

A Generative Account of Allomorphic Variations in Nigerian English: Some Observable Typologies in L2 Spoken Prose

Ubong E. Josiah¹

Hannah Clifford²

¹ An Associate Professor in the Department of English, University of Uyo,
Uyo, Nigeria

² Postgraduate student in the Department of English, University of Uyo,
Uyo, Nigeria

Abstract

It is rarely arguable that globalisation in an ICT-driven world has affected the kinds of English written and spoken in various parts of the globe. Using the spoken prose of one hundred final-year university students drawn from different sociolinguistic backgrounds in Nigeria as a case study, these researchers identified and investigated into specific instances of allomorphic variations in Nigerian spoken English. The respondents were drawn from four Federal Universities in the country. Two complementary, analytical approaches - perceptual and acoustic techniques - were employed to analyze the data while a component of the generative framework was adopted for its theoretical thrust. The results showed that the Nigerian English variety has peculiar features that serve the sociolinguistic needs of the society while, at the same time, isolating it from the speculative, exonormative standard, the RP. For instance, the allomorphs of the {D} and {Z} morphemes were, observably, not realized exactly as the ones articulated in the native speaker's variety designated as the native baseline, or the control. Rather, on average, 78.8% of the respondents adhered to forms representing an endonormative model, while approximately 23.2% attained what could account for the near-native variety. The findings signified emerging typologies in L2 spoken English leading to the conclusion that, like other forms of world Englishes, Nigerian spoken English has some peculiar features that reinforce its uniqueness. Such distinctiveness is, however, anchored on two basic criteria: social acceptability within the country and internationally intelligibility to speakers in other parts of the world. This last remark underscores Banjo's (1971) and Josiah's (2009) assertions that Nigerian English is more of an endonormative than exonormative, monolithic variety.

Keywords: Allomorphic variation, Second language, Endonormative, Nigerian English and spoken English



Introduction

Several scholars have observed that casual, rapid or colloquial English speech is characterized by a considerable number of phonemic modifications among speakers, either within a word, at word boundaries, or at syllable or morpheme boundaries as the case may be (Chomsky and Halle, 1968; Gimson and Cruttenden, 1994; Yule, 1996; Shariatmadari, 2006). Others have also noted that allomorphic variations could result from “different choice of internal phonemes depending on the assimilatory pressure of the word environment felt by the speaker” or the phonological environment within which an allomorph occurs (Abercrombie, 1967; Gimson and Cruttenden, 1994). Such allomorphic modifications occasioned by phonological environments, or sometimes, the speaker’s articulatory mechanisms, are regular occurrences in natural languages. But, while such linguistic experience is also expected in a second language situation, it may not take exactly the same form. This is why this research is significant – it aims at finding out if allomorphic variations in an L2 situation like the Nigerian English is bound to take similar forms as observed in native-speakers’ variety with the same output as expected in standard spoken English.

Ladefoged (2006:109) has concluded that, “speech is a continuum of gestures that may be produced fully or in a reduced form, or may be virtually not present at all”. He has also noted that, there is nothing slovenly or lazy about using weak forms or assimilations since all these make for efficient speech which is capable of conveying the same meaning with less effort. In essence, Ladefoged’s (2006) explication implies that, some phonological modifications (such as weak forms, allomorphemes and all forms of assimilation) are common in the speech of every sort of speaker, whether British, American or others in second language (L2 from henceforth) situations. This source further indicates that speakers who make insufficient use of weak forms, allomorphemes and assimilations are likely to sound “stilted” (p. 110). From these remarks, it becomes pertinent to point out that this study is not intended to present the argument that Nigerian spoken English variety is inferior to any other variety of English, but that what may be observed as allomorphic or morphophonemic modifications are outcomes of normal articulatory adjustments which should be expected in ordinary, natural speeches as pointed out in Ladefoged (2006) and this contributes to what could account for “efficient speech” (p. 110).

Ladefoged's (2006) observation corroborates Abercrombie's (1967) remark: that assimilation (including all forms of morphophonemic or allomorphic variations in speech) has the effect of “producing some economy of effort in the utterance of a sequence of words” ultimately resulting in the reduction of “the number, or the extent, of the movements and adjustments which the speech-producing organs have to perform in the transition from one word to the next” (p.135). The other way to put this is that phonological conditioning, including all forms of allomorphic variations in either native speakers' variety or L2 utterances, are outcomes of inevitable phonetic factors that may or may not be avoided in natural speech.

In undertaking this study, therefore, there will be an attempt to find out if natural speech utterances that are minimally intelligible in L2 spoken English such as the Nigerian variety are outcomes of sub-standard speech or not. Beyond this, it is necessary to distinguish between the ideal and the real in line with linguistic competence and performance when discussing tenuous aspects of spoken prose such as allomorphic modifications in L2 spoken English. A number of statistically analyzed instances will be isolated in this study to account for the speech performances of the respondents used for the study.

In particular, the study takes a look at allomorphic variations that are observable in Educated Nigerian Spoken English (ENSE henceforth). It draws its data from the spoken English of final-year university students in Nigeria who served as respondents. A seventy-worded paragraph was read into an audio device by the respondents and this was analyzed perceptually and acoustically. Also, for the purpose of interpolation, a native speaker of English (who admittedly speaks a variety of Standard British English) served as the control for a rewarding analysis. The respondents comprise speakers of the three major languages in Nigeria (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo) as well as those of some minority languages.

