Covenant University
Canaaland, Km. 10, Idiroko Road, Ota, Ogun State. Tel: +234-1-7900724,7901081, 7913282,7913283

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Another Look at Nigerian English

Charles Ogbulogo

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Charles Ogbulogo
Professor of the English language
Dean, College of Human Development
Covenant University, Ota.

Corporate & Public Affairs
Covenant University
Canaanland, Km. 10, Idiroko Road, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria
Tel: +234-1-7900724, 7901081, 7913282, 7913283

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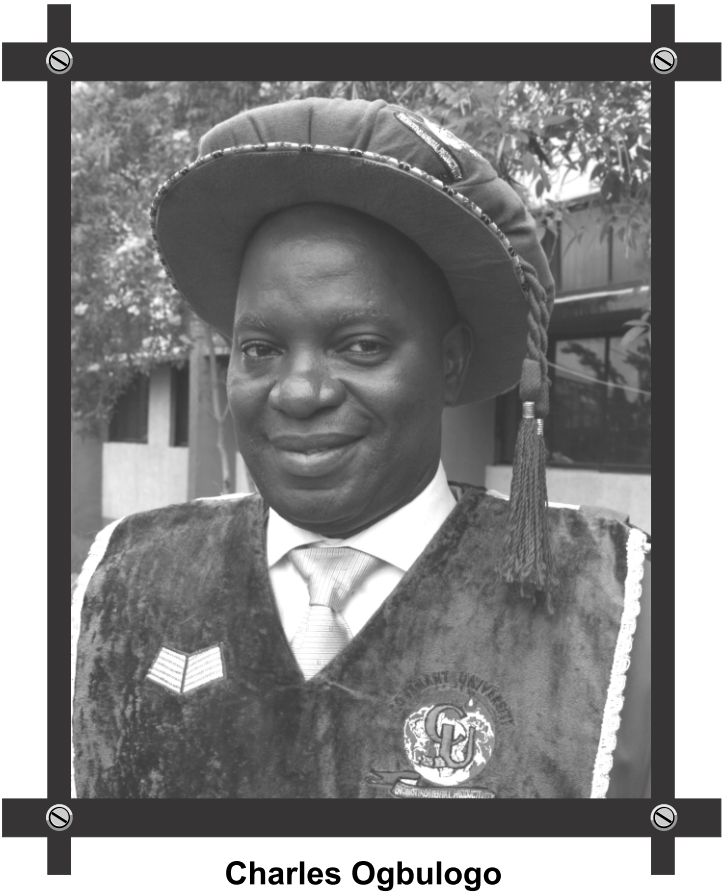

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Food for thought:

The most puzzling scientific mysteries
are often uncovered when scientists
investigate natural phenomena
that are taken for granted.

…Jacobs and Rosen Baum (1968:3)

A language owes most of its vigour
not to what it rejects, but to
what it can incorporate
within itself.

…Johan Von Goethe

1.1 Introduction

These two quotations cannot be any truer than they are with the nature of the English language in Nigeria. There are quite a number of people who find an alibi in the concept of Nigeria English for all instances of inadequate mastery; to some others, reference to Nigerian English tends to suggest a less prestigious variety and for which no research time may not be expended. In another context, the sources of Nigerian English should have a definite fixation on the elusive Standard British English (or the Received pronunciation). To such people, any instance of Americanism is suspect. These reactions provide justification for this paper. An attempt will be made to explore the new trends imparting on Nigerian English. In doing this, the theory of Interlanguage in the tradition of Selinker (1972) will be adopted

1.2 The theory of interlanguage

Two major theoretical constructs have been applied in the study of second language learning with varying degrees of success. These

are Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis. Contrastive Analysis is based on the assumption that differences in language systems predispose second language learners to interference errors. The latter, Error Analysis, on the other hand, depends on the actual errors made by learners, with the aim of identifying a pattern for them. Language teaching is then based on the established pattern.

Contrastive Analysis is associated with the works of audio-lingual theorists, especially Robert Lado (1957), while Error Analysis is based on the insights of the rationalist theorists including S. P. Corder (1971). Both Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis have been criticized because of their inadequacies. Schachter (1973) and her colleagues argue that the extreme emphasis of practitioners of Error Analysis place on actual errors make them not to distil out actual problem areas. On the other hand, Contrastive Analysis is perceived to the very laborious and the results- very minimal, since not all the areas of differences pose actual problems for learners.

