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IMPLICATIONS OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH ON SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the linguistic features and implications of Nigerian English on the learners of English as a second language in Nigeria. It looks at the levels of their differences from that of Standard English and how these differences affect the learning of English language by Nigerians. According to findings, Nigerian English is characterized by words and expressions that are contrary to those of the Standard Variety. Such deviations have some negative effects on the L2 learners. The researchers got data through discussions with different classes or categories of Nigerian users of English. Various literary works were also studied to have clear pictures of these linguistic features of Nigerian English. The features of Nigerian English discovered were classified according to phonological, slangy, syntactic, lexical, transliterational, and semantic variations. The major implication of Nigerian English features on the learners of English as an L2 is that the enormity of the deviations in all the linguistic levels could constitute serious problems to the learning of the Standard English. The work recommends that audio visuals materials should actually be used in teaching and learning for proper sound transmission and reception, and that curriculum planners, teachers, and the government, should all work towards attaining an acceptable degree of variation from the Standard Variety while choosing our 'standard'. The standard should also be the one intelligible within and across the boundaries of Nigeria to avoid emerging with a variety understood only by Nigerians if not by some Nigerians.

Key Words: Nigerian English, Standard English, Deviations, Linguistic Levels, Implications.

Introduction

Language is a means through which man produces and another understands his linguistic messages. It is the means through which the thoughts harboured in a man's heart are being exposed to another. A great feature of language is its dynamic tendency because its users vary across social, occupational, regional, or geographical domains. English language is one of the languages, if not the major language whose dynamism is parallel to no other because of its vast geographical distribution. English language has been acted upon as it comes into contact with different societies and different languages, resulting in different varieties of the same language. Adegbija (1994) says that the international explosion of English has made it cease to be an exclusive preserve of the English people. That is to say that it has ceased to be the exclusive property of Britain, Canada, America, etc. The status or global role of the English language has made it to rise as a world language or an international one because of its profuse diffusion to the various corners or regions of the world. This Akwanya (1999) affirms with that English is probably the language with the greatest rate of widespread.

After the colonial rule, countries under the British colonies were affected by this diffusion and Nigeria is one of such because English language in Sub-Sahara Africa (Nigeria included) was implanted following

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colonial activities. Adegbija (1994) says that one sociolinguistic implication of the diffusion of English language in the global scene is the emergence of World Englishes (WE). This accounts for different varieties of English which are now spoken among different categories of the speakers, the world over. It is an already established fact that there is a global spread of the English language because South African English, New English, Indian English, Australian English, etc. have evidence of this worldwide phenomenon of language contact, variation, and change of the same English language.

English language came to Nigeria in the 15th century as a result of Europeans' commercial interest in Nigeria. The language became the major means of communication when Britain acquired the Nigerian territory, instituted colonial rule, followed by the imposition of the language on Nigeria. Since then, English language has come to stay in Nigeria being the official language which is an indispensable tool in education, law, politics, science and technology, etc. To validate the status or immeasurable role of English language in the education of the Nigerian child, Seweju cited in Adedeji (2008) says that the Nigerian child's access to the cultural and scientific knowledge of the world is largely through English. To support Seweju, Adedeji (2008) states that English is the main language of literacy as it are the major medium of instruction in Nigerian educational system.

Before the imposition of English language on Nigerians, the country already had multiple vernacular languages numbering over four hundred. So, after the establishment of English language in Nigeria, the peculiarities of these indigenous languages tend to have direct influence on the quality of the English language spoken in the country. Uzoezie (1992) explains that English language in Nigeria is continuously undergoing a process of naturalization, domestication, and acculturalization, both at the national level and within the ethno-linguistic context. Such is not just peculiar to Nigeria. The English language which is spoken in different parts of the world undergoes modification which brings change in the complexity of the original form of the language. The reason is that language users tend to modify and simplify a foreign language so that they can use it with ease. These modifications to simplify the use of a foreign language gave birth to Nigerian English which establishes a socio-linguistic phenomenon that is peculiar with the Nigerian environment.