Research Questions

The researcher was interested in tackling some pertinent questions in this research.



- (i) How are the allomorphs of the {D}morpheme realized in Nigerian spoken English as distinct from those of the Standard British English?
- (ii) What are the allomorphs of the {Z} morpheme which distinctly characterize the Nigerian English variety?
- (iii) To what extent do allomorphic variations in Nigerian English constitute intelligibility problems for Nigerian interlocutors?
- (iv) How are variations in allomorphemes in Nigerian English typological to the concept of new Englishes?

Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

Phonological processes take different forms in virtually all-natural languages. One such process is assimilation which can result in the occurrence of a phoneme within a specific word position or linguistic environment in an utterance. Such an occurrence may result in several kinds of phonological modifications of the morpheme.

Katamba (1989) has carefully noted that assimilation involving the alternation in the shape of the morpheme is not just an arbitrary occurrence, but is an outcome of phonological conditioning. For instance, the allomorph of the morpheme that occurs in a given phonological context is partly or wholly determined by the sounds found in the allomorphs of adjacent morphemes. An instance is the case of past-time reference involving the morpheme {-d} in the regular form of the verb in English. The morpheme {-d} has three allomorphs, /d, t, ɪd/. If the past form of the regular verb ends with the phoneme /d/ and is preceded by a voiced sound, then /d/ retains its quality as [d], as in *blamed* [bleɪmd], *saved* /seɪvd/, and so on. If the /d/ past time reference is immediately preceded by a voiceless sound other than /t/, then /d/ becomes [t], as in *wished* [wɪʃt], *traced* [treɪst]. Relatively, if the /d/ past time reference is preceded by /t/ and /d/, the /d/ becomes [ɪd] as in *ended* ['endɪd], *presented* [pri'zəntɪd]. These morphophonemic variations can be summarily represented as follows:

- (i) Blame + d → *blamed* [bleɪmd] = /d/ → [d]
- (ii) Wish + ed → *wished* [wɪʃt] = /d/ → [t]
- (iii) End + ed → ['endɪd] = /d/ → [ɪd]

Another case of morphophonemic variation in Standard British English involves cases of concord, pluralization and possessives referred to as Z_1 , Z_2 and Z_3 morphemes (cf Eka, 1994; Palmer, 1974 and Udofot and Eshiet (1999). These cases are clearly illustrated by the sources cited here. For instance, these sources indicate that the final sounds in the plural morpheme {s} in English words such as “cat”, “dog” and “rose” will vary directly with the kind of sounds that precede them. Thus, when the plural marker “s” is added to cat (i.e. cats), the {s} morpheme remains [s] as in [kæts]; when the same plural morpheme {s} is added to the dog (i.e. dogs), the final segment of dogs becomes [z] as in [dɒgz]; and when the plural marker “s” is added to the noun “rose” changing it to “roses”, the same morpheme {s} assimilates to [ɪz] as in [ˈrəʊzɪz]. The three instances cited above can be summarily represented as:

- (i) cat + s → cats [kæts] = /s/ → [s]
- (ii) dog + s → dogs [dɒgz] = /s/ → [z]
- (iii) rose + s → roses [ˈrəʊzɪz] = /s/ → [ɪz]

Some general phonological rules (P -Rules) have been formulated to explain cases of allomorphic variations (cf Dinneen, 1966; Eka, 1994). For instance, ‘s’ in most cases is generally used to mark concord, pluralization and possessive cases in English. First, when the morpheme {s} occurs at the end of a word and is immediately preceded by a voiced sound, particularly lenis consonants other than /z, ʒ, dʒ/, the /s/ becomes [z] as in boys, pleads, John’s, among others. Second, if the {s} morpheme marking concord, pluralization or the possessive case is immediately preceded by a voiceless sound other than /s, ʃ, tʃ/, then the {s} morpheme retains its quality as [s], e.g. rats, keeps, Keats’. But if the plural morpheme {s} is immediately preceded by /z, ʒ, dʒ; s, ʃ, tʃ/, the /s/ changes to [ɪz], as in buses, rises, Moses. From these analyses, we can conclude that the segments /s/, /z/ and /ɪz/ are allomorphs of the morpheme {s}, or variants of the phoneme /s/ (cf Palmer, 1974).

In the majority of cases, linguists identify two major classes of morphophonemic variations that occur in English — the {D} morpheme affecting the past tense form of the regular verb, and the {Z} morpheme indicating concord, pluralization and possessive cases in English. The following schemata illustrate phonological modifications involving the {D}



morpheme which exemplifies the occurrence of the {-d} past tense morpheme in standard spoken English.

- (i) blame + d → blamed [bleɪmd] = /d/ → [d];
- (ii) wish + ed → wished [wɪʃt] = /d/ → [t];
- (iii) end + ed → ended ['endɪd] = /d/ → [ɪd].

These schemata imply that the {-d} morphemes have three allomorphs: [d], [t] and [ɪd] represented by the first, second and third schemata respectively. The [Ø] allomorph of the {-d} morpheme marks cases of irregular past tense forms signifying zero morphs, as input, broadcast, etc, which have no distinct past forms.

