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+234 (0) 803 633 1942

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## **EDITORIAL**

Every academic environment is sustained by learning through rigorous methods. Research is one and the focal point for assessment. A serious member of the academic community is measured by the quality and number of academic articles.

In spite of the desire to acquire many research reports, this edition has insisted on standards and quality. It is important to note that many articles have been rejected for not meeting our requirements.

The first and most obvious task of our journal is to provide a level playing field for researchers all over the globe in language-related disciplines, which is the vehicle for conveying knowledge. In this edition, thirty-one (31) articles have undergone academic scrutiny from our blind reviewers.

To our esteemed contributors and readers, thought-provoking articles are expected and we are ready to publish them in the next volume.

**PROFESSOR ALI AMADI ALKALI,**

Editor-in-Chief,

JAJOLLS: Jalingo Journal of Linguistics and Literary Studies,

Department of Languages and Linguistics,

Taraba State University, Jalingo.

## **FOR READERS**

This volume of JAJOLLS (Jalingo Journal of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Volume 8, Issue 1) adheres to the guidelines of the current edition of the American Psychological Association and Modern Language Association (APA & MLA) Publication Manual for editing and formatting the featured papers. Renowned for its clear and user-friendly citation system, the APA/MLA manual also provides valuable guidance on selecting appropriate headings, tables, figures, language, tone, and reference styles, resulting in compelling, concise, and refined scholarly presentations. Furthermore, it serves as a comprehensive resource for the Editorial Board, navigating the entire scholarly writing process, from authorship ethics to research reporting and publication best practices.

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The “Jalingo Journal of Linguistics and Literary Studies” (JAJOLLS) is a publication of the Department of Language and Linguistics, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. This journal publishes reports in relation to all aspects of linguistics, literary and cultural studies.

### **Manuscripts Submission**

Three hard copies of the article with text, charts, tables, figures, plates or any other original illustration should be sent to the editor-in-chief JAJOLLS, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Taraba State Nigeria. Submission should either be in English, French, Hausa, or Arabic languages. Articles should be typed in double line spacing with a wide margin on each side only on A4 sized paper not exceeding 15 pages including abstract with not more than 6-7 keywords. Articles are to be submitted with Five Thousand Naira (N5,000) assessment and handling charges. By submitting an article to JAJOLLS, the author(s) agree that the exclusive rights to produce and distribute the articles to the publisher.

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All correspondences on editorial matters should be sent to:

### **Sumayyat Ibrahim Gambo (Ph.D.)**

Department of Languages & Linguistics

Taraba State University

P.M.B. 1167, Jalingo, Taraba State

**Email:** jajolls022@gmail.com

**Phone:** +234803132245, +2348182312149 & +2349045724091

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<sup>1</sup> Zama Danladi Tanko & <sup>2</sup>Jennifer Harrison

<sup>1&2</sup>Department of English, College of Education Zing, Taraba State, Jalingo.

## New Englishes: A Sociolinguistic Perspective to the Nigerian Situation

### Abstract

Over the centuries, English has continued to have intense linguistic exchanges with other European and non-European languages. Coupled with the need for global communications, English varieties have developed all over the world. Today, English is spoken as first language in Great Britain, Ireland, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. English has spread much to the world as a second language with the language being used both internally and internationally. New varieties of English have emerged in societies where English has a multilingual status of a second language. Nigeria like most other territories of the British Empire uses English as a language of official business, law, commerce, instruction at all strata of education, air traffic, etc. This paper contends that the diversity of the many varieties all over the world has led to what is now characterized as New Englishes. One of the major aims of this paper is to put the concept of New Englishes into perspective, chart a course for understanding the nature of the development of New Englishes in their contexts and examine the relationship between social interaction and English language in the Nigerian context. The paper compares the syntactic structure, vocabulary and phonology of some words in standard British English usage and Nigerian English (NigE) to buttress the arguments for and against the New Englishes.

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**Corresponding Author:** Tanko, Z. D. **Email:** [tzamatk@gmail.com](mailto:tzamatk@gmail.com)

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### 1.1 Introduction

The rapid spread of English language across the globe triggers nagging question as to how to characterize the language and which standard to adopt worldwide. Rajagopalan (111) argues in favour of what he calls 'a single monochrome form...' That is, a single standard form of English spoken round the world. Kumaravadivelu (231) on the other hand holds that because of the phenomenal growth of the English language, a number of native varieties have developed whose speakers use it as a native language. In addition to the native varieties, he observes that, non-native varieties have developed making English to attain a 'point of pluralising it as world Englishes' and calls for recognition of these varieties, because as he argues, they are 'rule-governed: conditioned by phonological, syntactic, semantic and rhetorical rules.' From the foregoing, it is obvious that advocating for the teaching of Standard English worldwide which although is desirable, in practice remains a daunting task.