THE CONCEPT OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH

The term Nigerian English can broadly be defined as the variety of English spoken and used by Nigerians, Adeniyi (2006). After an extensive study of the variety of English spoken in Nigeria, Jowitt (2012) says: "We might regard Nigerian English as the English that has England as its first mother, and Nigeria as its second, and has defied nature by undergoing a genealogical reprocessing." The above posits that there is indeed the existence of a variety called Nigerian English which has its root from England and influence or modifications from other languages of Nigeria or thought patterns of Nigerians. It is a socio-linguistic phenomenon that is peculiar with the Nigerian society and its environment. This arose from the domestication of English language in Nigeria as Nigerians try to bring it down into their environment by modifying and simplifying it to accommodate their thought patterns.

A foreign language is bound to change and adapt itself to the prevailing socio-linguistic peculiarities of the environment where it finds itself, just like Nigerian English is a variety of English language that adapts to the socio-linguistic peculiarities of Nigerian environment. Uzoezie (1992) appears to concur with the possibility of this adaptation as she says that a living language has tendency to adapt itself to the socio-cultural environment within which it operates whether such a language is spoken as L_1, L2, or L3. In the same vein, Barber (1999) supports this notion where he says that no language which is being used can be prevented from changing. He also recapitulates a great classical scholar, Richard Bentley's view that every language is in perpetual motion and alteration. English language present in Nigeria is one of such languages that are in perpetual motion and alternation which materialized as Nigerian English because of the effects of the environment within which it is used in everyday life activities.

Despite the foregoing standpoints, there is a crucial question which is: "Is the variety truly Nigerian English or simply anglicized Nigerian expressions?" This question arose from the fact that there are flagrant

infiltration of Nigerian slangs and deviant expressions into English usage of some Nigerian speakers even at formal situations. This possibly is the basis upon which Banjo in Jowitt (2012) concludes that the English usage of every Nigerian is a mixture of standard forms and popular Nigerian English forms, which are in turn composed of errors and variants. Many Nigerians are less concerned about imitating the native speakers' forms, structure, and mode of utterances and the negative effect is that comprehensibility is often distorted. One is then left in doubt of the comprehensibility and intelligibility of some Nigerian English expressions especially the esoteric slangy expressions that are today branded "Nigerian English." Differences abound in the lexis, syntax, phonology, and semantics levels of linguistics in the Nigeria English and that spoken in other places. This indicates the true state of English of most Nigerian users, some educated speakers included. Now, where lies the power to conquer the world since English is the language of power and intellectualization if the English of most Nigerians is such that could only be understood only within the Nigerian speech community? There is need to study the linguistic existence of the language within the country that claims to use English as its official language. There is also need to study the outcome of using Nigerian English if it does not parallel with that of the native speakers and how it affects citizens of Nigeria who are learners of English as a second language. It is important to point out that the quality of English language in Nigeria should be of world standard as anything short of that, may hinder effective communication. Onochie (2002) warns that it is better not to communicate at all for no action will be taken, than to communicate what is misunderstood for a wrong action will be taken by the listener.

Some linguists do not accept that there is an actual existence of Nigeria English but believe that it is a variety filled with errors and deviations and therefore, substandard in all ramifications. They see the term 'Nigerian English' as a term under the umbrella of which Nigerians hide their poor usage of the grammar of the standard variety of English language.

On the other hand, Adetugbo (1980), Kachru (1982), Adekunle (1985) and Uzoezie (1992) belong to a school of thought that maintain that there is evidence of "Nigerianess" in the English of Nigerians. Another proponent of this reality is Jowitt (2012) in his preface (after looking at the whole synchronic system, the grammar, the sounds, and the vocabulary of Nigerian English) says I have a thesis; it is that Nigerian English is something real and identifiable.