For the {Z} morpheme, the following schemata are exemplified:

- (i) cat + s → cats [kæts] = /s/ → [s]
- (ii) dog + s → dogs [dɒgz] = /s/ → [z]
- (iii) rose + s → roses ['rəʊzɪz] = /s/ → [ɪz]

What these schemata summarily signify is that the {Z} morpheme has three allomorphs: [s], [z] and [ɪz] in its inventory. The fourth [Ø] is the zero-allomorph indicating zero plural morphs as in such words as sheep, equipment, cattle, etc. These schemata were adopted to test respondents' performance based on the corpus used for data collection. The schemata were formulated to generate the following P-rules:

(a) The {D} morpheme:

- (i) /d/ → [d] / $\left[\begin{array}{l} + \text{con} \\ + \text{voice} \\ - \text{d} \end{array} \right] \text{ — \#}$
- (ii) /d/ → [t] / $\left[\begin{array}{l} - \text{voice} \\ - \text{son} \\ + \text{con} \end{array} \right] \text{ — \#}$
- (iii) /d/ → [ɪd] / $\left[\begin{array}{l} + \text{voice} \\ + \text{Obstr.} \end{array} \right] \text{ — \#}$

(b) The {Z} morpheme:

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These rules for the {Z} morpheme schemata are as presented below:

- (i) $/s/ \rightarrow [s] \ / \left(\begin{array}{l} + \text{con} \\ - \text{voice} \\ - /s, ʃ, tʃ/ \end{array} \right) \text{---} \#$
- (ii) $/s/ \rightarrow [z] \ / \left(\begin{array}{l} + \text{con} \\ - \text{voc} \\ - z, ʒ, dʒ \end{array} \right) \text{---} \#$
- (iii) $/s/ \rightarrow [ɪz] \ / \left(\begin{array}{l} + \text{con} \\ + /s, z, ʒ, dʒ, ʃ, tʃ/ \end{array} \right) \text{---} \#$



Research Methodology

The subjects of this study comprised two groups of respondents: an Experimental Group (EG) and a Control Group (CG). The EG was made up of one hundred (100) final-year university students, all of them Nigerians, from varying socio-economic, socio-political and educational backgrounds. This group of respondents was randomly selected from four federal universities covering University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Othman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto. This arrangement was to ensure a fair spread of respondents' base to cover, at least minimally, various ethnic groups in various parts of the country. From such an experiment, generalization could be attested to as being truly widespread. The respondents in the EG were drawn from nineteen linguistic groups including both the three major languages (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo) and some minority languages or the “medium” group languages (cf Egbokhare, 2003). It would be doubtful if nineteen languages and dialects out of between 400 and 513 languages and dialects in Nigeria (Grimes, 2000; Elugbe, 2006) are adequate for generalization in this study. But it should be noted that the selection of respondents from the nineteen linguistic groups is merely representative of different parts of Nigeria. Each of the respondents in the experimental group had exposure to English speaking for upward of fifteen to twenty-five years.

Besides, As postulated in Banjo (1971;1976), Adesanoye (1973), Fakuade (1978), Eka (1985;2000), and Josiah (2009), among others, many final-year university students in Nigeria are considered to be speakers or exponents of Educated Nigerian English. This is why we have selected our respondents from this class of Nigerians (cf Jowitt, 2000; Udofot, 2004;2006).

The Control Group had just one respondent – a Briton who is a native speaker of English. The respondent in the CG had his university education at Cambridge University and the University of Essex respectively, and speaks a variety of the RP. One respondent in the Control Group may appear inadequate, but this is not obviously a contrastive study of Educated Nigerian Spoken English and another variety of English, the RP, for instance. The author considers that using one RP speaker is enough for interpolation and an invariable control to the variables observed among speakers in the EG (cf. Udofot, 2004, 2006).

Elicitation Procedure

The data used for this study was a seventy-one-worded paragraph and another thirty-four words and phrases. The single words and phrases contained potential elements of allomorphic variations modelled after Crystal (1987), Schane (1973), Katamba (1989) and Kreidler (1989). The same words and phrases were also used to compose the paragraph. The corpora were provided for the respondents to read into an audio device provided for them. Each of them read in turn, and adequate time was given to each respondent to go through the script before reading. Each respondent read a total of 105 words into the tape within three to four minutes. At the end, approximately five hours, thirty minutes was spent in recording the data. The single words and phrases were read in isolation while the short paragraph was read at a stretch. The sentences in the paragraph were meant to test the possible occurrence of allomorphic variations determined by fast speech while the single words and phrases were aimed at testing potential processes of morphophonemic modifications that could be noticed with a slower pace of reading.

The corpus used for the study contained single words and phrases as well as one short paragraph which were provided for the respondents to read into an audio-device provided for them. Each of them read in turn, and adequate time was given to each respondent to go through the script before reading. Each respondent read a total of 105 words into the tape within three to four minutes. At the end, approximately five hours, thirty minutes was spent in recording the data. The single words and phrases were read in isolation while the short paragraph was read at a stretch. The sentences in the paragraph were meant to test the possible occurrence of allomorphic variations determined by fast speech while the single words and phrases were aimed at testing potential processes of morphophonemic modifications that could be noticed with a slower pace of reading.