A basic assumption in the theory of Interlanguage is the issue of competence. What constitutes competence is that finite amount of the target language, which the learner has mastered, along with all the bits and pieces of knowledge unrelated to the target language. Competence also includes the wrong and tentative hypotheses about the target made by the learner. It is time bound and can change with increased exposure and better motivation.

This tentative level of the learner has been characterized as the interlanguage by Selinker (1972). Other earlier related terms are the *idiosyncratic dialect* of Corder (1971), and the *approximate system* of Nemser (1971). It is indeed the learner's intermediate grammar.

According to Selinker, the central components of the learner's interlanguage are language transfer, training transfer, learning strategies, communication strategies and overgeneralization. The transfer phenomenon occurs as interference from L1. Learning and Communication Strategies,

as well as overgeneralization, focus on the many sources of the learner's competence, which yield the intermediate grammar. A scheme for the interlanguage adopted from Headbloom (1979) is presented below:

Fig. 1: A conception of the interlanguage
adopted from Headbloom(1979:37)

Success in helping the learner to acquire appropriate forms of the target language depends on the identification of absolute standards by which to judge progress. These standards are expected to be based on dynamic research efforts on the emerging corpora of World English.

The theory of interlanguage has been refined in modern times in Chomsky (2002) as an aspect of Universal Grammar within the Principles and Parameters framework where knowledge of language is expressed as a continuum between S_0 and S_s where S_0 is initial stage of language behaviour and S_s as the

steady stage. The progression from the initial stage to the steady stage is determined by exposure, experience, motivation and the things that go into language learning.

1.3 The Nigerian Variety within the Global English

Before the 1950's, the English language had not been established as a global language. That possibility was highly speculative and theoretical. There were the uncertainties of the Cold War and the deep marks of the bipolar world. Now, the world English has become an expression of political and cultural reality. This reality is a profound manifestation of changes in sociolinguistic strategies and language engineering.

A language is characterized as global when its role is recognized in almost every country of the world. It should be noted that English is the mother tongue in Britain, the USA, Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and many Caribbean Countries. If is the official language of over 70 Countries including Nigeria, Ghana, India, Singapore, Vanuatu,

the Gambia, Cameroon, Malta, the Philippines and all other Countries that were former British Colonies. In well over 60 Countries with well-established indigenous official languages, English has been identified as an important foreign language to be learnt in schools in such countries include China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil. Thus, following Kachuru, (2001), the use of world English occurs in concentric circle with the first language settings as the inner circle. Second and official language settings are the outer circle. The expanding circle comprises the places where it is learnt as a foreign language.

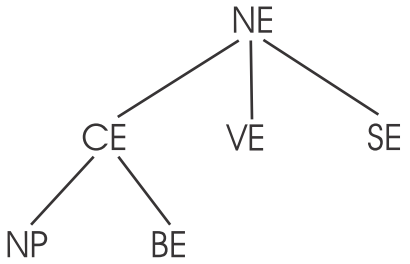
As first language, official language and foreign language, about 1.5 billion people speak English. About 1.1 billion people speak located in almost one region of the world speak Chinese.

Apart from a great population of speakers, English has become truly global because of the power relations of nations. Indeed, the United States of America, Britain and Canada are major power blocs in world politics. These countries are also among the richest and the most technologically advanced. They

use their wealth and their technology to advance the cause of their social life and their culture. Besides the reality of the colonial heritage, knowledge of English in many parts of the world is perceived to be a powerful tool for survival in contemporary times.

Before the entrenchment of the British colonial administration in Nigeria, there had been contacts between Nigeria and European countries. Such contacts brought along with them some form of English to Nigerians. Future developments were to strengthen the position of the language in the country. In charting the paths of the development of Nigerian English, Bamgbose (1995) identifies three major strands which coincide with specific periods in the history of the country. These strands area; Contact English (CE), Victorian English (VE) and School English (SE).

Two major variants, Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and Broken English developed from the Contact English. These strands, as presented by Bamgbose, are reproduced below:



NE Nigerian English, CE Contact English

VE Victorian English, SE School English

NP Nigerian Pidgin, BE Broken English

Fig. 2 Strands of Nigerian English

Source: Bamgbose (1995: 12)

Extracts of Contact English were gleaned from Antera Duke's records of events in Calabar between 1785 and 1788, as well as those of the records attributed to the King of Opubu in 1824. While Antera Duke's records were in Broken English those of the King of Opubu were in Nigeria Pidgin. The difference

between the two is that Broken English is less popular and less grammatical than the Pidgin. Consider these samples.