A historical thesis (or to historicise) is important to explain the present, because the issues which form the kernel for this treatise evolve around the facts of history. However, it is

pertinent to point out that the detailed history of the phenomenal growth of English is well documented. Pennycook (8), Wardhaugh, (31) and Kachru (9) assert that English is the most widely taught, read, and spoken language that the world has ever known. Gnutzmann (9), for instance, traces the spread of English to the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the English started ‘discovering new territories’ and the ‘conquest of territories’ in Asia and Africa. Jenkins (5) characterizes the process as ‘dispersals, or Diasporas of English to the new world or the conquered territories. Kachru (11) opines that ‘whatever the reasons for the earlier spread of English, we should now consider it a positive development in the twentieth-century world context....’ This is so because aside the ‘dispersals’, other exigencies such as the advances made in science and technology have also added impetus to the rapid spread of English. In addition, within the period, two major events which changed the course of the history of English language occurred: the process of standardisation was set in motion and the emergence of two strands of variety: native and non-native varieties. Gnutzmann (11) holds that the native variety is used in Britain and the ‘new territories’ that were discovered, while the non- native variety is spoken in the ‘conquered’ territories, and beyond. English spoken Russia, France, Germany and others.

## 2.1 Standard English

Halliday (2000, p.)?? posits that a ‘standard language is a tongue which has moved beyond its region to become “national.” From a sociolinguistic point of view, Wardhaugh (29) refers to standardisation as the ‘process by which a language has been codified in some way.’ Amongst others, he holds that, such things as ‘grammars, spellings books, and dictionaries, and possibly literature’ are basic. However, it is pertinent to note that the existence of a standard (H-high) form of a language does not exclude the existence of low (L- low) forms called regional standards or dialects. To lend credence to this assertion Cheshire (7) says that even in countries where English is a native language, ‘a range of associated local dialects’ exist and insists that despite the fact that UK by orientation is mono-linguistic it has ‘always been multilingual’.

Standard English according to Yule mono-lingual (29) can be described as the variety of English ‘which has been subjected to the processes of standardisation’ which among others include selection, codification, elaboration of function and stabilisation. He argues that Standard English is but one of the varieties except that it is the prestigious variety associated with educated people and taught to non-native learners. In a similar vein, Jenkins (29) contends that standard language is ‘that variety of a language which is considered to be the norm.’ It is not surprising that the standard variety is used for educational purposes and as a benchmark against which other varieties of same language are measured. Widdowson (163) sees Standard English as ‘a written variety mainly designed for institutional purposes (education, administration, business and so on).’ Davies (177), Crystal (24) and Jenkins (31), in lending credence to the sociological value of Standard English, contend that it is the prerogative of the educated class. In other words, the standard variety of any language is determined by social factors rather purely linguistic considerations. Similarly, Holmes (137) shares this view in asserting that ‘standard English is a social dialect.’ In other words, in linguistic terms Standard English is the norm; it is the benchmark, the sine quo nun upon which all other regional varieties take their bearings. However, when it comes to the social values, no one variety is inferior to the other. Quirk (6) distinguishes between two varieties of English: native and non-native. According to him, the native variety is further subdivided into two: ‘institutionalised and non-institutionalised.’ The institutionalised variety is described as the form that is ‘fully described and with defined standards observed by institutions of state’. The non-native varieties are generally non- institutionalised. Consequently, they do not possess defined standards which are recognised by institutions of state. However, as Rajagopalan (112) contends, the perception that the standard variety is the ‘ultimate for the second language learner’ and consequently the parameter by which correctness is measured, no longer holds sway. This may be explained in

part by the position held by Gnutzmann and Intemann (162), that varieties are ‘social constructs’ and their existence is subject to the way the speech community perceives them. Sociolinguistically speaking then, it does not always follow that, the linguist who holds an ‘endonormative’ view would prescribe standard for a speech community which is guided by ‘ethnopolitical / sociocultural’ realities.

In addition to language being seen as a social construct, in a globalised world where communication has grown beyond the traditional (restricted) sense of the concept, a number of scholars have challenged the rather narrow view, that non-native learners “secondary user(s)” often use the language to communicate with members within their immediate community. The issue at stake here is that, in a globalised world, communication is no longer restricted to interlocutors within one’s immediate community. People interact for a number of reasons on the internet and such interactions could be written and formal. For instance, it is public knowledge that multinational organisations rely on online communication as a means of information dissemination for the day to day running of their activities in countries where English may not necessarily be a native language. So it is crystal clear that people who learn English even in non-native environments, do so for reasons beyond intra-national communication. Consequently, the need for international intelligibility is now more relevant than ever before.