Analytical Procedure

(i) Transcription of the Data

After the reading came the transcription. Although the transcription was solely carried out by the researcher, but there was consultation with other phoneticians and phonologists who made some useful suggestions with regards to the transcription of the data. Different transcription models were adopted for the varying data. For instance, Gimson's Transcription System



was used for the English data exemplified by the Control. But, in transcribing the Nigerian English data, Nigerian English phonemes enumerated in Odumuh (1987), Eka (1985; 2000), Jowitt (1991), Jibril (1982), Adetugbo (2004), Awonusi (2004) as well as other available models on Nigerian English were used juxtaposed with Gimson Transcription System for a more accurate and empirical representation.

(ii) Acoustic Analysis of Data

For the acoustic analysis, audio, and tape-recorded data were uploaded into a PC-based sound analysis system consisting of 160 GB of Audio/Visual Hard Disk and a Full Duplex Multi I/O Audio Capture Card. The problem of ambient noise which the researcher encountered during the recording stage as a result of not recording the data in a sound-proof studio was drastically reduced using Cool Edit Pro and Adobe Auditioning 1.5. During the pre-processing stage, residual noise was reduced to the barest minimum using the click/pop elimination as well as hiss and random noise elimination before transferring the data to the speech analysis software (Praat) which we used for the acoustic investigation.

Praat, a sound analysis software for undertaking phonetic analysis and sound manipulations (Mills, Edwards and Beckham, 2005) was adopted for the acoustic analysis. It was used to determine such phonetic features as duration of utterance between the EG and the Control, amplitude and frequencies of utterances, voicing ripples to determine voiced and devoiced or voiceless segments as displayed on the spectrogram, intensity, harmonics and Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) alongside other acoustic properties and observation of waveform to determine tenuous allomorphic elements, among others. A close observation of the waveform on the sound spectrogram helped in isolating the basic features of allomorphic segments which were observably prominent during the analysis.

Data Presentation, Analysis/Results

Data for each of the items are presented and analyzed one after the other. The first set of discussions has to do with the perceptual analysis of the items that exemplified instances of allomorphic variation in our data. This goes hand-in-hand with the statistical tool used, that is, “Test of Proportion”.

Each of the tables presented in this study has six columns namely: “Pronunciation”, “Code”, “Frequency”, “Percentage”, “Z-value”, “P-value” and “Remarks”. The “Pronunciation” column shows the variant realizations of the item(s) tested. The column designated as “Code” is a combination of letters and numbers arbitrarily designed to aid the computerization of the data for convenience during the analysis. The codes, it should be noted, are in the form of mnemonics representing the items to be analysed and this was done so that the statisticians could feed the data into the PC to run the analysis. For instance, the expression “Watch You” is coded “WY” reflecting the initial letters in that expression; “This Year” takes the initial letters “TY”, and so on. The numbers assigned to each coded item reflect the various variants observed during the transcription. These were necessary devices adopted because it was difficult for the statisticians who helped in the analysis to key in the transcribed versions of our variable data into the computer before running the analysis. They were equally afraid that the computer could run the analysis if the transcribed versions were used. It was necessary to leave these codes the way they are on the tables so that while making references to the items on any of the tables, we can easily use them to facilitate smooth discussion and to avoid unnecessary repetition of the transcribed items.

The column tagged ‘frequency’ on the table showed the number of respondents that realized a particular item (words or expressions). The “Z-value” column is the statistical value of each of the items presented in the data. It is a technique usually employed in Statistics to determine the critical or probability value of the item analyzed. Column five (the “P-value”) indicates the actual critical or probability value, which can help determine whether the item analyzed is a significant value, or not. The most significant values on the “P-value” column shown as “0.00000” indicate the most likely patterns of realization of an item among many of the subjects while the values that are above 0.05 are deemed to be insignificant. This means that any value on our tables above 0.05 (occurring under the “P-value” column) is marked as being insignificant realizations in Nigerian English. The last column designated as “Remarks” indicates whether an item should be considered significant or not. Details of the results are presented in the following section. The tables that are relevant to each of the sections are grouped and presented together to facilitate smooth discussion on each of the items tested.



Item Analyzed: The {D} Morpheme

Table 1: Respondents’ Variants in the Realization of the Word “Tested”.

Example: *Tested*

Control’s Realization: / t^hestəd /

PRONUNCIATION	CODE	FREQUENCY	%	Z-value	P-value	REMARKS
t ^h estəd	TD 1	13	13	3.86556	0.00011	Significant
tested	TD 2	67	67	14.24887	0.00000	Significant
t ^h ested	TD 3	7	7	2.74352	0.00608	Significant
testid	TD 4	8	8	3.86556	0.00011	Significant
t ^h estrid	TD 5	5	5	2.29416	0.02178	Significant
		100	100			

Table 2: Respondents’ Variants in the Realization of the Word “Watched”.

Example: *Watched*

Control’s Realization: / wɒtʃt /

PRONUNCIATION	CODE	FREQUENCY	%	Z-value	P-value	REMARKS
wɒtʃt	WT 1	1	1	1.00504	0.31488	Not Significant
wɒtʃd	WT 2	15	15	4.20084	0.00003	Significant
wɒtʃd	WT 3	37	37	7.66356	0.00000	Significant
wɒʃd	WT 4	18	18	4.68521	0.00000	Significant
watʃd	WT 5	8	8	2.94884	0.00319	Significant
wɒtʃ	WT 6	16	16	4.36436	0.00001	Significant
wɔ:sd	WT 7	3	3	1.75863	0.07864	Not Significant
wɒʃ	WT 8	2	2	1.42857	0.15313	Not Significant
		100	100			

Table 3: Respondents’ Variants in the Realization of the Word “Warned”.