** Soon after I see one my men was Liv with him to canow Com Up and tell Enyong peoples tak my canow way for Landing so I Run and Go Down for Landing I find no canow (Soon after I saw one of my men who was left at the Canoe from the landing.So I run down to the landing and I find no canoe…). Source: Farde (1956)*

** Suppose my fader, or my fader fader come up from ground and peak me why English man do dat, I no sabby tell why (Suppose my father or my grandfather were to come back from the grave and ask me why the Englishman did that, wouldn't be able to say why). Source: Mabeni (1971: 97)*

The second strand, the Victorian English is associated with the 19th Century Negro Lagos with a population of doctors, lawyers, teachers, missionaries and other professionals who returned from Brazil, America, the West Indies, Sierra Leone and

Liberia. According to Echeruo (1977), these people in their bid to display their elite status and great learning often resorted to the use of quotations profusely.

The third strand is the school English, which Spencer (1971: 13) refers to as the English of the school primer, of the sermon, of the Bible and of the hymnal. As a result of the use of this variety in education it became the dominant variety that has imparted most profoundly on the emergence of Nigerian English.

Naturally Nigerian English has developed from the Standard British English, which was used by the colonial masters. In spite of the long period of relationship between American English and the Nigeria English corpus has not become a major area of research.

American Peace Corps members, who served in Nigeria in the 1960's had to conform to the spelling and vocabulary conventions of British English. This attitude was similar to that of the first generation of American trained professionals who arrived on the West coast of Africa in the 19th Century. Indeed,

both groups abandoned their Americanisms as soon as they set foot in Africa - cf Bamgbose (1995). The negative attitude toward American English and its influence on other varieties appears to have persisted. Following Bamgbose, there are such problems as misunderstanding, ungrammaticality and demands of curricular review associated with the American variety of English, which may not make policy makers to prescribe it as a standard.

However, a few Nigerian linguists have identified areas of the influence of Americanism in Nigerian English. Awonusi (1994), for instance, argues that Americanisms and clearly noticed in Nigerian English pronunciation vocabulary and syntax. The following examples from different linguistic levels are taken from his paper.

1. Phonology:

A. Yod dropping ie the loss of the / j / sound after coronal consonants (consonant produced with the blade of the tongue raised from its neutral position as in alveolar, dental and palato alveolar consonants). Yod-dropping occurs in Nigerian English, just as in America English

in such words as:

SBE		AME / NE
Student,	stju:dent	stu:dent
Studio	stju:di∂v	stu:di∂u
Attitude	ætitju:d	ætitu:d
Duke	dju:k	du:k
News	nju:z	nu:z
Avenue	ævcnju:	ævenu:
Suit	sju:t	su:t

B. T- tapping in general pronunciation, the / t / sound in the intervocalic environment is produced as a one-tap trill that is usually voiced. This is decoded as / d /. In some variants of

Nigerian English, this phenomenon is common and the / t / is realized as / d / or / r / as shown below:

SBE	AME / NE	
Waiting	/weitiŋ/	wetin / werin
Water	/ wɔ:tə(r)/	/wɔ:rə/
Butter	/bʌtə(r)/	/bʌrə/
Beautiful	/bju:tiʃəl/	/bju:riʃəl/

2. Lexical features:

There are many lexical items, which are typically American, but which many Nigerians have appropriated without even realizing they are not British.

Common examples are presented below:

Americanism ***Used in NE***	**British**
Chips	crisps
Conductor	guard
Connect (telephone)	put through
Editorial	leader
Water heater	immersion heater
Shot	jab (injection)
Shorts	briefs
Raincoat	mackintosh
Doctor's office	surgery
Electric wire	flex
Generator	dynamo
Lawyer	kiosk
Duplex	semidetached
Painting	ladder
Kerosene	paraffin

Reporting on the preference patterns between British and America English forms, Awonusi (1994) points at 64% of a research population made up of Nigerians resident in Lagos preferred the British standards to then American counterparts preferred by 36% what study conducted in 1990 shows that as recent as then, Nigerian English was still based on the British

mode.

Incidentally, Awonusi did not highlight any aspect of the syntax of America English, but it has been noticed that more and more people are using the American Syntactic construction especially WANNA construction. This is observed more in the speech of many young Christian missionaries, a new business and company executives.

The State of Research on Nigerian English

Presented below are some of the popular views about Nigerian English by some leading experts in the field.

1. "*An almost distinctly Nigerian variety of the English language ...*

   which is at par with and has much vitality as any other variety of English.

   Adetugbo (1984:17)

2. "The variety of English that has English as its first mother and Nigeria as its second and has defied nature by undergoing gynecological reprocessing".