## **2.2 Varieties of English**

Wardhaugh (31), commenting on the existence of varieties of English holds that the codification of Standard English has made the grammar and vocabulary of English ‘much the same everywhere in the world’ that even where variation exists, it is ‘really quite minor, being differences of “flavour” rather than of “substance”.’ Holding tenaciously to his view, he concludes that many of the dialects in ‘England and Scotland have lost much of their vigor.’ When the standard variety becomes supra-dialectal, it moves beyond its region to become national. Kachru and Nelson (13) describe the global position of English in what they call ‘three concentric circles’: the ‘inner circle’, the ‘outer circle’ and the ‘expanding circle.’ The inner circle consists of varieties resulting from what Jenkins (5) calls ‘the first dispersals or diasporas’: the American, Australian and New Zealandan varieties which have undergone standardisation, but in some respects slightly different from the British Standard English. The outer circle are made up of countries that have gone through some form of colonisation by the British also referred to as ‘the second dispersals or diasporas,’ and as a result, English has a long tradition of ‘institutionalised functions and standing’ in education, administration, communication and so on. In this category are countries like Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Zambia, South Africa, Bangladesh, and Ghana. The third and final category is the ‘expanding circle’ comprising of countries where English plays a number of roles and it is studied for ‘more specific purposes’. In this category are countries like China, Japan, Korea, Eastern Europe, Indonesia, Iran and others (Kachru and Nelson, 13).

The distinction drawn above between native and non-native users are rather fuzzy and difficult because as Jenkins (17) argues, it is based on ‘geography and genetics’. People use English for a multiplicity of reasons including social communication with others within their own immediate community and occasionally with members of other communities who may or may not include native speakers. Given the fact that, the model is based on geographical and genetic factors, it does not adequately define native speakers who may be deficient in ‘vocabulary and low grammatical competence while the reverse may be true of a non-native speaker’.

Gnutzmann (116) concedes the fact that ‘English is being increasingly used as a *lingua franca*’ in Europe and other parts of the world, she submits that ‘detaching communication in an international context entirely from the standard variety of English and its associated cultures seems problematic’. The problems include among others ‘pedagogical’ as well as ‘political.’

By communication in a context like this, one means essentially written communication, although oral communication cannot in its entirety be ruled out. She points out that both in the context of English as a lingua franca as well as English as a Foreign Language, the standard variety should act as a 'linguistic model.'

To add my voice to the argument, the world is fast changing (if it has not changed) into a global village resulting from scientific and technological breakthroughs in the last twenty years. Consequently, the walls that had hitherto served as barriers to international communication are crumbling like a pack of cards. Among young speakers of English, chatting on the net and text messaging are novel and the order of the day. Language itself is in a state of flux: it is dynamic not fixed. We all know that relexification is an important component of any growing language and especially the type being witnessed among young speakers of English across the world. To my thinking, once relexification ceases in a language, it goes without saying that it is drifting towards its death since it cannot adequately account for changes that occur in the physical and social environments. But be that as it may, there is yet a variety which one can point to as a substitute to the standard variety as a medium of communication across the globe. Styles are not culture-specific in the same way accents are not region-specific but individual idiosyncrasies. Consequently, I submit that for want of an immediate alternative, Standard English should continue to be taught worldwide.

### **2.3 The status of English in Nigeria**

There is hardly any country in the world in which there is no language question. In a country where the language orientation is monolingual, the dominant language problem may be regional or social dialects, or on the other hand, if the orientation is multilingual, the problem is compounded because of the need to define the status or the role assigned to each language (Bamgbose, 1991). This may be by way of assigning an official status to one or some of the languages as the lingua franca and others as regional languages as the case may be. It is in public knowledge that in a multilingual society like Nigeria and coupled with its colonial experience, English naturally becomes and still a language of wider communication and the dominant language. With the adoption of English as the official language of state; Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa become regional languages. Thus, English has become the supra-language widely used throughout the country by the most powerful groups and educated people. Consequently, people who desire to enjoy socioeconomic mobility must of necessity learn the Standard English as it is imposed on them as the parameter for inclusiveness.

Essentially, in Nigeria, English is the official language or the lingua franca: it is the language of education, administration, the judiciary, military, broadcast, and international communication. The question that begs for answer is which standard to teach? Should and can the Standard English be taught in a country like Nigeria and other parts of the world?

