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# Phonological Description of the Spoken English Forms of Educated Ikale and Ondo Speakers of Nigerian English

**Otuyemi, Taiwo Solomon**
Federal College of Education, Iwo
Department of General Studies in Education, Iwo, Osun State
otuyemits@fceiwo.edu.ng

&

**Akinmusayo, Sunday Daniel**
Faculty of Education
University of Ibadan (Lagos Campus)
dakinmusayo105@gmail.com

## Abstract

Attention of researchers has been drawn to the phonological description of the varieties of Nigerian English spoken by the three major ethnic groups such as the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. However, as Jowitt (1991:71) comments, there is little available information on the spoken English of Nigeria's smaller ethnic groups. Therefore, this study undertakes a phonological description of the spoken English forms of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English. Guided by Generative Phonology and Metrical Phonology as theoretical frameworks, one hundred educated subjects from each of Ikale and Ondo were used to collect data for the research. The subjects were made to read a prepared text containing the features being tested into a voice recorder. Their responses were transcribed and statistically analyzed. Both the voiced and the voiceless dental fricatives /ð/ and /θ/ still pose a challenge to the educated people from Ikale and Ondo dialectal groups. Most of the English vowels used by educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English in their spoken English are hardly approximated to those of Standard English; this low performance confirms the results of earlier

researches. It was observed by this research that the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English is at variance with Standard English in terms of stress placement, articulation of some vowels and consonant sounds. It was also found that the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo is characterized by spelling pronunciation. In conclusion, the outright absence of the English phonological process of assimilation from the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo English speakers has a telling effect on their phonological renditions; hence, breeding a version of Nigerian English which could either be seen as variation or deviation from Standard British English.
**Keywords:** Phonological Description, Spoken English, Generative Phonology, Metric Phonology and Nigerian English.

## Introduction

Language has often been identified as the most unique attribute of man and without language, there is no society. Language does not only bring meanings to the world, it also shapes ones cognitive processes such as perception, interpretation and judgement. William (1992) agrees that language embodies the spirit of people who speak it and that grammatical forms have influence on the development of ideas. Most languages have been influenced at one time or the other by contact, resulting in varying degrees of transfer of features from one to the other. The above is true of the existence of English and Nigerian English.

Languages all over the world are noted for variation pervasiveness. English for example, has so many variations such as British English, American English, Australian English, Nigerian English and so on. For instance, American English (AME) is noticeably different from the British English, and the speeches of these two groups in turn are distinct from Australian English. When speakers of a particular language speak different versions of the language, they are said to be speaking different dialects of the language.

There exist "geo-tribal" varieties of Nigerian English such as Yoruba English, Igbo English, Hausa English and so on. This is because the form of English used by one ethnic group is different from that used by the other. Each of these groups has sub-groups whose forms of English also vary. For instance, Yoruba has sub-groups such as Ikale, Ondo, Ijesa, Egba, Akure, Akoko, Ife, Oyo, and so on. The label 'Nigerian English' is not a single entity; it varies according to the languages and dialects of the speakers (Soneye, 2008:402). This then suggests that the forms of English used by these sub-groups are not unvarying, and the variation is usually more predominant in the phonological aspect than in other aspects of the English language.

Using educational parameter, Brosnaham (1958) and Banjo (1971) identify four varieties of Nigerian English, which they label as varieties I-IV. Brosnaham's variety I is the variety spoken by those without any formal education, variety II is spoken by those with only primary education, III by those who have completed secondary education, while variety IV is spoken by university graduates. In Banjo's classification, variety I is spoken by semi-literate people and those with primary education; it is claimed that this variety is highly influenced by the phonological system of the mother tongue. Variety II is spoken by secondary school leavers who do not show much influence of the sound system of the mother tongue, but who do not make phonemic distinctions. Variety III corresponds to the one used by university graduates, making phonemic distinctions and enjoying national and international acceptance and intelligibility. Then variety IV is similar to Standard British English, which is internationally acceptable but nationally unacceptable because it sounds affected.