Example: *Warned*

Control’s Realization: / wɔ:nd /

PRONUNCIATION	CODE	FREQUENCY	%	Z-value	P-value	REMARKS
wɔ:nd	WN 1	65	65	13.62770	0.00000	Significant
wɔ:nd	WN 2	11	11	3.51562	0.00044	Significant
wɔ:n	WN 3	14	14	4.03473	0.00005	Significant
wa:nd	WN 4	7	7	2.74352	0.00608	Significant
wɔmd	WN 5	1	1	1.00504	0.31488	Not Significant
wɜ:nd	WN 6	2	2	1.42857	0.15313	Not Significant
		100	100			

Item Analyzed: The {Z} Morpheme

Table 4: Respondents’ Variants in the Realization of the Word “Cats”

Example 1: *Cats*

Control’s Realization: /k^hæts/

PRONUNCIATION	CODE	FREQUENCY	%	Z-value	P-value	REMARKS
k ^h æts	KT 1	25	25	5.77350	0.00000	Significant
k ^h ats	KT 2	17	17	4.52570	0.00001	Significant
kats	KT 3	49	49	9.80916	0.00000	Significant
Kat̃	KT 4	5	5	2.29416	0.02178	Significant
kət	KT 5	3	3	1.75863	0.07864	Not Significant
		100	100			



Table 23: Respondents’ Variants in the Realization of the Word “Dogs”.

Example 2: *Dogs*

Control’s Realization: /dɔgz/

PRONUNCIATION	CODE	FREQUENCY	%	Z-value	P-value	REMARKS
dɔgz	DO 1	33	33	7.01810	0.00000	Significant
dɔgz	DO 2	22	22	5.31085	0.00000	Significant
dɔgz	DO 3	45	45	9.04534	0.00000	Significant
		100	100			

Table 24: Respondents’ Variants in the Realization of the Word “Horses”.

Example 3: *Horses*

Control’s Realization: /'hɔ:zɪz/

PRONUNCIATION	CODE	FREQUENCY	%	Z-value	P-value	REMARKS
'hɔ:zɪz	HZ 1	8	8	2.74352	0.00608	Significant
'hɔ:zɪz	HZ 2	45	45	9.04534	0.00000	Significant
'hɔzɪs	HZ 3	47	47	9.41697	0.00000	Significant
		100	100			

The {D} Morpheme in Spoken Nigerian English

Three words on our corpus, “tested”, “watched” and “warned” were used to test the past tense morpheme {-d} in the Nigerian English variety. The results are as presented on Tables 16, 17 and 18.

Example 1: Warned /wɔ:nd /: The {-d} allomorph [d]

The word on our corpus that illustrated the situation in which the past tense morpheme {-d} has the allomorph [d] is “warned” /wɔ:nd/. The rule for this

allomorph is that if the past form of the regular verb ends with the segment /d/, then /d/ retains its quality as [d] thus:

Warn + ed → Warned [wɔːnd] = /d/ → [d]

This explains the context of Rule (i) we presented earlier in this section. We now want to test the application of this rule with the performance of our respondents.

There were six (6) different realizations of the word “warned” noticed in the data we collected. The form with the highest index of (65) was [wɔːnd]. Next to it was [wɔːn] articulated by 11 respondents. Another form [waːnd] was realized by seven (7) respondents comprising six Hausa and one Fulani speakers. One other Hausa speaker realized the form [wɔːmd] while two other speakers, one Yoruba and the other a Hausa realized the variant [wɜːnd].

The general performance as reflected in the data showed that the majority of the respondents, irrespective of the ethnic background or MT, pronounced the form [wɔːnd] which incidentally is an exponent of the RP variant. The /ɔː/ seemed long enough, at least close to the length of the RP variant. This was a specific case where the EG’s variant appeared to be equivalent to that of the Control. The long /ɔː/ sound realized by most of the respondents must have been occasioned by the presence of two voiced segments, that is, [+sonorant] preceding it because, generally, NE /ɔː/ is predictably shorter in length than the RP /ɔː/ (cf Ekong, 1978; Adetugbo, 1977; Jowitt, 1991). But this should always be interpreted based on the phonological environment that occasions the sound as evidenced in this context.

The most interesting fact about this particular item was that, at least, the majority of the respondents (86%) realized the suffix – ed represented the {-d} morpheme as [d]. This implies that the realization of the {-d} morpheme in this instance did not pose difficulty to our respondents. By extension, the rule conditioning the occurrence of the {-d} morpheme as [d] in SBE also applies to the Nigerian English variety. We also need to quickly add that in the multi-sociolinguistic environment in which Nigeria is known, there may be other variations, for instance, the final devoicing of



voiced segments which is known to occur in Nigerian English (Adegbija, 2004; Adetugbo, 2004). In that case, /d/ could be rendered as a devoiced segment [d̥], or may be deleted where there is the consonant cluster, as our respondents who rendered it as [wɔːn] have shown.

