



## PRONUNCIATION TEACHING IN NIGERIA IN RELATION TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM: A FOCUS ON THE YORUBA-ENGLISH NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS

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### Abstract

*The two-faced nature of English language pronunciation teaching in Nigeria is becoming an issue that calls for researchers to examine. Less research emphasis is placed on English language pronunciation teaching in Nigeria in comparison with other aspects of English Language curriculum. This study therefore examines pronunciation teaching in Nigeria in connection with English Language curriculum. It explicates the distinction between the Nigerian English Pronunciation (NP) and the British variety (BrE). Also, it unravels the confusing nature of English language pronunciation teaching in Nigeria in relation to English as a Second Language (ESL). A questionnaire was designed to elicit information from 10 purposively selected ESL students. Also, five English lessons were recorded; and phonological realizations of selected words were examined and analyzed, using simple percentages. The results reveal that some English Language teachers produce English words differently from BrE variety. Their productions exhibit phonological features such as consonant reduction, vowel substitution, cluster reduction and vowel lengthening. The study drew insight from Giles' Communicative Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Smiljanik & Bradlow's Phonetic Accommodation.*

**Key Words:** British variety, Communicative and Phonetic Accommodation, Nigerian English, Two-faced-Pronunciation,

### Introduction

The status of the English language in Nigerian education system cannot be exaggerated. In most countries across the globe, and in Nigeria specifically, English is a mandatory subject in the secondary school curriculum, and this even continues through the tertiary education. The English language is instrumental to knowledge, and as recognized 60 years ago by Michael West in India, the demand for English will continue both in the compulsory school system and in the worlds of business, commerce and industry (White, 1988). Mobility function of English language in Nigeria, among others, necessitates a good grade in the subject for any student who wants to progress academically. Failure rate in English language, most especially in secondary school leaving examinations, is becoming appalling in Nigerian public schools (Adebajo, 2009; Olofin, 2012).



The need for the English as a second language (L2), aside mobility, includes national communication, interpersonal relationships, unification, socio-economic and political transactions as well as religious and educational activities. This gives it credence amidst the numerous Nigerian indigenous languages.

Nigeria is not left out in the global change that has happened to the English language in recent times. As a global language, different varieties have emerged such that the language no longer belongs to the British or the Americans alone, (Widdowson, 1993; Crystal, 1995; Jenkins, 2000). This has given rise to the term 'World Englishes' where we have British English, North American English, Cantonese English, Japanese English, Canadian English, South American English, Ghanaian English and of course Nigerian English (Bamgbose, 1995; Adegbija, 2004). It is imperative to note that the purpose the English language serves in each language community varies. While to the British and Americans, it is a native language, Nigerians and some other countries use it as a second language. In countries like France, it is used as a foreign language. This engenders localization as a reflection of the culture and traditions plus other sociolinguistic factors that are illicit in the target language featuring in the native language community, a product of language contact or linguistic interference.

The effect of this localization on student's performance in English language proficiency is becoming hazardous. Students are exposed to a mixture of both Nigerian English Pronunciation (NEP) and the British English Pronunciation through communication with other users of the English language around them and even by their teachers in school without a thorough demarcation between the two varieties and the context they should be used. This poses confusion to students most especially when faced with pronunciation examinations; an area this study wants to explore.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The requirement for pronunciation teaching is on the increase, as it is essential for speaking skills (Goh & Burns, 2012; Newton, 2017). Studies have revealed that many non-native teachers of English are reluctant to teach pronunciation. It is one aspect of language teachers try to avoid (Foote, et al, 2016; Olofin, 2019). It is expedient that the goal for pronunciation teaching is designed and executed. While many treat it as unimportant, its importance to both speaking and writing cannot be overlooked. Intelligibility to both native and non-native speakers should be the goal of pronunciation teaching, and not meeting this requirement amounts to 'abrogation of professional responsibility' (Morley, 1991:489).