Jowitt (1991:x)

3. "A model of English based on the twin criteria of social acceptability and international intelligibility, which, given the second language situation, should to possess a high prestige at home and reasonable easy intelligibility abroad.

Banjo (1995:209)

Each of the views expressed above recognizes the alien based of the language and, at the same time, argues for a high degree of acceptability, locally and internationally. We shall match these expectations with the development of research paradigms over the years.

Before 1977, commentaries on the quality of English used in Nigeria concentrated on deviations from the ideal Standard British English. Grieve (1966), for instance, in response

to the demands of the West African Examination Council recommend, an end normative model of the language so as to save it from sliding below a given prestige level. Walse (1967) associated himself with Grieve's portion. However, Banjo (1967) and Salami (1967) express great concern over the nature of that end normative model, as it may not have been discubed. The model they planned could also have a problem of international intelligibility.

Spencer (1971) provides, perhaps, the first account of the deliberation effort to study the institutionalized variety of Nigerian English. According to him, through the different people that constitute the present day Nigeria had sustained contacts with the English language since the 16th Century, rigorous attempts to study the language began only in the early part of the 19th century, through the activities of the Christian Missionaries.

Following Spencer, a great deal of researchers began to identify parameters for identifying this emerging variety. Banjo (1971, 1993) proposed a typology of English usage in Nigeria.

There were four varieties based on the extent of mother tongue interference, as well as on the approximation to a world standard. Variety **1** had the greatest density of mother tongue interference; variety **2** also has a great density of mother tongue interference, but not as heavy as in variety **1;** Variety **3** has much less of the mother tongue interference. It is Variety **4** that has the least of the density of interference.

Bamgbose (1982) points out that Banjo's Variety **4** could not have reflected a typical Nigerian performance since it was based on the index of mainly Nigerian Anglo-Saxon speeches. The parameters for even all the other varieties were arbitrary. Banjo himself has had to settle for an end normative variety as the authentic form of Nigerian English

Adesanoye (1973) may be considered to be the earliest full-scale empirical study of the different varieties of Nigerian English. Just like Banjo (1971), Adesanoye bases his classification on the proximity to or distance from the British English. In his estimation there is a very close relationship

between performance and educational attainment. Based purely on indexical markers, district from specific common core characteristics, Adesanoye identifies three varieties - 2, 3 and 4. However, his variety 3 is similar in many respects, to the standard Nigerian English in the written form. A major shortfall in Adesanoye of his research to members of the judiciary from the magistrate courts.

Adekunle (1979) highlights the potentials fear of the controversy over what an error is. He reasons (i.e., errors) and non-random variations (localized standards) exist also in countries where English is ancestral. Okoro (1994) has also expressed the fear of not being able to identify specific boundaries between errors and Nigerian expressions. He advises that a standard be codified.

Other researchers like Ubahakwe (1974) Adetugbo (1977,1984) Adeniran (1979), Akere (1982), Jibril (1982), Obilade (1984), Odumuh (1984), Kujore (1985) and Afolayan (1987) point to the direction of research in the characterization of

Nigerian English. They all agree that Nigerian English occurs in gradation with all the varieties striving towards an ideal. This trend is represented in a pyramid with a heavy base. The great majority of Nigerian speakers of English fall within the dialect of this base, hence, basilect. A few are within the middle band of the pyramid, while very few Nigerians who have attained a very high degree of education occupy the tip. It has been argued that many people, just with the primary or junior secondary level of education dominate the basilect. The middle band is for many people, who have completed secondary school or have had some education at the tertiary level. The top level is occupied by many sophisticated users of the language including well-trained university lecturers, High Court / Supreme Court judges, very well exposed preachers top rate journalists and other professionals. The first level is the basilect, the middle band, the mesolect and the apex, the acrolect. These levels are represented below:

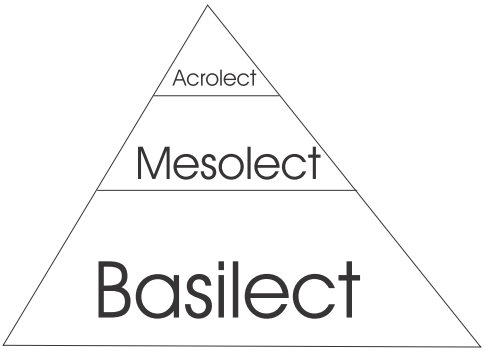


Fig. 3: A representation of the use of English by Nigerians

The elusive point located outside the pyramid is the prestige variety which in our context is the Standard British English. Just like other descriptions, this model is still in conclusive. The major varieties appear to be the mother tongue and the target language. In line with this speculative portion, Romaine (1989) argues that second language learners, including Nigerian English users, fall into two broad categories. The first category comprises all persons who have mastered the language (and can separate it from their mother tongue) and are, thus, co-ordinate bilinguals, as well as these on their way to total mastery. This second group is made up the incipient or compound bilinguals.