Example 2: Watched / wɒtʃt /: The {-d} allomorph [t]

For the [t] allomorph, eight (8) variant forms were noticed among our respondents. The form with the highest index of thirty-seven (37) was [wɒtʃd] which spread across the various linguistic groups. Seven (7) of the Hausa speakers and one Fulani speaker realized it as [watʃd] while 8 Yorubas, 5 Igbos, two Nupes, one Igala, one Ijaw and one Ibibio making a total of 18 respondents were heard pronouncing the form [wɒtʃd]. One Esan, one Igala and one Yoruba were heard producing the form [wɔːsd], sixteen (16) respondents produced another variant [wɒtʃ] without the [d] allomorph while another two articulated the form [wɒtʃ]. The worst performance was noticed with the variant [wɒtʃt̥] which represented the RP variant. Apart from the Control who articulated the [t] clearly, only one respondent could realize the RP variant. It appears, based on the pronunciations of the other words on our corpus, that this respondent in the EG had been in contact with native speakers in his formative years.

From the analysis so far, it is clear that only one member of the EG pronounced the RP variant “watched” [wɒtʃt̥]. At least, not less than eighty-one (81) respondents had the final [d] in their pronunciation (even though some had it as a devoiced sound) while eighteen (18) others did not produce the final [d] at all. The implication of this analysis is that majority of Educated Nigerians do not produce the final [d] morpheme as [t] which is an exponent of SBE variant. Based on this performance, we reject Rule (ii) which we earlier presented as an account of SBE realization of the [t] allomorph after lenis consonants. This means that most Nigerians realize the {-d} allomorph as [d] irrespective of the preceding segment, based however, on the orthographic environment. This is a clear case of spelling pronunciation. This analysis corroborates Jowitt’s (1991:78) remark that, in Nigerian English, “final /t/ is realized as [d] by many speakers where orthographic – ed suggest /d/, and this entails pre-final voicing”. In our experience, the final voicing element was reduced to devoiced forms in

many of the instances. Observably, this does not result from mother-tongue interference as some would assume, but from the confusion that arises as a result of the English orthography because the rule that changes [d] to [t] appears inexplicably arbitrary and illogical, and therefore, does not seem to favour L₂ speakers of English. We equally contend that this is not likely to be an experience peculiar to Nigerian English speakers alone.

As a follow-up, many non-native speakers are likely to have the same experience as the case of Nigerian speakers explained here. More so, it is doubtful if this performance could impede national or international intelligibility since there are clues to context-based nuances of meaning that could aid communicators during speech acts. It should be recalled that Jenkins (2000) has proposed the adoption of a set of “nuclear norms” in the phonology of English as an International Language (EIL) using the concept of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) instead of maintaining a monolithic form of Standard English. This is because there are more speakers and users of English in the Expanding Circle than in the Inner Circle (Crystal, 1997). This idea is again suggested in Alptekin (2002) and Celik (2008).

Example 3: Tested /^hestəd /: The {-d} allomorph [d]

For the word “tested” /^hestɪd/, the following performances were noticed. Thirteen (13) respondents realized the variant [^hestəd] while five (5) articulated the RP variant [^hestɪd] and another 8, [testɪd]. However, we noticed that the variant realized by the Control was [^hestəd] and not [^hestɪd]. Sixty-seven (67) respondents produced the form [ˈtested]. In the latter, the two vowels in the two syllables were realized as if they were of equal quality and length, except with the slight shortening of the second in the second syllable. But the Control clearly articulated the second vowel as the schwa /ə/ which is a reduced vowel. The performance of the sixty-seven respondents who realized the item as [tested] is understandable: full-vowel timing has been attested in the Nigerian English variety because of the preponderance of strong or accented syllables and the absence of reduced vowels (Akinjobi, 2004; Udofot, 2004). This is why the majority of our respondents realized their final syllable of “tested” as [ted] and not [tɪd] or [təd]. One major reason that may be advanced for this realization is the



incidence of spelling pronunciation occasioned by the orthographic environment as noted in Awonusi (2004), Adetugbo (2004), Adegbija (2004), Jibril (1982) and Jowitt (1991). The second could be analyzable from the perspective of MT interference (Bamgbose, 1995; Awonusi, 2004; Adetugbo, 2004). In some of the cases, (apart from the realization of the lengthened form of [e:]), the final [d] was articulated as a devoiced segment. The conclusion we draw here is that the majority of educated Nigerian English speakers do not realize the allomorph {-id} in English. They produce the form {-ed} instead (cf Jibril, 1982). With this performance, Rule (iii) of the {-d} morpheme we presented earlier is rejected as accounting for most Nigerian English utterances ending with the [ɪd] allomorph. We will now reconstruct the [-d] morpheme in ESNE as follows:

- (i) warn + ed → warned [wɔ:nd] = /d/ → [d]
- (ii) watch + ed → watched [wɔtɪd] = /d/ → [d]
- (iii) test + ed → tested [ˈtestɪd] = /d/ → [ed]

Rule (i) is interpreted as /d/ remains [d] after voiced sounds; Rule (ii) is that /d/ remains [d] after voiceless sounds (and no matter the environment) while Rule (iii) has the interpretation that [d] changes to [ed] (though occasionally [ɪd] and [əɪd]), since we had some tokens of this as statistically significant after /s, z, ʒ, dʒ, ʃ, tʃ/. The implication of this is that in Educated Spoken Nigerian English (ESNE), we have two major allomorphs for the past tense morpheme {-d} namely [d] and [ed] while [t] is generally non-existent. This finding is corroborated in Jibril (1982) and Jowitt (1991).