Failure to do so will defeat one of the advantages of learning a new language, which is reaching a wider audience, as intelligibility for both national and international communication is essential (Ufomata, 1990; Ufomata 1995, Olofin, 2017).

Hismanoğlu, (2006:102) opines:

*Since sounds play an important role in communication, foreign language teachers must attribute proper importance to teaching pronunciation in their classes. However, this fact is much neglected by many foreign language teachers. It is evident that communication is a mutual relationship between the speaker and the hearer. This means that one must comprehend what he hears in the target language and must produce the sound of the language he is trying to learn accurately.*

Cunningham, (2012:143) in a study of the English pronunciation of a group of Nigerian students at a University in Sweden, from a point of view of their intelligibility to two groups of listeners; both native speakers and non-native speakers of English, who are teachers at the university, discovers that locally useful varieties of the Nigerian English may not easily be used for wider communication. Also, students preparing to study abroad would find it useful to gain access to a more widely intelligible variety. According to her, “we are fooling ourselves if we claim that a speaker can wander from one communicative situation to another without modifying his or her English according to the communicative situation.” (Cunningham, 2012:146).

Research on pronunciation teaching in Nigeria by Yoruba-English teachers in relation to the school curriculum is very scanty, hence, this study. This study, therefore, aims to unravel the complications surrounding teaching and learning of English language pronunciation in Nigeria. This will help policy makers, curriculum planners and teachers, as well, reach a compromise on what to input and the expected output from pupils generally.

## Literature Review

### Pronunciation Teaching in Nigeria

As observed by Ladefoged (2006), sometimes a speaker says something and the listener perceives the utterance differently. As English language teacher, when we speak, we should listen back to what we speak to see if our pronunciation tallies with what we teach our students, otherwise we will become inconsistent. This fact alone has made many language teachers capitalize on Nigerian



English (NE) as an escape route, avoiding English pronunciation teaching. They forget that (NE) is just a variety intelligible to Nigerians and those familiar with Nigerian languages only. Also, it is not yet a standard for academic assessment in Nigeria. The simultaneous co-existence of the native-speaker and the non-native speaker varieties of English has constituted a challenge to teachers concerning which model to teach (Cruttenden, 2001). This creates confusion for students, most especially those who have developed interest in the native-like pronunciation and have strived to imitate the standard variety to a reasonable extent.

Every language has its own standard variety. Even the Yoruba language has a standard variety conventionally acceptable in spoken and written forms. Any violation of the rules guiding the conventional form is seen as an error. A teacher should know the students' pronunciation needs and adapt his/her method to suit them and their needs and as well help them to practice effectively to overcome any problem in sight (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). It should be noted that the target for pronunciation teaching is not attaining native accent but intelligibility among the interlocutors as a common language among the lingua franca speakers (Walker, 2010; Celce-Murcia, 2014).

Teaching English pronunciation in a multilingual society like Nigeria may be challenging. The contact of the English language with the numerous Nigerian languages generates different varieties as it is used concurrently with the indigenous languages; and these varieties feature, in grammatical structures and, of course, phonological realizations (Gut, 2005; Okoro, 2004; Jowitt, 1991; Olofin, 2017). The variety to use becomes a task where a classroom comprises students from various L1 linguistic backgrounds. Even with the three major Nigerian languages, it is still a herculean task to decide the variety to use; whether Hausa variety, Yoruba variety or Igbo variety. The onus therefore lies on the teacher to harmonize the pronunciation needs by sticking to a standard variety which will bridge the gap between the numerous existing varieties to ensure uniformity, considering the heterogeneity of Nigerian linguistic environment (Jowitt, 1995). Pronunciation cannot be toyed with in language learning, as it forms the basis of every language. It is as important and effective as grammar and vocabulary (Lee et al. 2015; Thomson & Derwing, 2015).