Nwoke (2001) agrees with the possibility of an English variety in Nigeria as he says: "...given the role of English as an L2 in Nigeria, it is bound to be influenced by an L_1, and the entire cultural environment. Influences of environment and an L_1, on an L2 may not result in errors parse - it can result in new forms...."

The problem is that some Nigerians may apply unlimited freedom to bend the linguistic rules of the language. What is most times obtainable is a blend of the language and vernacular features or what is called transliteration. This gives rise to what Babatunde (2002) talks about in the variation the gainer, the standard, the loser.

Boadi, Grieve, and Nwankwo (1981) warn that "...it would be a colossal waste of resources if at the end of the process, people cannot communicate effectively with one another within and across national boundaries." Based on this, the idea of "Nigerian English" evolving within the ethno-linguistic setting is not without some grave implications.

Nwaegbe (1978) frowns at unlimited deviation from the Standard English and warns that:

> *We must not mutilate the English language merely because we want to create a Nigerian variant. If the idea we want to express is English in origin, then there is likely to be an English word for it. If we then coin for it an expression with a local flavour, that expression is Nigerian… not English - certainly not Nigerian English.*

Nwaegbe goes further to say that if we wish to indicate a Nigerian concept which has no English equivalent, then, an existing Nigerian expression can be used. As a result, okro, garri etc. to him are "legitimate Nigerianism".

Banjo (1995) shares the same fear with Nwaegbe when he says that any reckless decolonization of English

in Nigeria could result in English developing into an entirely new language intelligible only to Nigerians. One sticky point in the view of Banjo stated above is that of intelligibility. This is one angle advocates for Nigerian English fail to consider. They are more concerned with 'acceptability' and 'communicability' as the right basis for judging the standard of performance of the educated Nigerian speakers of English rather than the native speaker's performance. They seem to be ignorant of the fact that the terminal objective of foreign language teaching is a command of the spoken forms of the language just like French language. This command, presupposes "acceptable approximation to native pronunciation." When teaching and learning of English in Nigeria is done with this view in mind, the issue of development of an acceptable standard could be properly addressed.

Fadeyi (1997) opined that for a Nigerian child to be educated in the modern sense of the world, he requires a thorough command of English language. Now, what then can we hold on to as a thorough command of a language if the grammatical competence is neglected and the users' utterances become outright deviations from the norm?

Bamiteko (1994) warns against unintelligible use of English words, expressions or phonological variations in these words: "Caution should be taken so that our English words are used in a manner that mutual intelligibility would still be attainable with other people especially the English as first language users." Bamiteko here has good points because esoteric slang and deviant expressions characterize most Nigerian English, and their meanings are lost to the outside world.

As it regards intelligibility and acceptability of Nigerian English, we agree strongly with Okonkwo (1988) that:

> *The writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will not be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience.*

One empirical study of Nigerian slang was that by Oluikpe and Anesiudu (2006) and the outcome is the Dictionary of Nigerian English Slang. According to Oluikpe and Anesiudu (2006), "the dictionary is designed to serve two functions namely: to bridge the various communication gap, ... to serve a pedagogical function by providing a list of words and phrases which Nigerian speakers of English are not supposed to use in formal situations."

Where then lies the veracity of the claim of "national acceptability", "appropriateness", and "intelligibility" which some apostles of Nigerian English profess if the above scenario exposed by Oluikpe and Adesiudu still persists many decades after the official adoption of the English language as an official language in Nigeria?

This work will go further to x-ray some linguistic features of Nigerian English against that of Standard Variety and reveal the effects of their influences on the learners of English in Nigeria.

FEATURES OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH

These are certain peculiarities that characterize Nigerian English variant and distinguish it from other varieties of English in other countries. "These peculiarities of the socio-cultural derivations form the major features of Nigerian English usage," according to Onuigbo and Eyisi (2009). These features are evident in phonological, lexical, syntactic, slangy, and semantic shifts, including transliteration. They are what could be called 'Nigerianisms' in Nigerian English. "Nigerianism" according to Akindele and Adegbite (2005), may be defined as "any variety of English construction that reflects the phonology, structural, and semantics properties of a Nigerian language." That is to say that there are characteristics of Nigerian languages in such a variety which can also be classified as an interference type.