**Nigerian English**

The **E**nglish language that came into Nigeria during the colonial era is no longer the same. It has lost a measure of its foreignness which led to the birth of another form of English that is popularly

called Nigerian English. According to Eka (2000: 15), it is that variety of world Englishes learnt, spoken and/or written by Nigerians who are born and/or brought up within the Nigerian environment. Adegbija (2004: 20) referred to this process of rebirth of English to suit the Nigerian environment as "domestication of English in Nigeria". In his words, "the term "domestication", in the context of English in Nigeria, connotes "home – grown", "made native", "adapted and tamed" to suit the Nigerian environment". Udofot traced the reason for the Nigerianization of the English Language to its co-existence with over 400 local languages in Nigeria as well as its use for expressing Nigerian experiences and situations (2000: 7). Standard Nigerian English, according to Ekpe (2010:150), 'may not sound like the English of the native speakers' because it has been modified to reflect Nigerians' socio-cultural norms. However, this must be a type that is fit for international communication.

**Standard English Sound System and Nigerian English Sound System**

The sound segments of English have a lot of differences from those of the Yoruba language. This is claimed to be the major reason why most Yoruba learners of English find it difficult to cope with the production of utterances in English. Ekpe (2010:100) observes that the difficulties faced by Yoruba and other Nigerian learners are caused by the transfer of mother tongue sound patterns to the sound system of English. Sounds such as /p/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʧ/, /ʃ/, /v/, /z/, /ʒ/, /ʌ/, /ə/, the long vowels and many diphthongs in English are non-existent in the Yoruba language and other Nigerian indigenous languages. So, many Yoruba speakers of English do not pronounce words in which these sounds appear correctly.

Adetugbo (2009: 179) establishes it that 'dialectal differentiation of a language spoken over a very wide geographical area' is one of the factors that have contributed to the emergence of Nigerian variety of English. For instance, the Yoruba language has /ʃ/ in its sound inventory, yet some Yoruba speakers are unable to

pronounce it. In Yoruba English and most other geo-tribal varieties of Nigerian English, words are pronounced exactly the way they are written.

Stress is another phonological feature of English claimed to pose a problem to educated Yoruba speakers of English. This is so because Yoruba is a tonal language in which every syllable is made prominent. This situation is not peculiar to Yoruba speakers of English alone; members of other geo-tribal groups in Nigeria who speak English are also affected by inability to apply stress as appropriate.

**Dialects of a Language**

Soneye (2008:402) sees dialect of a language as a variety which is distinguished from other varieties of the language at almost all linguistic levels. Ayeomoni (2011:125) submits that 'A dialect is a distinct form or variety of a language associated with a recognisable regional, social or ethnic group, different from other forms of the language by specific linguistic features such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar or any combination of these'. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:2), 'dialect is the label for a variety of a language according to region'. They are of the opinion that when the speakers of a language live remotely from one another for a long time as a result of geographical dispersion, their dialects become distinct, and these may result in different languages. This shows that contiguity is a factor which is likely to sustain intelligibility and reduce variation in a language. The Ikale dialect and the Ondo dialect have been identified as two of the dialects of the Yoruba language. These dialects are assumed to have significant influence on the spoken English of their speakers.

**Theoretical Framework**

Generative Phonology and Metrical Phonology were adopted for this study. Generative Phonology was used to explain some of the rules of Standard English phonology that educated Ikale and Ondo

speakers of Nigerian English observed or did not observe in their spoken English. Metrical Phonology was used to explain the stress patterns of the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English.

**Generative Phonology**

Generative Phonology developed from Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG). It was developed as a reaction against the earlier theory which concentrated attention solely on identifying sound segments and analysing the relationship between them. This model is not concerned solely about individual sound segments. It groups segments into classes. It embraces the morphophonemic level of analysis to explain the kind of relationships which exist between phonemes. Generative phonemists opine that the production of the phoneme in context undergoes certain phonological processes which are regulated by grammar and morphology.

This theory claims that many segments are related contrary to the classical model's refutation of such relationships. This makes it possible for generative phonology to be able to account for the relationships between sound segments. Rules were developed to regulate these relationships between phonemes to bring about such things as substitutions, deletions and insertions.

Chomsky and Halle (1968), in their *Sound Patterns of English*, recognise the phoneme, and hold the view that the phoneme is not an indivisible linguistic unit. The phoneme can be divided into its distinctive features, contrary to the view of classical phonemists who claim that it is an indivisible unit. Distinctive features, according to Hyman (1975), are the properties of a phoneme that make it different from other phonemes. Distinctive features are used to show phonological contrasts. Distinctive feature theory employs the mathematical plus (+) and minus (-) signs to indicate the presence and absence of a feature.