### **The English Language Curriculum in Nigeria**

The Senior Secondary School 3 (SS3) is the final year and the final exam class in Nigeria where the requirements for higher institution level of education must be acquired for mobility into the next level. Students are expected to learn the phonological features in preparation for the Test of Orals as an integral part of their English language requirements.



Till today, the BrE variety of English is still approved as the standard for both teaching and examination of the candidates in Oral English. The minimum requirement for admission into any higher institution of education in Nigeria is a Credit (C6) in English of which Oral English forms paper 3 in any SSCE examination in Nigeria.

### **Sociological Factors to Consider in Teaching English as a Second Language in Nigeria.**

In teaching pronunciation to Non-Native English Speakers (NNESs), certain factors need to be considered, such as: age, length of exposure to the target language, amount and type of prior pronunciation instruction, language aptitude, individual differences, attitude towards target language and type and degree of learner motivation (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Olofin, 2017). Among them, only the last three can be addressed in the classroom. There are various motivations for learning the English language in Nigeria. These are some kinds of internal drive that encourage somebody to pursue a course of action (Harmer, 1983). Brown (1981) identified 3 types of motivation as global, situational and task motivation.

**Global Motivation:** This is a general motivation to the goal of learning a second language. The goal of the English language in Nigerian education is such that whether students like it or not, they must learn it. Despite it is stated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) that the first three years of primary education should be instructed in the mother tongue, (NPE, 2013), the English language is used as the medium of instruction in most schools at all levels and this has become a yard stick for measuring the standard of education offered. It is the language of science and technology, business, political and even religious administration as well as global communication. Above all, it is a compulsory school subject which is a criterion for mobility (Alexander et al, 2014).

Fakuade, (2004:19-20) states:

*Nigeria is an English-speaking nation, and the basic Federal Policy on Education is to recognize the need to prepare Nigerian children/students to function successfully in an English-speaking nation. This policy ranks English language the only medium through which Nigerian children can be educated...*

The above buttresses the essentialness of the English language in Nigeria and the need for all aspects to be well catered for.



**Situational Motivation:** The motivation associated with classroom learning is different from naturalistic learning or virtual learning. The condition in which learning takes place is essential to the results achievable. A conducive classroom condition in terms of facility and size of students will go a long way in enhancing learning. This is observed in the virtual learning students were conditioned to during the 2019-2021 Covid-19 pandemic lock-down when schools in almost all parts of the world were closed in order to be 'covidient'. Most students complained it was boring which means the zoom, google classroom etc. are less effective than face-to-face classroom setting.

**Task Motivation:** This has to do with performing a certain task. Every aspect of English is essential, as no aspect can be exempted in acquisition of the English language. Pronunciation teaching and learning is a task indispensable to studying the English language generally, being the basis of language learning. Teachers are models to students; the best way to learn pronunciation in a language classroom is by imitating or mimicking the teacher (Flege, et al., 1995; Where the language teacher pronounces differently from what they teach or what the students expect, there may be confusion.

In a nutshell, students' performance generally depends on teacher's methods, classroom interaction, student's motivation, classroom size and the curriculum (Deji-Afuye & Obadare, 2019).

### **Distinctiveness of Nigerian English**

The Nigerian English is a variety with its own peculiar features, including grammatical features (morphological, syntactic, semantic and phonological) and socio-cultural features (identity, class, status, age, gender etc.). All these culminate in the peculiarity of the Nigerian English. Some identified distinctive features of the Nigerian English are *accent, tonal versus Stress-timed, vowel lengthening/reduction, epenthesis, aberrant cluster reduction and vowel/consonant substitution*.

*i. Accent:* It is an important feature of the Nigerian English. No matter how fluent or proficient a Nigerian is in the English language, the accent is a distinguishing factor which exposes the part of the country he hails from, whether he is from the North, South, East or West. Among the Yoruba, it is still easy to distinguish people's English based on the dialect a speaker grew with.