The stages towards the total mastery are aspect of the inter language. There is therefore the need to draw a distinct line between an end normative standard and a deviation based on overgeneralization and errors. It is not every price of performance by just any Nigerian that constitutes Nigerian English. That is not to deny the possibility of Nigerian additions to the world corpus of Nigerian English should be codified, along specific linguistic parameters. We shall be guided in this direction by making reference to well-established corpora of World Englishes American English, Canadian English, Australian English and South African English.

What is the distinct colour of Nigerian English?

Regional varieties of world Englishes are a reality. The initial question to ask is what level presents the greatest opportunity for variety change? In a humorous manner, Lederer (1991) identifies the following pronunciation forms in Japanese

English

:"Kakuteiru" cocktail

"Jintonikku" gin and tonic

"fantazikku" - fantastic

"furendo" friend

-p. 31

In Ghanaian English the most distinguishing characteristic is the pronunciation. The following word:

-turn /t3:n/ /taen/

-serve /s3:v/ /sev/

-sir /s3:/ /se/

are distinctly pronounced.

In Nigerian English phonology, the following features have been identified.

(i) Phoneme under- differentiation which reduces the 44 phones of English by eliminating those that do not occur in the mother tongue.

(ii.) Phoneme substitution where the absent sounds are replaced with those that exist in the mother tongue.

Another major area in which the interlanguage mechanism is at play at the phonological evel is stress placement. Generally, stress in Nigerian English, as well as Cameroonian English, is shifted from the initial syllable to the second or third syllable. Indeed, SBE exhibits a backwards stress placement. Consider the following examples:

Non-standard Nigerian English	Standard British English
caLENdar	CALender
colLEAGUE	COLleague
saLAD	Salad
maDAM	MAdam
eDIT	Edit
celeBrate	CElebrate

It is gladdening to note that most educated Nigerian users of

English are ready to shift styles as soon as they become aware of the preferred standards.

At the lexical level, it is easy to identify specific items of vocabulary, which are typically American, Ghanaian or Nigerian. Witness these:

American

-station wagon -check out a book -single-handedly

-Custom-made -pass the buck

-Vacation -go downtown

-Garbage (trash) -Monday through Saturday

-Step aside

Ghanaian

-Kenke a type of food

-Outdooring

-Enstoolment

Queenmother

Engagement as part of a marriage ceremony

Dolphyne (1995:30)

-**Ni*gerian***

-Oga

-Four-one-nine

-Arrangee

-Sufferhead

-Been-to

-Auntie

-*SU* (meaning member of the Scripture Union)

Cf Kujore (1985), Jowitt (1991)

The degree of acceptability of these terms tends to suggest that it is at the level of lexis that Nigerian English can maximally be appropriated into the mainstream of English. It has happened before in other linguistic milieux

Let us examine these:

Alcohol Arabic

Boomerang	Australia
Zebra	Bantu
Bungalow	Bengali
Typhoon	Cantonese
Hurricane	Carib
Boss	Dutch
Skill	Danish
Sauna	Finnish
Jukebox	Gullah

It is, perhaps, at the syntactic level that the greatest resistance to the violation is felt. The following items taken from the actual speeches of Nigerians and which have been tested on a cross section of the population are indicative of this resistance. In some cases, media executives, consultants, professors, judges and even Vice-Chancellor's have had to respond to the dynamics of the changes.

Consider the following:

1.1 Errors Related to Number Restrictions in Nouns

Examples:	**Corrected Versions**
1. He has fine *furnitures*	He has fine furniture
2. The school lacks Science *equipments*	The school lacks Science *equipment*
3. The rain caused many damages	The rain caused many damage
4. His luggages were seized	His luggage was seized
5. The cattle is grazing	The cattle are grazing
6. The police has caught the robber	The police have caught the robber

1.2 Errors Related to the Use of Pronouns

8. The dog chased Bisi and **I**	The dog chased Bisi and **me**
9. To **we** boys, heavy meals are necessary	To **us** boys, heavy meals are necessary
10. Between Tolu and **I** there is no difference	Between Tolu and **me** there is no difference
11. **It was him** that took the book	**It was he** that took the book