## Metrical Phonology

Metrical Phonology came as a reaction against some of the assumptions of the earlier theories. Attention is shifted from phonemic segments to larger units and their strength and weaknesses. Considerable attention is paid to the structure of the syllable and how weak and strong syllables among neighbouring syllables are patterned (Roach, 2009).

This model does not view stress as the property of individual syllabic segments. Rather, it aims to organise segments into groups of relative prominence on tree diagrams called metrical trees. To explain different levels of stress in an utterance, metrical grids are constructed. Metrical grids are used to show the hierarchy of stress in a word. The syllable with the highest prominence is assigned the highest number of asterisks. The number of grids corresponds to degree of stress. This phonological theory shows that stress is relational and hierarchical.

## Objectives of the Study

This research investigated in general terms the description of the forms of English spoken by educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English in order to single them out for a phonological analysis and propose a dialectal approach to the study of Nigerian English**.** To this end, an attempt was made to find out if educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English mispronounce speech sounds such as /p/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʧ/, /ʃ/, /v/, /z/, /i:/, /a:/, /ɔ:/, /ʌ/, /ə/, /ɜ:/ and certain diphthongs; find out whether educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English simplify consonant clusters in their English utterances; find out whether the spoken English forms of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English are characterised by spelling pronunciation as well as find out if educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English apply the main stress on words correctly.

For many years, the phonological description of the varieties of Nigerian English spoken by the three major ethnic groups such as Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo has taken the attention of many researchers and this has resulted in Yoruba English, Hausa English and Igbo English respectively. However, as Jowitt (1991:71) comments, there is little available information on the spoken English of Nigeria's smaller ethnic groups. The phonological features of the spoken English of Nigeria's dialectal groups are either just glossed over or not mentioned at all. The variety of Nigerian English termed Yoruba English has been sufficiently identified by scholars such as (Jowitt, 1991; Akinjobi, 2005; Soneye, 2008) and a host of others. Just as Nigerian English has variations, Yoruba English also tends to have dialectal variations which have not received sufficient mention in literature. This paucity of information about the spoken English of each dialectal group of the Yoruba tribe was the springboard for this study.

The forms of English spoken by educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English are two of those sub-varieties of Nigerian English that have either been trivialised or completely ignored and which features need to be singled out for a phonological analysis, showing how they too have contributed to the evolution of Nigerian English features since the standard varieties per se are not the sole contributors. Therefore, a phonological description of the spoken English forms of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English has been attempted in this study.

**Methodology**

A quantitative method was employed in carrying out the research. The responses of the subjects were transcribed, and statistically analysed. One hundred subjects from each of educated Ikale and Ondo dialectal group were used to collect data for the research. The subjects, who were graduates and undergraduates of some selected universities and colleges of education in south-west Nigeria were made to read a prepared text containing the features

being tested into a voice recorder. That their voices were being recorded was not hidden from them. However, the items being investigated were not disclosed to them. The text was prepared in such a way that the subjects could not realise the particular language items being tested; items not relevant to the study were also included in the text used in order to hide the items being tested from the subjects. This was done with a view to gaining access to their natural way of speaking the English language. This study accommodated only segmental features of phonology and one supra-segmental feature- stress. Also, only two dialectal groups – the educated Ikale and Ondo people were studied for this research. The other Yoruba dialectal groups were not considered in this research because of the time and complexity that would be involved in studying all of them at a time.

The data collected was statistically analysed based on the features perceived to be realised by the subjects. The frequency of occurrence of the features which approximated to Standard English and frequency of their non-occurrence were noted. Percentages of these were taken, and the features with the highest percentage were regarded as the usual features of the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA

### A. Consonant Sounds

**Table 1:**

| Words | RP Variants | Ikale Respondents' English Variants | Ondo Respondents' English Variants |
|---|---|---|---|
| /ʃ/ in '**sh**ine' | /ʃaɪn/ | /s/ 15%<br>/ʃ/ 85% | /s/ 10%<br>/ʃ/ 90% |
| /ʃ/ in 'cu**sh**ion' | /ˈkuʃən/ | /s/12%<br>/ʃ/ 88% | /s/8%<br>/ʃ/ 92% |
| /z/ in 'halves' | /ˈhaːvz/ | /s/ 50%<br>/z/ 50% | /s/ 50%<br>/z/ 50% |
| /z/ in 'comb**s**' | /kəʊmz/ | /s/ 81%<br>/z/19% | /s/ 88%<br>/z/12% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| /ʧ/ in 'Du**tch**like' | /ˈdʌʧlaik/ | /k/ 9%<br>/s/12%<br>/ʃ/ 50%<br>/ʧ/ 29% | /k/ 15%<br>/s/20%<br>/ʃ/ 0%<br>/ʧ/ 65% |
| /ʧ/ in 'coa**ch**' | /ˈkəʊʧ/ | /s/10%<br>/ʃ/ 48%<br>/ʧ/ 42% | /s/0%<br>/ʃ/ 10%<br>/ʧ/ 90% |
| /v/ in 'Ste**ph**en'<br>/v/ in '**v**eto' | /ˈsti:vən/<br>/ˈvi:təʊ/ | /f/ 7%<br>/v/93%<br>/f/8%<br>/v/92% | /f/ 0%<br>/v/ 100%<br>/f/6%<br>/v/94% |
| /θ/ in 'an**th**em' | /ˈæŋθəm/ | /t/ 97%<br>/θ/ 3% | /t/86%<br>/θ/14% |
| /θ/ in 'Ca**th**olic' | /ka:θəlɪk/ | /t/ 88%<br>/θ/ 12% | /t/79%<br>/θ/21% |
| /ð/ in 'fa**th**om' | /ðə/ | /t/ 100%<br>/ð/ 0% | /t/92%<br>/ð/8% |
| /p/ in 'o**p**en' | /ˈəʊpən/ | /kp/0%<br>/p/100% | /kp/0%<br>/p/100% |
| /p/ in 'ex**p**loded' | /ɪkˈspləʊdɪd/ | /kp/ 0%<br>/p/100% | /kp/0%<br>/p/100% |

From **table 1** where pronunciation of consonants /ʧ/, /ʃ/, /z/ /ʧ/, /v/, /f/, /θ/, /ð/ and /p/ were tested on words such as shine, combs, coach, anthem, Stephen, and Catholic. Both the Ikale and the Ondo production of the sounds was a little above average. The Ikale respondents recorded 55% correct production while 45% of them incorrectly pronounced the sound. Among the Ondo respondents, appropriate production of 64% was recorded while only 36% of them incorrectly pronounced the sounds. While many of the respondents from both Ikale and Ondo recorded high performance in almost all the sounds, the production of the voiceless dental fricative sound, /θ/ in the words "anthem" and "Catholic" and the voiced dental fricative, /ð/ in the word "fathom" recorded a very low performance as many of them pronounced the words inappropriately. For instance, 97% of the Ikale subjects incorrectly

pronounced the sound, /θ/ in the words "anthem" and "Catholic" while only 3% recorded appropriate production. Similarly, only 14% pronounced the words correctly among the Ondo respondents, while 86% recorded inappropriate production.