*ii. Tonal Versus Stress-Timed:* English is a stress-timed language, a factor that distinguishes it from Yoruba which is a tonal language and therefore a syllable timed language. Going by Pike (1945), a tonal language is one having significant contrastive pitch on each syllable. In a tonal language,



the pitch of the voice is an essential element in the formation of words and in connected speech. A great number of the world languages are tone languages where a word may have different meanings depending on the tone. Examples are French, Kono language in Africa, Mandarin Chinese, Telugu, Thai and Vietnamese in South East Asia, and numerous African languages, which Yoruba is one (Roach, 2004:154). In contrast with English where rhythm is determined by the number of the stressed syllables available in a sentence, the Yoruba language for instance, gives equal intervals of time to each syllable, since there are no reduced vowels; every vowel attracts equal prominence unlike English which has strong or weak vowels.

iii. *Vowel Lengthening/Reduction*: Nigerian speakers of English are fond of elongating vowels of English thereby making short vowels sound long. An example is the word 'abstract' /'æb.strækt/ pronounced [a:b.sræt] where the short /æ/ is replaced with the long /a:/ (Olofin, 2019:83).

iv. *Epenthesis* is an established feature of Non-Native English in most part of the globe for simplification of the marked phonemes, vowels are sometimes inserted between consonants (Hansen, 2001; Gut, 2008; Jabbari and Samavarchi, 2011; Olofin, 2019). For example, among Yoruba users of English, 'blade' becomes 'bileedi'. Here we have vowel epenthesis in both initial and final syllables (Bamisaye and Ojo, 2015:380); /bureki/ for (break) and /βurani/(plan), etc. by Kikuyu speakers of English (Macharia, (2013:7).

v. *Aberrant Cluster Reduction*: Clusters are prohibited, for example, in the Yoruba language. This leads to deletion of certain consonants that make English words marked for Yoruba speakers of English (YSE). For examples we hear words such as 'sreet' /sri:t/, posrated /posreted/ secretary /sekɪtri/ etc instead of street, /stri:t /, prostrated / prɒstreɪtɪd and secretary / sekɪtɪəri/ (Olofin, 2019:83).

vi. *Vowel/Consonant Substitution*: Phonotactic differences in languages affect vowel and consonant production a great deal. Where certain phonemes are marked in a language, speakers of the target language tend to substitute the closer vowel in their L1 for the L2. In Yoruba language for example, vowels such as /ʌ/ in *cut*, and *mother* is replaced with /ɒ/. There is sometimes substitution of consonants e.g., /t/ for /θ/, for example **think** as [tɪŋk] for /θɪŋk/; **thank** as [tæŋk] for /θæŋk/. Also, /s/ substituted for /ʃ/ in words such as **shame** as [seɪm] for /ʃeɪm/, and **change** as [seɪndʒ] for /ʃeɪndʒ/ (peculiar to some Yoruba dialect speakers).

The above are variations resulting from phonotactic difference, markedness and some sociological factors to variations in English realizations by most Nigerian users of the English language.



## Theoretical Framework

Communication is a two-way process which demands involvement of the speaker and the listener. Communication takes place only when there is understanding that eventually generates feedback. When the feedback is satisfactory, continuity is encouraged. There are instances the interlocutors need to adjust to the status, age, culture, sex, and even the other party's need to enhance understanding. This study is anchored on Communication accommodation and Phonetic accommodation theories.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), a development on Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) propounded by Howard Giles (1973) predicts and explains various adjustments people make consciously or unconsciously in speech and what motivates the adjustments. This may be to create distance 'divergence' or closeness 'convergence', (Giles, 2007). Three identifiable reasons are given for these adjustments: to evoke their social approval; to promote the effectiveness of communication; and to sustain positive social identity (Giles et al, 1991). Continuous adjustment for closeness or remoteness by changing one's communicative behaviour is referred to as accommodation in CAT. In this technological age researchers have started observing convergence in online environments (Riordan, Markman & Stewart, 2013).