1.3 Error Related to the Use of Determiners

12. I met an European tourist	I met **a** European tourist
13. He scarcely greets **somebody**	He scarcely greets **anybody**
14. Each of them **have** been here	Each of them has been here
15. None of the student **write** well	None of the student **writes** well
16. Since he is almost blind, he sees **a little**	Since he is almost blind, he sees **little**

Examples:	**Corrected Versions**
Errors Related to the Use of Adjectives	
17. The poor **feels** oppressed	The poor **feel** oppressed
18. The **sick is** not well catered for well	The **sick are** not catered for
19. The worst **are** yet to come	The worst **is** yet to come
20. She gave us two **ten-pounds** notes	She gave us two **ten-pound** notes
21. Ojo was on the **three-men panel**	Ojo was on the **three-man panel**
22. Peter bought a **black Chinese big** bag	Peter bought a **big black Chinese** bag
23. The boys left their **torn brown new torn** sandals.	The boys left their **new brown** sandals.
24. The prefect is **tallest than** all the boys.	The prefect is **taller than** all the boys.
Errors Related to the Use of Auxiliary Verbs	
25. His brother returned late; **isn't it? didn't he?**	His brother returned late;
26. **Needs** he pay that much?	**Need** he pay that much?
27. They said that they **have** done this job	They said that they **has** done this job
28. He is used to **run** fast	He is used to **running** fast
29. He **dares** not beat her	He **dare** not beat her
Errors Related to the Use of Verbs	
30. By the end of this year, I will finish novels three	By the end of this year, I will finish three novels
31. If **I am asked** to do it I would have been happy	If **I am asked** to do it I would be happy
32. If he **was** a woman, he would have Been pretty.	If he **were** a woman, he would Be pretty

33. The thief has been **hung**	The thief has been **hunged**
34. The labourer **lied**	The labourer **lay** down
35. The boy **has laid** here for many days	The boy **has lain** here for many days
36. You have **bursted** the idea	You have **burst** the idea
37. We would **have grinded** the pepper	We would have grounded the pepper

Errors Associated with the Use of Adverbs and Adverbials

38. We saw Betty **last night at the lawn**	We saw Betty **at the lawn last night**
39. The teacher spoke to us **in the class this friendly way afternoon this afternoon**	The teacher spoke to us **in a friendly way in the class**
40. He was **too** happy	He was **very** happy
41. Ali is **too** eager to see Jimoh	Ali is **very** eager to see Jimoh
42. She was **very** annoyed **that** she abandoned her meal	She was **so** annoyed **that** she abandoned her meal
43. They were **so** big **for** us to handle	They were **too** big **for** us to handle
44. The tea is **very** hot; so we can't take it now	The tea is **very** hot; so we can't take it now
45. The boys aimed **highly** in life.	The boys aimed **high** in life.
46. The car runs **fastly**	The car runs **fast**

Errors Associated with the Use of Prepositions

47. They prefer rice **more than** beans	They prefer rice **to** beans
48. That shirt is **more superior** than yours	That shirt is **superior to** yours
49. Benji is **more senior** than Wale	Benji is senior **to**Wale
50. The man's car is more inferior **than** his wife	The man's car is inferior **to** his wife

There are also other areas of the over extension of lexical rules. Consider further, the following.

Standard English Expressions

1. John's father is an academician; he teaches at the University Lagos.
   John's father is an academic; he teaches at the University of Lagos
   Note that an academician is a member of an academy.
2. He is in academics.
   He is in academic pursuits
3. He will win the race all things being equal
   He will win the race other things being equal
4. Conclusive, I maintain that…..
   In conclusion /finally, I maintain that…..
   Note: *Conclusively does not mean finally; rather it means, decisively or convincingly.*
5. The man died in the cause of the war.
   The man died in the course Of the war.
6. I can be able to give you books.
   I will be able to give you books.
   I am able to give you books.
7. Can it be possible?
   Is it possible?
8. Check me up at home.
   Look me up at home.
9. I chanced to see Jide
   I had the opportunity to see Jide.
10. We went to condole Peter when his father died.
    We went to condole Peter When is father died.
11. I cracked my brain to get an answer.
    I racked my brains to get an Answer.
12. Paul wears his expensive dresses on casual occasions.
    Paul wears his expensive clothes on casual occasions.

Note: Dresses are for women, while clothes (always plural) are garments in general.