NIGERIAN ENGLISH PHONOLOGY

1. Insertion of vowel sounds between consonant clusters

Insertion of vowel sounds between clusters in the course of word articulation by adding an extraneous

phoneme where it should not occur. This occurs because many Nigerian languages like Igbo and Isoko do not have clusters; as a result, Nigerian English speakers insert vowels immediately after the production of consonant sounds, giving rise to the following:

Words	RP	NE
Christmas	/kristməs/	/kristimasi
Towel	/taʊəl /	/tɐwelu/
Ball	/bɔ:l /	/bɔ:lu/
Penalty	/penalti/	/penaliti/

Orthography

Orthography is used as the basis for pronunciation in Nigerian English. That is to say that the letters that make up a word are highly considered, resulting in symmetrical relationship between the letters and pronunciation of the word. That is not the case in Standard British English (SBE).
Examples:

Words	BE	NE
Comedian	/kəmi:diən/	/kɒmedian/
Ewe	/ju:/	/ewe/
Quay	/ki:/	/kwei/
Felix	/fi:liks/	/felisi/
Prefix	/pri:fiks/	/prefis/
Receipt	/risi:t/	/risi:pt/

Substitution of Phonemes

Substitution of phonemes is one of the deviant features of some Nigerian English usages. This comes as a result of the absence of some English sound segments in the vernacular languages of such Nigerian learners of English as a second language. Examples:

Sounds	Words	RP	NE
/ð/	Together	/tə'geðaʳ/	/tugeda/
/θ/	Teeth	/ti:θ/	/ti:ti/
/u:/	Pool	/pu:ɪ/	/puɪ/
/^/	Country	/'k^ntri/	/kɒntri/
/ŋ/	Singing	/'siŋIŋ/	/singin/
/ʒ/	Equation	/I'kwei3ən/	/Ikweʃɐn/

Loss of Glottal Fricative /h /

There is loss of glottal fricative /h/ in the pronunciation of words that begin with /h/ sound especially by the Yoruba people. That is to say that there is deletion of certain phonemes during pronunciation and consequently in writing. Examples:

Words	RP	NE	Words	RP	NE
Help	/help/	/elp/	House	/haʊs/	/aʊs/
How	/haʊ/	/aʊ/	Hello	/heləʊ/	/eloo/

Such people then, on the other way round, fix / h / where it should be absent in words, e.g: His for 'is', Hat for 'at', Hegg for 'egg', Hour for 'our', Hin for 'in', etc.

Wrong Placement of Stress.

Jowitt (1991) pinpoints these differences that are evident in the stress pattern of English words in

NE with the following:

RP	**NE**	**RP**	**NE**
conGRAtulate	congratuLATE	PERfume	perFUME
deVElopment	DEvelopment	CUcumber	cucuMBER

Non Recognition of Long Vowel Sounds

Nigerianism in Nigerian English at the unit of sound levels also occurs where the Nigerian English bilinguals are not aware of the distinctions between the vowel quality of long sounds and that of short sounds. Examples:

Words	**RP**	**NE**	**Words**	**RP**	**NE**
Seat	/si:t/	/sit/	Park	/Pa:k/	/pæk/
Need	/ni:d/	/nid/	Sport	/spɔ:t/	/spɒt/

Similarly, there are reduced vowel systems that result in substituting one sound for the other.