To maintain identity as a teacher of English language, correct pronunciation of words has to be ensured hence, the need for divergence. Since it is the societal norms for intergroup that determine the appropriate language or code to be used, who should diverge or converge depends on who uses the standard variety of the language. For instance, in an English language class, it is beneficial that the teacher maintains the standard variety in linguistics, most especially pronunciation, which is the focus of this study. It is then required of the pupils/students to engage in upward convergence to a more prestigious accent (Dragojevic, et al. 2016b) so as to gain the teacher's approval and to exhibit learning traits which is positive change in their pronunciation proficiency. A situation where the teacher converges to the level of the students in class may be seen as 'suspicious or inappropriate' (Giles & Ogay, 2007).

On the other hand, situation may demand that the teacher adjusts by using the Nigerian variety to explain to students most especially when they find it difficult to grasp the message before diverging to the British variety. It is important the teacher clarifies the differences between the Nigerian English (NE) variety and the British English (BrE) variety.





Phonetic Accommodation (Smiljanik & Bradlow, 2011), on the other hand, is a situation where a speaker becomes more phonetically similar to his or her interlocutor over the course of a conversation. It typically studies two distinctive varieties of a single language but later extended to second language (L2) accent and intelligibility. The focus of this theory in this study therefore is on two varieties of the English language within the same context and communication community (NE and BrE). The global motivation for the English language requires the BrE pronunciation in the classroom learning environment and this demands that the teacher as a model maintains the standard while the pupils converge. CAT is a sociopsychological model that explores how social context facilitates phonetic accommodation.

Based on the above discussed theories, the demand of the English language as a second language in Nigeria, as a language of education and mobility, the teacher needs to get conversant with the two varieties (NE and BrE). As the situation arises, the teacher should be able to diversify, converges or diverges, as the case may be for the learners as well to be able to distinguish between the NE and the BrE.

### **Methodology**

This study employs both primary and secondary methods of data collection. It is descriptive qualitative in nature, in the sense that, all the data are in form of words and the analysis is in the descriptive manner such as words, sentences and utterances. The primary data includes a questionnaire and recording of life classroom teaching of five different teachers, from five different schools in four different states; both primary and secondary. All subjects are coincidentally Yoruba indigenes. Questionnaires were administered to elicit information from 10 purposively selected pupils on their disposition to pronunciation learning and their teacher's attitude to pronunciation teaching; the rate of attention given to pronunciation lessons as well as students' performance in pronunciation tests. The respondents answered questions without indicating their names or schools to allow objectivity. The questionnaires were sent in soft copies to be administered in four different states; Osun, Oyo, Kwara and FCT (Abuja), and the responses were also returned in soft copies via WhatsApp. The purpose is for us to cover a wide communication community and for a reliable data. The recordings were carried out in the four states, one teacher per state and two in Osun state.



## Data analysis and Discussions

### Instrument 1: Analysis of the Questionnaire

Ten questions (*See appendix*) were administered on the respondents and their responses are coded in the table below:

**Table 1: Results of Questionnaire**

|     | Token     | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 | R6 | R7 | R8 | R9 | R10 |
|-----|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Q1  | 1, 0      | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1   |
| Q2  | 1,2,3,4,5 | 4  | 4  | 5  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 5  | 4  | 5  | 4   |
| Q3  | 1,0       | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0   |
| Q4  | 1,0       | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1   |
| Q5  | 1,0       | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   |
| Q6  | 1,0       | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1   |
| Q7  | 1,0       | 1  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1   |
| Q8  | 1,0       | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1   |
| Q9  | 5,4,3,2,1 | 5  | 4  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 3  | 2  | 2  | 3  | 4   |
| Q10 | 1,0       | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1   |
|     |           |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |

Q = Question

R= Respondent

#### Tokens

Q1,4,5,6,7,8, & 10 [ Yes=1] [N0=0]