13. Ben has not paid the dowry. Ben has not paid the bride price.

Note: Dowry refers to the wealth which the bride brings into her matrimonial home from her family.

14. Graham Bell discovered the telephone. Graham Bell invented the telephone.
Note: Existing things are discovered.

15. To dine with the devil you need a long spoon
To sup with the devil you need a long spoon

16. Don't drag my name in the mud. Don't drag my name through the mire

17. Our leaders have eaten our money. Our leaders have embezzled our money

18. At the end of the seminar, we exchange notes.
At the end of the seminar, we compared notes

19. Ojo had an edge over his mates. Ojo had an edge on his mates.

20. The answers to the question are not far fetched.
The answers to the question are not hard to find

Note: Far fetched is used for unusual and bizarre situations and often with disapproval. It is also used for ideas that are beyond the imagination of ordinary people.

21. The great prophet has a large followership.
The great prophet has a large following

22. He wanted to win by fair or foul means.	He wanted to win by fair or foul means
23. The accident was fatal; all the victims are being treated in the hospital.	The accident was serious; all the victims are being treated In the hospital

Note: an accident is fatal when it involves the death of the victims.

24. Congratulation Joe, more grease to your elbow.	Congratulation Joe, more power to your elbow.
25. They did not know that the chief hears English.	They did not know that the Chief understands English
26. Julie could not read the handwriting on the wall.	Julie could not read the writing on the wall
27. I will horn to alert you.	I will hoot/sound the horn to alert you.
28. Shade intimated me with her plans.	Shade intimated to me with her plans.
29. Obi's father is influential and he has long legs.	Obi's father is influential and he has a long arm.
30. The Chairman lords things over everybody.	The Chairman lords it over ever everybody.
31. The boy moves with bad people.	The boy associates/keeps company with bad people
32. He sang the national anthem off head.	He sang the national anthem off hand/by heart.

33. Right from the onset, knew he would make it.
Right from the outset, I I Knew he would make it.

34. I was not opportuned to watch the play.
I did not have the opportunity to watch the play.

35. He decided to come on his own free will.
He decided to come his free will.

36. Ade's wife had put to bed.
Ade's wife has been delivered of a baby/has given birth to a baby

Note: it is not right to used Ade's wife has delivered a baby. It is the woman who is delivered of a baby

37. Ude has got the new plate number.
Ude has got the new number plate.

38. I am just pulling your legs.
I am just pulling your leg.

39. Joseph decided to it into writing.
Joseph decided to put it in writing.

40. In tried to move the car, but the engine wouldn't start.
I tried to move the car, but engine refused to start

41. The participants rounded up the show with a cocktail.
The participants rounded off The show with a cocktail.

42. Professor Madu is on a Sabbatical leave.
Professor Madu is on Sabbatical

43. The Managing Director is not on seat.	The Managing Director is Not in the office/available.
44. The carpenter will smoothen the wood.	The carpenter will smooth the wood.
45. The proposal was smooth sailing	The proposal was plain sailing.
46. Mrs. Ojo sides her daughter.	Mrs. Ojo sides with her daughter/takes her daughter's sides
47. Let me tap your brain, please.	Let me pick your brains, please
48. Joseph has scraped his beard.	Joseph has shaved his beard.

A Casual Look at the Use of English at Covenant University

Between January 14 and November, 2005, I have observed the linguistic performance of members of the Covenant University Community. Reported below are samples of the language repertoire.

Covenant University is a purpose-built institution for the restoration of the dignity of the African peoples.

It is as visionary as it is spirit-driven. It has come to be through the interpretation of God's vision delivered to the Chancellor and the Bishop of the Winners Chapel International Dr. David

Oyedepo. As a result of this positive position, the staff structure and the organogram is unique. There is the admixture of the clergy and the professionals as well as members of the academia. Recruitment is based on the best practices of investments in Human capital.

Many of the faculty and other workers have the American new of life, especially as the University has a strong relationship with the Oral Roberts University in the United States of America. This view point reflects in the language that may explain why right from the pulpit to the pew to the news, and from the registry to the classroom, the ***wanna*** construction is quite pervasive. It is common to hear the following expression in our meetings and gatherings**.**

1. I ***wanna*** say welcome to you. I ***wanna*** tell you that you are the ones we've been waiting for.
2. I ***wanna*** let you know that the same heat that hardens the day also melts the wax.
3. You ***wanna*** think generationally
4. I ***wanna*** also say that is what makes you peculiar
5. You're ***gonna*** have access to computers as senior staff
6. Each office is ***gonna*** have a telephone set.
7. how many people are ***gonna*** be interested in the laptops

8. its not ***gonna*** be permitted to wear just anything
9. God is ***gonna*** be giving us speed
10. I ***wanna*** let you know that every effort has been worth it.