Examples:

Sound	**Word**	**RP**	**NE**	**Word**	**RP**	**NE**
/e/for /ei /	Say	/sei/	/se/	Make	/meik/	/mek/
/ʊ/for /əʊ/	Road	/rəʊd/	/rʊd/	Over	\əʊvəʳ/	/ʊvæ/
/i/for /i:/	Peter	/pi:tə/	/pita/	Reading	/ri:diŋ/	/ridin/

Consonants Elimination and Inclusion

This occurs where consonant sounds that should be pronounced are wrongly eliminated and those that should not be pronounced or should be silent are erroneously pronounced. Examples of elimination of consonant sounds:

Words	**RP**	**NE**	**Words**	**RP**	**NE**
Accident	/æksidənt/	/æsident/	Taxi	/tæksi/	/taizi/
Correct	/kə'rekt/	/kɐret/	Exam	/Igzæm/	/ezæm/
Six	/siks/	/sis/	Accent	/æksent/	/æsent/

Consonant inclusion occurs where there should be silent sounds. Examples:

Words	**RP**	**NE**	**Words**	**RP**	**NE**
Whore	/hɔ:r/	/wɔ:r/	Apostle	/əpɒsəl/	/æpɒstul/
Sword	/sɔ:d/	/swɔ:d/	Bomb	/bɒm/	/bɒmbu/
Castle	/kɑ:sᵊl/	/kæstul/	Handkerchief	/hæŋkətʃi:f/	/hændkætʃi:f/

The above underlined letters are not supposed to be phonetically realized during pronunciation.

Intonation

At the level of intonation, "Nigerian languages are syllable-timed unlike the stress-timed rhythmic characteristics of English," Akindele and Wale Adegbite (2005). That is to say that, Nigerian users of English make use of syllable-timed rhythm coupled with a reduced system of intonation.

From the points above, it is clear that Nigeria English phonology is to a large extent, different from the world standard variety. Jowitt (1991) describing the scenario regrets that the pupils unconsciously relied on MT model, as indeed many of their teachers, and assuming that there was a perfect correspondence between sound and spelling, they used orthography as their guide to pronunciation.

In line with Jowitt's point above, transference of rules guiding the speech sounds of a dominant language in a speech community to that of the sound system of a subordinate target language like English in Nigeria, results in phonemic interference as seen in some of the examples above.

NIGERIAN ENGLISH SYNTAX

Syntax or sentence construction is the way words are grouped together to form phrases and sentences. Syntax studies a sentence which is realized by "word order." Meaning is deduced from a sentence based on the word order. Examples:

(A)The boy slapped the girl.

(B) The girl slapped the boy.

The above expressions are different in meaning because of the word order of these lexical items even when their constituents are exactly the same.

Distortion of the correct structural pattern of the standard variety by some learners of English as a second language with a view to creating or adding "Nigerian flavour" to them is one major feature of Nigerian English. Examples of Nigerian English Syntax:

Nigerian English Expressions	**Standard English Expressions**
1. On my way *going* to the place....	1. On my way to the p l a c e . . . .
2. She jumped *from* frying pan to fire.	2. She jumped out of the frying pan and into fire.
3. *Which* class are you?	3. In what / which class are you?
4. *On* the long run . . .	4. In the long run . . . .
5. The man *has died*.	5. The man is dead.
6. Let's discuss *about* the issue.	6. Let's discuss the issue now.
7. Now voice *out* your opinion.	7. Voice your opinion.
8. She has *put to* bed.	8. She was delivered of a baby.
9. My *junior* sister is married.	9. My younger sister is married.
10. There is *go slow* everywhere.	10. There is traffic everywhere.

There are many more instances of these syntactically deviant expressions in Nigerian English.

NIGERIAN ENGLISH SLANG

According to Jowitt (1991), "slang forms part of the Nigerian English lexical indexical markers because they are part and parcel of language used anywhere in Nigeria."

Examples of slang used in Nigeria are:

Nigerian slangy words/ expressions	**Meanings**
1. Chase	To woo a woman.
2. Area boys	Social miscreants
3. Rain coat, bullet proof	Condom
4. Green	Twenty naira
5. White	Fifty naira
6. 5k	Five thousand
7. Father Christmas	A generous person

The above Nigerian English slang and many more others draw attention because of their confusing meanings with those of Standard English to L2 learners of English in Nigeria.