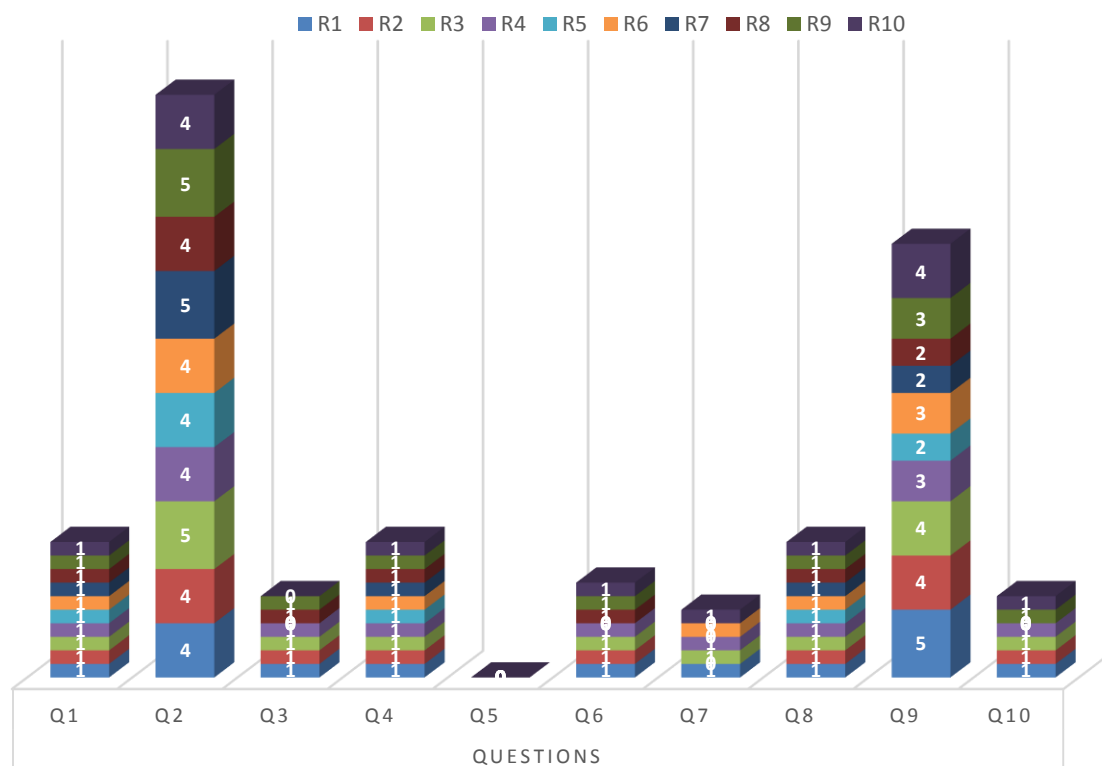
Q2 =1,2,3,4,5 [No of Periods per week]

Q3 = [Male =1, Female = 0]

Q10 = [Excellent=5, Very Good = 4, Good = 3, Fair = 2 & Poor =0]



### 3-D STACKED COLUMN OF RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE



**Figure 1**

The results show that all the respondents attest to the fact that English language is taught in their school as a subject, forming 100%. As regards the number of periods English Language is taught in their respective schools, 70% reports that English Language is held 4 periods in a week, while 30% claim it is 5 periods per week in their own schools. All of them claim they have pronunciation teaching as a topic in their syllabus, while none of the schools has a special period for pronunciation teaching. 70% claim their teachers like teaching oral English while to 30% their teachers dislike it. While 50% claim they enjoy pronunciation teaching, 50% do not enjoy it for various reasons such as ‘It is boring; It makes one feel artificial; The teacher avoids it; and, I don’t pass it’.



This buttresses researchers’ observation that some teachers deliberately avoid pronunciation teaching (Morley, 1991; Foote et al, 2016; Olofin, 2019). All of them agree that pronunciation test is part of their continuous assessment and final examinations. To one of them forming 10%, their teacher is excellent in pronunciation teaching, 30% claim their teachers are very good at it, 30% rated their teachers good and another 30% claim their teachers are just fair in English pronunciation teaching. None at all claim that his teacher is poor at pronunciation teaching.