## B. Simplification of Consonant Clusters

**Table 2:**

| **A. Simplification of Consonant Clusters by Epenthesis** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Words | RP Variants | Ikale English Variants | Ondo English Variants |
| Wednesday | /ˈwɛnzdeɪ/ | /ˈwɛnezdeɪ/ 94%<br>/ˈwɛnzdeɪ/ 6% | /ˈwɛnezdeɪ/ 89%<br>/ˈwɛnzdeɪ/ 11% |
| Colonel | /ˈkɜːnəl/ | /ˈkɜlɔːnəl/ 98%<br>/ˈkɜːnəl/ 2% | /ˈkɜlɔːnəl/ 97%<br>/ˈkɜːnəl/ 3% |
| Driver | /ˈdraɪvə/ | /diraɪvə/ 0%<br>/ˈdraɪvə/ 100% | /diraɪvə/ 0%<br>/ˈdraɪvə/ 100% |
| Examination | /ɪgˌzæmɪˈneɪʃən/ | ɪgˌzæmɪˈneɪʃən/ 96%<br>ɪgˌzæmɪˈneɪʃən/ 4% | ɪgˌzæmɪˈneɪʃən/ 97%<br>ɪgˌzæmɪˈneɪʃən/ 3% |
| Music | /ˈmjuːzɪk/ | /ˈmjuːzɪk/ 95%<br>/ˈmjuːzɪk/ 5% | /ˈmjuːzɪk/ 90%<br>/ˈmjuːzɪk/ 10% |
| **B. Simplification of Consonant Clusters by Deletion** | | | |
| Excel | /ɪkˈsel/ | /eˈzel/ 93%<br>/ɪkˈsel/ 7% | /eˈzel/ 89%<br>/ɪkˈsel/ 11% |
| Explode | /ɪkˈspləʊd/ | /eˈspləʊd/ 90%<br>/ɪkˈspləʊd/ 10% | /eˈspləʊd/ 69%<br>/ɪkˈspləʊd/ 31% |
| Student | /ˈstjuːdnt/ | /ˈstuːdent/ 100%<br>/ˈstjuːdnt/ 0% | /ˈstuːdent/ 91%<br>/ˈstjuːdnt/ 9% |
| **C. Simplification of Consonant Clusters by Elision of /w/** | | | |
| Quality | /kwɒlɪti/ | /kɒlɪti/ 82/%<br>/kwɒlɪti/ 18% | /kɒlɪti/ 80%<br>/kwɒlɪti/ 20% |
| Quarter | /ˈkwɔːtə/ | /kɔːtə/ 3%<br>/ˈkʷwɔːtə/ 97% | /kɔːtə/ 31%<br>/ˈkʷwɔːtə/ 69% |
| Suite | /swiːt/ | /suːt/ 95%<br>/swiːt/ 5% | /suːt/ 93%<br>/swiːt/ 7% |

In **table 2**, simplification of consonant clusters by epenthesis has been observed to be at the lowest level of occurrence in the

English spoken by educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of English. In the words tested – Wednesday, colonel, music, the subjects from both the Ikale and the Ondo recorded high appropriate performance. They realized the British English variant 100% in all the instances. However, there is a sharp decrease in their performance in simplification of consonant clusters by deletion as the Ikale subjects recorded as high as 94% inappropriate production and a negligible 6% correct production. As for the Ondo counterparts, only 17% appropriate production was recorded while 83% was inappropriately produced.

**C. Vowel Sounds**

**Table 3:**

| Words | RP Variants | Ikale English Variants | Ondo English Variants |
|---|---|---|---|
| /ʌ/ in 'bl**oo**d' | /blʌd/ | /ɒ/ 58%<br>/u:/ 20%<br>/ʌ/ 22% | /ɒ/ 64%<br>/u:/ 0%<br>/ʌ/36% |
| /ʌ/ in 'fr**o**nt' | /frʌnt/ | /ɒ/87%<br>/ʌ/13% | /ɒ/97%<br>/ʌ/3% |
| /ʌ/ in 'cousin' | /kʌzn/ | /ɒ/ 76%<br>/ʌ/ 24% | /ɒ/ 55%<br>/ʌ/ 45% |
| /ɔ:/ in 'chord' | /kɔ:d/ | /ɔ/ 85%<br>/ɔ:/ 15% | /ɒ/ 78%<br>/ɔ:/ 22% |
| /ɔ:/ in 'raw' | /rɔ:/ | /ɔ/ 65%<br>/ɔ:/ 35% | /ɔ/ 60%<br>/ɔ:/ 40% |
| /a:/ in 'father' | /fa:ðə/ | /æ/ 96%<br>/a:/ 4% | /æ/ 94%<br>/a:/ 6% |
| /a:/ in 'far' | /fa:/ | /æ/ 68%<br>/a:/ 32% | /æ/ 70%<br>/a:/ 30% |
| /i:/ in 'Stephen' | /ˈsti:vən/ | /ɪ/ 73%<br>/i:/ 20%<br>/e/ 7% | /ɪ/ 68%<br>/i:/ 20%<br>/e/ 12% |

In **table 3**, vowel sounds were tested for appropriate pronunciation. The following words – blood, cousin, front, father, far, raw, chord, and Stephen were treated. Most of the English vowels used by the educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English in their spoken English are scarcely closed to those of Standard English.