Wanna construction have also been noticed in the English of other professionals and executives in Nigeria. Witness also these men's fellowship Chapel of Christ on Light **Unilag**

1. We're gonna read from Ephesians 4, verse 17
2. What we're gonna do is to ensure our fingerlings are of the right quality

Think thank
We are gonna be reaching out

Kakaaki Programme on AIT 9/9/05

3. I'm gonna start somewhere to fight

Super breakfast show:

4. You're gonna be hearing from us

A musician AIT

How long are we gonna do this

STV Interview 7/9/05

5. I wanna know how many of us gonna do it

House 4 TV Programme

6. We're gonna start off

Wanna construction has become very pervading in Nigeria English the time to investigate it the more is now.

Other interesting findings about language use at Covenant University are presented below:

The use of

- ***Severally*** instead of ***on several occasions.***
- ***Reoccurrence*** instead of ***recurrence***
- ***With regards*** instead of ***with regard*** as ***regards***
- ***Conclusively*** instead of ***in conclusion***
- ***Binded*** instead of *bound*
- ***Most unique*** for ***unique***
- Covenant University be in ***you and I*** instead of ***you and me***
- I would have ***ran*** out instead of ***run***
- Without having to ***border*** instead of ***bother***
- We invite guest lecturers to deliver ***paper,*** instead of ***papers***

A unique expression at Covenant University is diagnostic of what we refer to as pro-drop in such languages as Italian and Spanish. It occurs when the subject of the clause is omitted, with the assumption that the sense well be understood. Indeed, the human brain has the capacity to recover lost language element. Therefore we are all experimenting into the pro-diop parameter when we greet one another:

It is interesting to note that we are all wading through the interlanguage, going from the Ø to Øthe.
God will help us!

It has been speculated by Bamiro (1994) and Adegbija (2003) that it is perhaps in the area of idioms that Nigerian English will make its contribution to world Englishes. They hinged their argument on the following entries:

Son of soil, to smell pepper, carry go cash madam to spray, to wet the ground to toast a girl, to have an expo, black insurance, yellow fever etc.

There is no doubt that some linguistic ingenuity is at play in this

regard. We may have such established linguistic procedures as

Analogy in ***invitee***, ***decampee*** from ***addressee***
Coinages as in ***yellow fever; sure banker***
Loan shift as in ***branch*** in the place of ***visit***
Semantic under differentiation as in ***small boy*** for a ***little boy***
Translation as in ***bush meat*** etc.

While some of these idioms may have been fairly established as in ***not as seat***, ***go slow long leg*** etc.

Many others like:
Siddon look attitude and ***dey Kampe***

Are still shaky. There are still others that are restricted as in ***chill out***, ***fashy the deal***

What to take away from all this is that Nigerian English still has to be codified. I am aware that some international journals tend to favour entries from the Nigerian English Carpus. The two prominent ones are:

World Englishes edited by Professor Bray Kachvu of the University of Illinois and published by ***Balckwell in the USA***

studies ***in the African Varieties of English***, edited by Peter Lucko, Lothar Peter and Hans-Geor Wolf and published by Peter Lang Germany. There is this danger of the outsider making comments about what is authentically ours.

The international corpus of English project being listed at the University of London under the leadership of Professor Sydney Greenbaum is an on-going project. The Nigerian version has been dormant for close to two decades now. We need to take some steps towards making a statement.

Where is the Direction of Research? A Matter of Conclusion!

The Chancellor Sir, Language shapes the destiny of man. In our context, we have appropriated the English language. We shall only be doing a great service to our generation if we discover the hidden truth about this language in our context. To do this we shall need to embark on research in all aspects of the language. At the Department of English we are poised to contribute our quota by embarking on the following research enterprises;

(i) A Comprehensive Dictionary of Nigerian English Idioms

(ii) A Comparative Study of Female Names in English and

selected Nigerian languages

(iii) A Mini Dictionary of the Language of the Professions for the University student

(iv) A survey of the Development of Literature in English in Nigeria

(v) The Language Needs of Bureaucracy and Politics in Nigeria

(vi) The Language Needs of Evangelism in Nigeria

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Produced by:
Corporate & Public Affairs Unit
Covenant University
Canaaland, Km. 10, Idiroko Road, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria
Tel: +234-1-7900724,7901081, 7913282,7913283