Nigerian English Lexis

The totality of the vocabulary stock of a language is its lexis. It is defined by Hudson (1980) as "the individual bits of a language." Nigerian English lexis could be said to have certain indexical markers that completely mark it out from the standard variety. Local coinages, extended or restricted meanings of Standard English words and expressions, loan words and expressions, and those derived from people,

are some of the indexical markers of Nigerian English lexis identified by Jowitt.
Examples of Nigerian English lexical variants:

Nigerian English lexis	Standard equivalent
Sorry	Be careful
Dupe (a fraudster)	someone who is duped
Dash	Gratis
Motor Park	Parking lot
Stand at my back	Stand behind me
Go with leg.	Go on foot.
Dis-virgined	Deflowered

NIGERIAN ENGLISH SEMANTICS

Semantics is the study of the meanings of sentence structures. Meaning is automatically affected if there is distortion in the choice of lexis, structure, use, and distributional properties of words in a sentence. Semantic shift and lots of extensions of meanings occur in Nigerian English because its users produce words and expressions that are semantically different from standard conventions.

Semantic Shift and Meanings

Examples of such are:

Words and Expressions as used in Nigeria	Standard British English
Hear: Do you *hear* Hausa?	Understand. Do you *understand* Hausa?
Lean: The illness made her *lean*.	Thin: The illness made her thin.
Off: Off the fan	Switch off: Switch off the fan.
Troubleshooter: Troublesome person.	A person employed to detect problems in a machine.
Round up: Round up and submit your papers.	Round off: Round off and submit your papers.

Social cultural influence is equally manifested in the addition of new meanings to some original English words, that is, the extension of the semantic boundaries of existing words Ofoegbu (2015). These social influences can be noted in the following semantic range of words that their meanings are shifted, extended, or generalized in Nigerian English: Chase (to toast, to woo a lady). Corner (a diversion along the road). Escort (to see a guest off), etc.

ELEMENTS OF TRANSLITERATION IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH

In transliteration, expressions are directly transliterated into English with obvious or conspicuous traces of the linguistic traits of the vernacular language. That is, the structure of Nigerian languages is directly translated into the L_2. Examples:

Nigerian English Expressions	Standard English Expressions
1. His head is not correct.	He is mad/daft.
2. I will go with leg.	I will go on foot.
3. Please beg him for me.	Help me plead with him.
4. Eat your morning food.	Eat your breakfast.
5. Be my eye at the meeting.	Represent me at the meeting.

From the examples above, transliteration is a clear indication of interference factor that is the aftermath of languages in contact. Native speakers of English or other users of English outside Nigerian environment are bound to be cut off from communication anytime these lexical items are used in the above sense.

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IMPLICATIONS OF THE FEATURES OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH ON LEARNERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

L_2 learners of English end up expanding or deleting some parts of the Standard English idioms without boundary in their attempt to simply "Nigerianize" them, thereby, doing more harm to the already distorted language. Examples are in "There are prophets and there are prophets...," "nooks and crannies," "proof of the pudding is in the eating." There is an unnecessary expansion in the first expression while 'crannies and proof are interchanged with 'corners and taste' respectively with no justification because the meanings are still retained, so the deletion and expansion are quite unnecessary. Idioms should remain as they are used by the native speakers and not subjected to any kind of distortion syntactically like what is obtainable in Nigerian English. These deletions and extensions of meanings manifest in new expressions day by day. Continuation of transliteration is another syntactically deviant sentence construction the L_2 learners of English copy as a result of one of the implications of the features of Nigerian English they learned from friends, enlightened adults, and even from some teachers everyday. Some examples are "*wait* me,", "Long time *no* see", "I will *do* my hair at the *saloon*," "Don't eat your school fees," etc. These wrong constructions are the results of the influence of the features of Nigerian English on L_2 learners of English in Nigeria.