For instance, letters "oo" in "blood" and "o" in "front" which should be pronounced as vowel number 10, /ʌ/ was realized by the Ikale respondents as /ɔ:/ 58%, as /u:/ 20% and as /ʌ/ 22% of the instances. The Ondo subjects realized the "oo" in "blood" and the "o" in "front" as /ɔ/ 64%, as /u:/ zero percent and as /ʌ/ 36%. The Ikale realized the "ou" in "cousin" as /ɔ/ 76% and as /ʌ/ 24%. However, the Ondo subjects realized the "ou" as /ɔ/ 55%, while 45% of them realized it as /ʌ/. The generally low performance of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of English in the production of English vowels confirms the results of earlier researches.

**D. Spelling Pronunciation**

**Table 4:**

| Words | RP Variants | Ikale English Variants | Ondo English Variants |
|---|---|---|---|
| 'sw' in '**sw**ord' | /sɔ:d/ | /sw/ 90%<br>/s/ 10% | /sw/ 71%<br>/s/ 29% |
| 'eo' in 'G**eo**ffrey' | /ˈʤefrɪ/ | /eo/ 25%<br>/ɒ/ 48%<br>/e/ 27% | /eo/ 33%<br>/ɒ/ 35%<br>/e/ 32% |
| 'ch' in '**ch**aos' | /ˈkeɪɒs/ | /ʃ 28%<br>/s/ 5%<br>/k/ 67% | /ʃ/ 38%<br>/k/ 62% |
| 'ed' in 'park**ed**' | /pa:kt/ | /d/76%<br>/t/24% | /d/ 62%<br>/t/ 38% |
| 'e' in 'stat**e**d' | /ˈsteitɪd/ | /e/ 75%<br>/ɪ/ 25% | /e/ 65%<br>/ɪ/ 35% |
| 'mb' in 'co**mb**s' | /kɒmz/ | /mb/67%<br>/m/ 33% | /mb/ 69%<br>/m/ 31% |
| 'dne' in We**dnes**day' /ˈwɛnzdeɪ/ | //ˈwɛnzdeɪ/ | /dne/ 86%<br>/n/ 14% | /dne/ 84%<br>/n/ 16% |
| 'st' in 'has**t**en' | /ˈheisn/ | /st/ 92%<br>/s/ 8% | /st/ 90%<br>/s/ 10% |
| 'ph' in 'she**ph**erd' | /ˈʃepəd/ | /f/ 23%<br>/p/ 77% | //f/ 12%<br>/p/ 88% |

**Table 4** focuses on spelling pronunciation. The following items were analyzed .They include "sword, Geoffrey, chaos, parked, combs, hasten, shepherd, Wednesday etc. It was observed that

spelling pronunciation was found on a large scale as many of the subjects did not correctly pronounce the words presented to them. Among the Ikale, a total of 32% correctly pronounced the words presented to them, while 68% of them mispronounced them. The Ondo subjects had 38% correct production of the words while 62% of them mispronounced the words. This confirms that the spoken English of most educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of English has a tendency to be informed by spelling pronunciation. Words tend to be pronounced as they are cued by spelling in the English spoken by most educated Ikale and Ondo people. For example, in 'sword', the first two letters, 'sw' should be realized as a single sound, which is the voiceless alveolar fricative, /s/. But the Ikale subjects pronounced them as /sw/ 90% and as /s/ 10%, while their Ondo counterparts realized them as /sw/ 71% and as /s/ 29%. Also, the three letters, 'dne' in 'Wednesday' are to be produced as the voiced alveolar nasal, /n/. However, the Ikale subjects pronounced them as /dne/ 86% and as /n/14%, while the Ondo subjects realized them as /dne/ 84% and as /n/ 16%.

**Stress**

'Helen', 'Susan', 'businesswomen', 'bathroom', 'aeroplane', 'kerosene', 'telephone', 'sitting-room', 'occupied', 'capitalism' and 'nationalism' should all receive the main stress on the first syllable. However, the Ikale subjects placed the primary stress on the words as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| He-LEN 70% | HE-len 30% |
| Su-SAN 43% | SU-san 57% |
| businessWOmen 70% | BUsinesswomen 30% |
| bathROOM 77% | BATHroom 23% |
| aeroPLANE 67% | AEroplane 33% |
| keroSENE 93% | KErosene 7% |
| telePHONE 83% | TElephone 17% |
| sitting-ROOM 47% | SITting-room 53% |
| occuPIED 73% | OCcupied 27% |
| capiTAlism 93% | CApitalism 7% |

nationAlism 97% NAtionalism 3%

The Ondo subjects' responses are analysed as follows:

He-LEN 40% HE-len 60%
Su-SAN 46% SU-san 54%
businessWOmen 14% BUsinesswomen 86%
bathROOM 66% BATHroom 34%
aeroPLANE 89% AEroplane 11%
keroSENE 100% KErosene 0%
teLEsphone 90% TElephone 10%
sitting-ROOM 37% SITting-room 63%
occuPIED 54% OCcupied 46%
capiTAlism 100% CApitalism 0%
nationAlism 100% NAtionalism 0%

'Establish', 'distinguished', 'investigate' and 'congratulate' are stressed on the second syllable in the RP. The words were stressed by the Ikale subjects as follows:

estaBLISH 70% Establish 3% eSTAblish 27%
distinGUISHED 33% DIstinguished 7% diSTINguished 60%
investiGATE 87% INvestigate 3% inVEStigate 10%
congratuLATE 80% CONgratulate 0% conGRAtulate 20%

The Ondo subjects, in their own case, stressed the words as follows:

estaBLISH 43% Establish 0% eSTAblish 57%
distinGUISHED 23% DIstinguished 0% diSTINguished 77%
investiGATE 91% INvestigate 0% inVEStigate 9%
congratuLATE 100% CONgratulate 0% conGRAtulate 0%

**Overall Performance of the Subjects**

**Table 5**

| Ikale English Variants | Ondo English Variants |
|---|---|
| **A. Consonant Sounds** | **A. Consonant Sounds** |
| Appropriate Production(AP)-55% | Appropriate Production(AP)-64.% |
| Inappropriate Production(IP)-45.% | Inappropriate Production(IP)-36% |

| | |
|---|---|
| **B. Simplification of Consonant Clusters by Epenthesis**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)-100%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-Nil | **B. Simplification of Consonant Clusters by Epenthesis**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)- 100%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-Nil |
| **C. Simplification of Consonant Clusters by Deletion**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)-6%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-94% | **C.Simplification of Consonant Clusters by Deletion**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)-17%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-83% |
| **D. Vowel Sounds**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)-25%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-75% | **D. Vowel Sounds**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)-31%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-69% |
| **E. Spelling Pronunciation**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)-32%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-68% | **E. Spelling Pronunciation**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)-38%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-62% |
| **F. Main Stress Placement**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)-45%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-55% | **F. Main Stress Placement**<br>Appropriate Production(AP)-48%<br>Inappropriate Production(IP)-52% |
| **Total Percentage**<br>Appropriate Production = 54%<br>Inappropriate Production = 46% | **Total Percentage**<br>Appropriate Production =56 %<br>Inappropriate Production =44% |

## Summary and Conclusion

It has been discovered through this research that educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English pronounce the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/ correctly in their spoken English. The result shows that the educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English recorded somewhat high performance in their production of this sound, which is non-existent in the sound systems of their respective dialects. The result, to an extent, contradicts earlier made claims that Yoruba English speakers pronounce /s/ instead of /ʃ/ in their spoken English.

Most of the Ikale and Ondo subjects did not devoice /z/ and /v/ to realise /s/ and /f/ respectively. This is pointing to the fact that the claim that Yoruba speakers of English realise /s/ for /z/ and /f/ for /v/ may need to be limited to only the uneducated ones and few

educated ones among these people. A lack of these sounds in the dialects of Ikale and Ondo did not affect their production of them. They pronounced the sounds correctly where they were overt.

The plural marker '-s' has varying forms when it appears in context. When it occurs after a voiced sound, it takes on the voiced quality of the sound and becomes realised as /z/, whereas it remains voiceless when it occurs after a voiceless sound. The production of /s/ instead of /z/ in 'combs' by the Ikale and Ondo subjects was probably caused by a lack of the knowledge of the phonological process called assimilation. In the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English, /s/ was not assimilated by the preceding sound.

The educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English used for this study performed very poorly in their production of /ð/ and /θ/. The result confirms earlier claims that most speakers of Nigerian English have difficulty in articulating these sounds of Standard English which are non- existent in the inventories of the phonemes of indigenous Nigerian languages. Both the voiced and the voiceless dental fricatives /ð/ and /θ/ still pose a challenge to the educated people from Ikale and Ondo dialectal groups.