To attempt an answer as to whether Standard English should or can be used worldwide and Nigeria in particular demands that the role of English in the context of the discussion be established. That English is the lingua franca in Nigeria is no longer in contention. In addition, that Nigeria does have a language policy is not in doubt. Banjo (229) says that at present what the country has is a 'national policy on language in education which assigns a role to English as the medium of instruction' within the national framework of education and which he, unfortunately, observes 'hardly operates'. It is important to note from the foregoing that a national policy on language in education is different from a status planning, in the sense that a national language naturally incorporates all other roles assigned to languages in the case of a multilingual society like Nigeria. For the moment, in the absence of a well-articulated policy and the appropriate framework for its implementation, there is not much that can be achieved. Without proper implementation, teaching of any language and most importantly English cannot be effectively carried out because of chronic lack of trained manpower and material resources.

Bamgbose (79) corroborates this by asserting that the effectiveness of any educational language policy requires ‘the availability of teachers.’

In addition, Halliday (412) holds that provided ‘the teachers are trained’ and the ‘materials are available’ in sufficient quantity, which often is not the case, standard English can be taught worldwide. He further observes that those who control the resources are not always willing to release them for the purposes of education. Finally, he submits that occasionally even when the various inputs are put in place, the learners may not be interested in learning. In these situations, it may be difficult to achieve the desired goal to teach Standard English worldwide.

### **3.1 Is there standard Nigeria English?**

A variety of a language is considered standard by members of the speech community. Although the process is that of the community, political and social considerations are brought to bear on what is accepted by the community as its standard. At present, three strands in Nigerian English are recognisable: Contact English (CE), Victorian English (VE) and School English (SE). The various strands are exhaustively discussed in Bamgbose (11-20). But suffice to say that the strands evolved with time to form what is today known as Standard Nigerian English. Essentially, what is known as Standard Nigerian English (hereafter referred to as NSE) like most other West African varieties, which Dolphyne (30), claims is an approximant of the standard British English, is the fact that it is nativised (Bamgbose, 20). He holds that the nativisation can be visible in ‘linguistic, pragmatic and creative uses of the language. As he has rightly pointed out, NSE has not been accepted in teaching and examinations; consequently, I should say that the fate of SNE then hangs on a balance except something is done to reverse the dangerous trend. However, like other varieties of World English’s, SNE has come of age as it used to express ‘unaccustomed concepts and modes of interaction’ intra- nationally and at the sub-regional level. Kujore (375) is quick to assert that the NSE or simply Nigerian English (NigE) which he refers to as a ‘local standard’ should not be encouraged and taught throughout the educational system. He encourages the teaching of Standard English at all levels of the educational system.

### **3.2 Syntactic Structure and Vocabulary**

The English language is the important tool for communication within Nigeria, as well as stands as the bridge that connects the country to other parts of the world. The British English, Patra (22) asserts, played a major role in the teaching of English as a foreign language in several countries. The NigE, however, has shown inclination for mutual unintelligibility resulting from the complex linguistic backgrounds in which the variety emerged, evident by undeniable lexical and grammatical features. Therefore, efforts by proponents for legitimisation of the Nigerian English is promptly rejected by those who insist on upholding Standard English. Of later, Salami (97) dismisses the Nigerian variety as erroneous, stating that ‘although one finds some differences between certain usages by some Nigerians and, for instance, British usage, most of such differences are due to mistakes of some sort’. Similarly, Jowitt (107) asserts that ‘there are powerful reasons for regarding the differences of syntax and morphology as errors which it should the goal of teaching to eradicate.’

Recently, a Nigerian man, Dr. Joe Abah, who supports the Premier League club, Arsenal, humorously posted on the popular social *Twitter* thus:

I have managed to get the number of Willian’s baba that has tied Arteta.

You want?

Dr. Abah then went on to throw a challenge, stating that “this tweet was written completely in English but I dare any non-Nigerian to say what it means” (@JoeAbah, April 9, 2021). The tweet was made as a result of the perception among Nigerian supporters of Arsenal that although Willian (an Arsenal player) was not playing well, the coach, Arteta continues to

field him for games. They believed that Willian, with the help of a marabout, had bewitched Arteta. The words used by Dr. Abah are easily recognisable to Nigerians and understood. They are, however, not understood by non-Nigerian speakers of English. This is evidently as a result of shift in meaning of words, particularly, *manage*, *number* and *tied*, and the addition of a borrowed word *baba*. In British English, *manage* is the ability to efficiently utilise resources. It, however, is used in the statement to refer to *able to*, signifying efforts, while *number* goes takes on an extended meaning to mean *phone number*, although the adjective *phone* is omitted. *Tied* is used in the statement to mean *bewitched*. Perhaps if the other three words had not taken different, and extended meanings, non-Nigerian speakers would have understood the tweet despite the inclusion of the borrowed word *baba*. The use of borrowed words are dependent on the context in which they are used. The word *baba* is traditionally used to mean ‘father’ or an important personality.