The disparity between the sound system of English and that of the indigenous languages makes Nigerian learners of English to interpret the English sound system in their own indigenous languages daily. This result in the confusion of the following pairs of words and each pair takes the same pronunciation:

Fool:	/fuːl/	full:	/fʊl/	shop:	/ʃɒp/ chop: /tʃɒp/
Course:	/kɔːs/	curse:	/kɜːs/	Spot:	/spɒt/ sport: /spɔːt/
Through:	/θruː/	true:	/truː/	thank:	/θæŋk/ tank: /tæŋk/

Furthermore, there are more vowel sounds in English language than there are in each indigenous language of Nigeria. Nigeria L_2 learners of English therefore substitute the unavailable English sounds with those in their indigenous languages. The same is obtainable in consonant sounds. This keeps the L_2 learners far from attaining the Standard Variety.

A teacher who has a good stock of the Standard English and actually speaks it will help to enhance good performance of the learners. But a teacher that has been greatly influenced by the Nigerian English or a proponent of it will negatively affect the learning of the Standard British English, thereby, doing more harm than good as the learner is bound to swallow hook line and sinker whatever the teacher taught him. To guard against this negative influence, capable hands that are exposed to the native speakers or their learning materials should teach the language.

In most Nigerian languages, stress does not feature, what is obtainable is the regular spacing of syllables, while stress is deployed in both individual words and in the sentences in English at roughly regular intervals. L_2 learners of English are faced with great challenge of dropping the regular spacing of syllable to learn the use of stress as English language demands. Nigerian English features do not facilitate the learning of what English language demands in stress.

Another implication of Nigerian English as regards its syntax is that a breach of the principles outlined by standard variety will create a world of disorder which will affect communication. What makes the utterance of a mad man incomprehensible is that he flouts the syntactic principles of word ordering-SYNTAX. The syntactic distortions of English expressions by some Nigerian users often results to distortions of the meaning of these expressions.

As regards its lexis, there are items that exist in standard variety which have been assigned with completely different meanings in NE, resulting in "semantic contrast." Examples are *troubleshooter, dupe, escort,* green, chase, etc. that exist in standard variety but are in contrast with the different meanings Nigerian users ascribe to them, tearing the L_2 learner apart. For example, while a troubleshooter detects problems in a machine in Standard English, he foments trouble for some Nigerian English users.

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Still on lexis, there are cases of lexical inventions like Taiwan (for inferior products), Belgium (for a second hand materials), and Okada (for a commercial motorcyclist). These inventions or semantic contrasts will constitute gross linguistic barriers when international communication takes place. Native speakers of English or other users of English outside the Nigerian environment are bound to be cut off from communication wherever these lexical items are used in the above senses. Nigerian users of English should avoid "rule bending creativity" as Baldeh (1990) calls it. In any language, once the rules are bent, a linguistic anomaly is created and comprehensibility is automatically hampered.

At the phonemic level, there is variation in both vowels and consonants of the English speech sounds and those of our indigenous languages. The implication is that Nigerian speakers have difficulty in articulating diphthongs in words like 'career 'and 'open.' To circumvent these difficulties, such Nigerian speakers delete and subsequently substitute these segments with those available in the native language, resulting in pronouncing words different in meanings with the intended as in 'Tank' for 'thank.' 'Luke' for 'look,' 'die' for 'thy', etc. At such, communication is faulty when international communication is involved as the L_2 learner must be misunderstood.

Another phonological implication of Nigerian English usage is that there is disparity between NE and the standard variety because of the inability of NE users to differentiate between rising and falling intonation. This culminates in a certain speech problem which makes comprehensibility sometimes very difficult because intonation adds meaning to sentences when correctly used.

The emergence of slangy expressions poses a lot of challenges to the learner because some of such expressions only last for a period in some cases and retained to be accepted into the standard usage in some cases. A learner that is conversant or acquainted with some of those slangy expressions might be confused as to which could be used and which could not be used in formal contexts. What is however worrisome is the common use of slang by some educated Nigerians even to their subordinates. Some slang users use it even in strictly formal situations, and the implication is that intelligible communication is relatively difficult as it could be understood only by those in the same circle of environment, class, profession or academy.