The subjects overwhelmingly produced the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ correctly as /p/. This may indicate that educated speakers of Nigerian English from Ikale and Ondo do not realise /kp/ in place of the English consonant sound /p/ contrary to the claims and views of earlier scholars. Simplification of consonant clusters by epenthesis was not perceived in the responses of the subjects. Moreover, the claim that Yoruba lacks /kw/ consonant cluster does not apply to the Ikale dialect; Ikale has several consonant clusters including /kw/. The Ondo dialect may lack consonant clusters, but this lack did not reflect simplification of consonant clusters by epenthesis in the responses of the educated Ondo subjects used for this study. However, the Ikale and Ondo educated speakers of English are likely to simplify consonant

clusters by deletion, especially where spelling does not show these clusters.

Most of the vowels of English used by educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English in their spoken English hardly approximated to those of Standard English. The generally low performance of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of English in the production of English vowel sounds confirms the results of earlier researches. Some of the subjects produced some of the English vowels that occurred before /n/ as nasal vowels, whereas some of them did not. Ikale and Ondo educated speakers of English seem to realise the alveolar nasal /n/ after a vowel if it is in turn followed by another alveolar sound.

Spelling pronunciation was found on a large scale in the responses given by the subjects. This confirms that the spoken English of most educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English has a tendency to be informed by spelling pronunciation. Words tend to be pronounced as they are cued by spelling in the English spoken by most educated Ikale and Ondo people. Letters that are supposed to remain silent are likely to be realised in this brand of English, and it does not undergo the phonological processes of assimilation and deletion maybe due to the speakers' lack of knowledge of them.

This study has also confirmed it that the stress patterns of the spoken English of most educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English are different from those of Standard English. Educated Ikale and Ondo people mostly engage in forward stressing where in Standard English backward stressing is the norm.

## Conclusion

This study has attempted a phonological description of the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of English. Some of the results of this research are in contradiction to some of the claims made by earlier researches, whereas some of the claims

have also been confirmed. It is observed by this research that the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English is at variance with Standard English in terms of stress placement, articulation of vowel sounds and articulation of some consonant sounds. It has also been confirmed by this research that the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo is characterised by spelling pronunciation. The phonological process called assimilation is observed to be absent from the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo perhaps as a result of their lack of knowledge of it. Some educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of English do produce some vowels of English occurring before /n/ as nasal vowels.

Some of the consonant sounds such as /p/, /v/, /z/, /ʃ/ and /ʧ/ claimed to be problematic for Yoruba speakers of English have been observed not to pose difficulty to educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of English. However, some educated Ikale speakers still need to work on their production of the voiceless palato-alveolar affricate /ʧ/. Simplification of consonant clusters by epenthesis has been observed to be at the lowest level of occurrence in the English spoken by educated Ikale and Ondo. It has been sufficiently established by earlier researches that the kind of English spoken in Nigeria passes for the label 'Nigerian English' because of its distinctive Nigerian local colour. However, contrary to the assumption of some earlier works that British English no longer exists in Nigeria, the results of this research has shown that the variety of English spoken by educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English is not completely devoid of the features of Standard English.

In this work, educated speakers of Nigerian English from only two dialectal groups of Yoruba were studied. Moreover, not all the phonological aspects of English were examined in this work. In further studies, the rhythmic and intonational patterns of the spoken English of educated Ikale and Ondo can be studied, and the

phonologies of the spoken English of educated speakers of English from other dialectal groups of Yoruba not considered in this study still need to be examined. Studying the phonology of Yoruba English without singling out each dialectal group of the Yoruba tribe for such studies may result in making claims that are not based on empirical evidence.

For the educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English, there is a need to improve on their spoken English. Proper stressing of English words requires consciously learning the stress patterns of such words since no Nigerian born and living in Nigeria acquires a natural ability for English word stress. Educated Ikale and Ondo speakers of Nigerian English should, while learning a new word, make conscious efforts to learn its pronunciation which includes the stress pattern of the word. As suggested by Osisanwo (2005) and supported by Akinjobi (2006) and Soneye (2008), gadgets and learning materials produced in the natural English environments should be used to teach English phonology in Nigeria. The learners can be encouraged to watch educative British English films or listen to speeches produced by RP speakers of English.

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