through books, films, news reports etc to create new trends in speech forms. They also introduce new words if such imparted habits gain general acceptance; they may modify some of the existing varieties or even create new ones. The general effect of all such changes will also include not only the birth of new varieties, but also the death of some of the existing ones. Generally, in considering the future of these varieties, a lot depends on what happens at the educational sector of the economy. Regional varieties are bound to shrink with the regard to the number of people who speak them. This is traceable to the elitist nature of the educational system. However, if the new educational policy is fully implemented, the rank of the speakers may be swelled rather than reduced. In a nutshell, one can say that the changes that will take place will be predicted on what social, cultural and economic changes that occur in the country in future.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study attempted to explore and evaluate the sociolinguistic realities of language interference and the socio-cultural reality that led to the emergence of Nigeria English varieties. These were as a result of the interplay of English and the indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria. These varieties are different from each other because they reflect the different cultures, folkways, and the characteristics psychology of the people who use them. The features of these

varieties are generally hinged on the phenomenon of interference at the level of pronunciation, lexical usages, semantics, and syntactic structures. Though they might be said to be substandard, most of them are not outright error as they have Basic English structures.

Since these varieties are mutually intelligible, in most cases among other functions, they serve as the only alternative to the English Language in areas where pidgin is not widely used. However, whatever the functions of these varieties may be, it presupposes that the English language in Nigeria is still used as a single language despite the obvious signs that it is indigenizing. Nevertheless, a process of mutual indigenization can be maintained if the grammars of these varieties are the same and if the words continue to have the same meaning on the other hand. If this process of indigenization goes on in some of the varieties to the extent that the languages have different words meaning, sentence, pattern, realization of phonemes, and intonation pattern, we will have a situation where mutual intelligibility is lost. Such varieties will therefore have become different languages.

#### **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

In writing this article the researcher realizes that there are still many shortcomings in terms of language, writing, and form of presentation considering the limited knowledge and abilities of the researchers themselves. Therefore, for the perfection of the article, the researcher expects constructive criticism and suggestions from various parties.

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