Finally, distortion at all levels of lexis and syntax invariably affect meaning (semantics) in the communicative process. The peculiar features of some Nigerian English usage constitute this problem. For example 'dupe', 'escort' and 'lean' have different meanings in Nigerian English usage which contrasts with the standard variety. Changes such as these will further complicate the linguistic anomaly arising from some Nigerians' attempt to 'domesticate' the English language, in other words hampering effective communication within and across the country.

Summary

The paper through review of some literary works, revealed that a variety of English exist in Nigeria with its peculiarities from the angles of lexis, syntax, slang, phonology, transliteration, and semantics. These peculiarities or features of NE contrast with that of the Standard English, giving it a picture of "more of a deviation." This is because of the implications of the Nigerian English which complicate effective communication even within Nigerians who are not aware of the meanings ascribed to some words by people from different localities let alone people from outside the country. The mutual unintelligibility arising from the three major ethno-linguistic groups in Nigeria cannot be over-stated according to Jowitts' glossary of the three divergent varieties which constitute his acclaimed popular Nigerian English.

Since the disparities of this magnitude exist in the English usages of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria about one and a half centuries after its official adoption and that of the issue of codification or standardization still lingers, then it is premature to say that Nigerian English usage is a complete or fully developed variety. At this juncture, it is not entirely wrong to say that the linguistic features of Nigerian English negatively affect the learning of the English language in Nigeria.

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Recommendations

1. To ensure correctness, near native-like competence and international intelligibility, certificate and speaking-wise qualified teachers should be employed. In other words, the criteria for employment should not only be certificate based, but practically observed from their English language usage. This will also ensure that the language skills in English are built on strong and trusted foundation.
2. There is need for adequate exposure, especially at the early stages of learning to standard spoken English. It could be through the VCDs, interactions with the native speakers or education- based travels to their countries as is the case with French language.
3. Provisions should be made for teachers of English language by Nigerian governments to attend seminars, workshops, and conferences in the native speakers' countries to acquire current knowledge and skills that will enable them meet up with the challenges and innovations in English language methodology.
4. Those aspects of English as such outlined in this paper that pose problems for Nigerian learners of English should be the focus of curriculum planners so that those areas could be squarely addressed and tackled.
5. Nigerian learners of English should cultivate the habit of practicing the attainment of the actual phonological processes of the Standard English, instead of freely substituting the sounds with the ones obtainable in their own indigenous languages.
6. Audio visuals materials should actually be used in teaching and learning and not just the camouflage we have in the name of language laboratories in schools for perfect transmissions of sounds by the teachers and exact interpretations and learning by the learners.

Conclusion

The major concern of this research was to evaluate the implications of the features of Nigerian English on the learners of English language in Nigeria. It has explicitly discussed the concept of Nigerian English from the practical usage perspective at different levels: phonology, syntax, lexis, semantics and their deviations from the standard variety. These deviations have caused distortion in learning the standard variety. English language being a world language and its relevance and role as an official language in Nigeria and a means of her communication at the international level, informed the need for a critical evaluation of the implications of the Nigerian English variant to the learning of English language, hence, the motivation behind this work. The fact remains that deviations are inevitable but we must work towards attaining an acceptable degree of deviations while choosing our 'standard'. It is very obvious that to insist on the British standard is to sacrifice local communication, and to insist on local form is to deviate totally from the international standard. That is to say that the deviation should not be so much as to bring about a total lack of international intelligibility, which will then amount to different languages. This paper submits that learners of the English language should uphold the variety of English that facilitates communication across international boundaries and enhance the development of the country and its citizens. Nevertheless, if there be need for Nigerian English as a means of inter-ethnic communication then it must be codified and standardized for the international intelligibility.

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