The {Z} Morpheme in Spoken Nigerian English

The words in our corpus that exemplified the occurrence of the {Z} morpheme in Nigerian English are “cats”, “dogs” and “horses”. In SBE, the {Z} morpheme has three allomorphs: [s], [z] and [ɪz] and these allomorphs correspond to the words “cats”, “dogs” and “horses” respectively. We had earlier stated the rules that occasion the occurrence of the {Z} morpheme in normal English speech. There is no need to restate them again here.

Example I: Cats /k^hæts/: The {-z} allomorph [s].

There were five variants of this word as pronounced by our respondents. The first form [k^hæts] representing the RP variant was realized by twenty-

five (25) respondents nine of whom were Hausas, seven Yorubas, four Igbos, one Igbira, one idoma, two Ibibio and one Annang speakers. The variant [k^hats] was heard among seventeen (17) respondents spread across the various linguistic groups. The version [kats] was the most statistically significant (49) with the P-value put at 0.00000. Two other forms: [kat̚] with unreleased [t̚] and [kət] were realized by five (5) and three (3) respondents respectively. The last variant [kət] was rendered by one Hausa and two Nupe speakers.

From the analysis above, we can conclude that most of the respondents realized the form with the final [s] fully articulated. It appears that those who realized the form with unreleased [t̚] perceptually believed that they have /s/ in their utterance whereas it was actually the [t] that became lengthened thus sounding like [ts]. The variant [ket] seemed to be idiosyncratic with the three respondents who realized them. The conclusion we draw from these analyses is that educated Nigerian speakers of English do not have difficulty realizing the final [s] after voiceless sounds thus upholding Rule (i) of the {Z} morpheme, that is, that [s] remains [s] after voiceless environment thus:

$$/s/ \rightarrow [s] \quad / \quad \left(\begin{array}{l} + \text{consonant} \\ - \text{voice} \end{array} \right) \text{---} \#$$

There is the need to add that where there are consonant clusters, sometimes the [s] gets deleted as in, “lists ten” /lists ten/ which may be rendered as [list ten] or simplified to [listen] (cf Bobda and Chumbow, 1999; Jowitt, 1991).

The other words that exemplified the occurrence of the allomorph were “asks” and scientists. For asks, 50 respondents produced [asks] while another 31 produced [æks], so about 81 respondents produced the final /s/ as [s]. For scientists, there was cluster simplification such that only 58 respondents produced scientists fully.



Example 2: Dogs /dɒgz/: The {-z} allomorph [z]

The second allomorph of the {-z} morpheme [z] basically occurs in an environment where /s/ marking plural, possession or concord is preceded by voiced segments other than /s/, /ʃ/ and /tʃ/. When such a phonological environment is created, the [z] allomorph is inevitable in SBE. In testing this allomorph in ESNE, we used the word “dogs” in our corpus to illustrate the occurrence of [z] as /s/. The respondents produced three variants of this word. The most significant variant that was articulated by majority of our respondents was the devoiced form [dɒgz] (45%). The form in which [z] occurred as [s] was rendered by 22 respondents while another thirty-three (33) produced the SBE variant. What this implies is that many Nigerians produce the final {-z} morpheme as [s] and [z] and not as [z] (cf Awonusi, 2004; Jibril, 1982).

Seven (7) Yorubas and two Ibibio speakers were heard realizing the [z] as [s] possibly because /z/ does not occur as a phoneme in their MT (Jibril, 1982; Awonusi, 2004b; Essien, 1990). The Igbos had the highest inventory of /z/ followed by the Hausas all of whom are attested as having [z] as a phonemic segment in their inventory (Jibril, 1982). Therefore, mother-tongue interference, to some extent, played some major roles in determining the respondents’ performance on this item.

The other words, which exemplified the occurrence of this item, were “suppose”, “learns”, “questions”, “problems” and “Jeans”. In all these words, just like we observed with “dogs”, the majority of the respondents realized the voiceless alveolar fricative [s] instead of the voiced form [z]. For instance, in “suppose”, 68 respondents realized it as [sə'pɒs] with a final devoicing of [z] while the remaining 32 shared the forms [sə'pəʊz], [sə'pəʊz], [sə'pɒs] and [sɒpɒz]. These all indicate that the realization of the final [z] for our respondents was problematic while the same difficulty was not encountered with the form [sə'pɒs], etc. Our conclusion is that, except in the context where /z/ is found intervocalically, many educated Nigerians realize word-final/z/ as [z] or [s] (cf Awonusi, 2004; Jibril, 1982). Once again, the researcher rejects Rule (ii) of the [Z] morpheme stated earlier and upholds that [s] remains [s] after voiced sounds except when occurring intervocalically or in “zebra” words (see Awonusi, 2004).

Example 3: Horses / 'hɔ:zɪz /: The {z} allomorph [ɪz]

The major word that occurred on our corpus as an exponent of this item was “horses”. The following data was gleaned from this word. Eight (8) respondents realized the RP variant ['hɔ:zɪz] which was also articulated by the Control. Forty-five (45) other respondents realized it as ['hɔ:zɪz] with the last [z] devoiced while another forty-seven [47] produced the form ['hɔ:zɪs]. This performance shows that in Nigerian English, the RP [ɪz] allomorph is realized as [ɪs] or [ɪz] and marginally as [ɪz] (cf Jibril, 1982; Jowitt, 1991; Awonusi, 2004). We will now reconstruct another rule on the realization of allomorphs in ESNE:

cat + s → cats /kats/ = /s/ → [s]

dog + s → dogs /dɒgz/ = /s/ → [s], [z]

horse + s → horses /'hɔ:zɪs/ = /s/ → [ɪs], ± [ɪz]

This last schema implies that [ɪz] is an alternant or may be regarded as a diaphone.