Change of meaning of words, as the case with *manage* and *tied* is a distinctive feature the Nigerian variety exudes. These point out features of what is referred to as Nigerian English remain opaque to speakers of other varieties around the world. It is pertinent to note, therefore, that teaching of the standard Nigerian English as a model will only continue to draw speakers farther from the Standard English thereby deferring intelligibility and effectively crumbling the bridge connecting country with other countries.

### 3.3 Phonological features

It is assumed that at the phonetic level, the Standard Nigerian there are differences in the realisations resulting from mother tongue transfers. NigE scholars who have drawn a parallel between the country's ethnic diversity and indigenous languages propose that the indigenous languages (L1) characteristically influence the speakers' English accent, thus resulting in distinct sub-varieties that correspond to the native tongues (Adeiza, 1). Jowitt (85) submits that the differences ‘are too great to make it realistic or useful to maintaining that the sounds produced by Nigerians as sounds of English constitute any one system.’ For instance, Hausa speakers find problem with articulation of /p/ and /f/ sounds. They realise /p/ as /f/. Yoruba speakers also realise /p/ as /kp/. These are clear cases mother tongue interference. This can also be seen in the articulation of the consonant /ŋ/, when it occurs at the end of a syllable carrying primary accent, many Nigerian English introduce a /g/ so that hang is pronounced /hannɡ/ (Jowitt, 80).

Similarly, Adeiza (3) reports that while no known indigenous Nigerian language has more than 10 vowels, the SBE has approximately 24. The non-differentiation of contrastive and central vowels in NigE varieties can be resolved by looking at the linguistic differences between the two varieties. Tiffens (16), as reported by Adeiza (2), conducts an intelligibility test on the recorded speeches of 24 educated English speakers (12 Hausa and 12 Yoruba L1). The participants were all freshmen at a federal university. Tiffens examines both segmental and the prosodic aspects of his data all at once, drawing from a wordlist, story passage and informal speech tokens. He concludes that “difficulty occurs mainly with central and open back vowels”, while Nutall (8) examines the patterns of Hausa English vowels, and reports widespread realisation of the short vowels as long and vice-versa in all prosodic contexts.

In language learning, what is perceived is different from what is produced. These differences come as a result of differences that exist between the target language and interlanguage as is the case with the Nigerian situation. Intelligibility of what is produced, however, is what matters. We suggest that further intelligibility tests should be carried out on the Nigerian English. Incorporation of features from indigenous languages have resulted to a phonological diversity which makes it difficult for the adoption of a single variety that should be taught as a model. Sirsa and Radford (14) posit that in community where English is L2, the instability results from transference of features from an L1, stating that ‘speakers are nearly

always exposed to the language after they have acquired one or more indigenous...languages.’ This is ‘in contrast with what occurs with other varieties of English’ (Costa, 16).

#### **4.1 Conclusion**

The English language has continued to play an important role in Nigeria. Aside its major roles as the language of administration, international politics, commerce and instructions in educational institutions, English contributes as a unifier in a country that is characterised by its linguistic and ethnic diversity. It is important to point out that English-speaking communities embrace universally and mutually intelligible language varieties that are able to accommodate their experiences and emotions when interacting with other speakers around the world (Crystal 2008). Such kind of consideration can be apt for speakers who English is mostly acquired as a second language. The incorporation of cultural “flavour” into the language help speakers to remain in touch with their past. However, the language must not lose the much needed intelligibility that keeps her speakers from dialoguing with other countries.

Features that permeate standard Nigerian English symbolise the peculiarity of the variety, reflecting the impact of local languages in a multilingual and multicultural setting. Transference of local features affect aspects of the language, especially its grammar and phonology. This is constituting the reason for lack of intelligibility with other varieties around the world. The distinctive features of the Nigerian variety, however, provide valuable resources for further studies, if it must be used in the educational setting. The goal for such study will be to understand and identify elements that characterises Nigerian English, the roles they play at every strata of the Nigerian nation, especially its use in the educational setting, and doing this while maintaining international identity.

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