Discussion and Summary of Findings

This study examined allomorphic variations in Educated Spoken Nigerian English and attempted to contrast modestly such instances in Nigerian English with those of Standard British English. The overall results show that various forms of allomorphic modifications occur in Nigerian spoken English, apparently distinct from those of Standard SBE, and that by extension, from the perspective of some revealing facts in this study, Educated spoken Nigerian English is typologically different from Standard Spoken English and possibly from those of other expanding circle Englishes. For instance, cases of allomorphic modifications involving {D} and {Z} morphemes are predictably different from that of SBE, especially the case of [t] allomorph of the {D} morpheme. Using the P-rules in Generative Phonology, it is possible to generalize and thereby predict the occurrence of allomorphic phenomena in ESNE. Such phenomena could ultimately serve as an emerging typology that could be used to measure what happens in other world Englishes globally.

Generally, much of the variations in the forms of allomorphs noticed in ESNE suggest an endonormative, rather than an exonormative model of



English, which again suggests some evolving identities or typologies in the Expanding Circle Englishes around the world, as exemplified in Nigerian spoken English. For instance, observably, the [D] and [Z] morphemes occur differently in ESNE as distinct from that of SBE. Thus, while the {-d} morpheme has the {t} allomorph after voiceless sounds and [ɪd] after voiced sounds except [tʃ,s,ʒ, ʃ,z] in SBE, ENSE has no [t] allomorph and the [ɪd] allomorph is realized basically as [ed] and only has [əɪd] and [ɪd] marginally. For the [z] allomorph, ESNE has only two variants [s] and [ɪz] or [is] while SBE has three, [s], [z] and [ɪz]. The fact is that the ESNE variants seem to occur basically as a result of spelling pronunciation in the majority of cases examined (cf Jowitt, 1991, 2007; Igboanusi, 2002; Gut, 2002; Udofot, 2007; Josiah, 2010, 2011, Josiah and Taiwo, 2015; Josiah and Akpan, 2016; and Josiah, 2017).

Conclusion

Some conclusions were drawn by other studies of this nature to provide the basis for the current one the researcher is attempting to draw here. On Philippine English, Llamzon (1997:43) concludes that “Filipinos are willing to copy American English up to a point; in fact, an approximation of an English formal style is what they want”. They retain something of their identity. Relatively, Jibril (1982:330), while concluding his study, notes that “many highly educated and well-placed Nigerians — including University professors, politicians (one of them, a State Governor) and lawyers do not approximate closely to native patterns of English pronunciation”. On his part, Adetugbo (2004: 197) observes that: “The phonology of Nigerian English is *NOT* identical with the phonology of RP”. He further argues that the most sophisticated users of English in Nigeria are Nigerian University teachers and students and these groups have at their disposal two phonologies of English: one approximating but not identical with RP which they self-consciously use in formal and classroom situations but which they *DARE NOT* use in other situations for fear of being marked as pedantic ... The other phonology is the one resorted to in other situations by these people and the most socially accepted (emphasis mine). Jowitt (2006:20) in his view believes that “It is still premature to refer to Standard Nigerian English

as if it were an already discrete and recognizable variety, “but in the ***FUTURE, IT OUGHT TO BE POSSIBLE***”.

From the various views presented above, our conclusion in this study becomes inevitable, that is, that Nigerians speak English in their way and on their terms, while at the same time, adopting some features of SBE rather consciously for purposes of education and officialdom. Observably, Nigerian Spoken English is moderately intelligible to native speakers just as the native speaker’s variety is to a Nigerian (cf Tiffen (1974)). Thus, it is both socially acceptable and internationally intelligible to the extent that both parties can interact for purposes of social, political, economic and bilateral interests without appearing intolerably queer to each other.

Judging from comments from Jibril (1982), Adetugbo (2004), Udofot (2004) and Jowitt (2006), Nigerian English is at its embryonic stage, consciously and generally evolving some standardizing, endonormative features, and abandoning, as it were, the exoglossic standard usually identified with America and Britain while ultimately striving towards a uniform, national standard that will neither be alien to her nationals nor too grotesque to foreign or native speakers. From these remarks, it is obvious that Brann’s (1975) plea for an exoglossic standard in Nigerian English would naturally not be heed based on the emerging typologies that are observed in the course of the analysis in this study.

Finally, we wish to sound a conclusive remark that, based on the allomorphic variations examined in this study, majority of Nigerians do not speak Standard British English ranging from basilectal to acrolectal varieties. The sophisticated (or near-native) model appears too unreal for Nigerians. Even if they were to speak the RP, the question of which of the three varieties (cited in Jowitt, 2006) used in Britain should be adopted would still constitute a problem. To be on the safer side, therefore, Nigerian English, as far as it solves Nigerian problems while at the same time bringing about meaningful and effective communicative interactions at the international level moderately, should be regarded as adequate and developed as a model for educational, communicative and other purposes in Nigeria.



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