### Instrument 2: Analysis of the Recording

Five English lessons were recorded and phonetic realizations of selected words were examined and transcribed using Daniel Jones 18th Edition English Pronouncing Dictionary to describe the differences in pronunciation.

**Table 2: Showing Pronunciation of Selected Words**

| S/N | Tokens    | Selected Teacher’s Pron. | BrE Pron.     |
|-----|-----------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1.  | Language  | ['læŋgweɪdʒ]             | /'læŋg.wɪdʒ/  |
| 2.  | Thing     | [tɪŋ]                    | /θɪŋ/         |
| 3.  | Thought   | [tɔ:t]                   | /θɔ:t/        |
| 4.  | Works     | [wɔ:ks]                  | /wɜ:ks/       |
| 5.  | Example   | [esɑ:mpɔ]                | /'ɪgzɑ:m.pəl/ |
| 6.  | Beautiful | [bɪʊtɪfʊ]                | /bjʊ:.tɪ.fəl/ |
| 7.  | Expenses  | [es'pensɪs]              | /ɪk'spensɪz/  |
| 8.  | Orange    | [ɒreɪŋdʒ]                | /ɒr.ɪndʒ/     |
| 9.  | Quantity  | [kɒntɪtɪ]                | /kwɒn.tətɪ/   |
| 10. | Acted     | [æktɜ:d]                 | æktɪd/        |

The recording, most especially the primary school classes, reveals that pupils produce words after the teachers using their teacher as model; a display of ‘mim-mem’ (Mimicry and Memorization Method) (Howatt, 1984:266) or Repetition and Practice (Brown, 1980). The teachers asked students to say after them. Going by CAT, pupils are expected to converge to their teachers’ standard seeing him/her as a model possessing the required standard.



At this stage of 'Critical Period' (Penfield & Robertson, 1959, quoted in Olofin, 2012), their cognitive level is still very fresh and their interest is easily awakened. Whatever is imparted at this stage is easily grafted and it takes time for it to be erased. This early period is the best to learn language when critical period has not expired, and it is easy for them to manipulate their speech organs for sound production (Bright & McGregor, 1982). A child's brain is more plastic than that of adults and before the age 9, a child is a specialist in learning to speak, he can learn 2-3 languages at the same time conveniently. After early adolescence, it becomes increasingly difficult to acquire the pronunciation of a second language (Gimson, 1980). This period is what Lammendella, (1977) refer to as *Sensitive Period*.

Also, as regards Phonetic Accommodation, in language learning, L2 learners may encounter features different from their L1. This sometimes pose challenges when learning new sounds averse in their mother tongue. The phonotactic differences may result in intelligibility problem. The language background and the proficiency level of the teacher as a model therefore is important to pupils' phonetic accommodation and, hence, proficiency.

### Analysis of the Words

**I.** Tokens 1 and 8 reveal, *diphthongization* of the monophthong, /ɪ/ as /eɪ/. This means that while monophthongs are sometimes diphthongized the reverse is sometimes experienced. This is not a result of phonotactic differences in the L1 and L2 in the sense that the sound adulterated is not averse in their mother tongue, but a result of fossilization on the part of the teachers. They are used to that pronunciation may be as a result of erroneous impartation when they were young and their inability to be retrained due to disadvantaged environment.

**II.** Tokens 2 and 3 are cases of *consonant substitution* where dental fricative /θ/ is substituted with the alveolar plosive /t/. Unlike word 1, the two dental fricatives of English are marked and problematic for Yoruba L2 English users and this leads to replacement with the closest sound available in their L1. In word 8, there is the substitution of the alveolar nasal /n/ with the velar nasal /ŋ/ in the word *orange*.

**III.** Token 4 is an instance of *vowel substitution*. The long central vowel /ɜ:/ is replaced with the long back vowel /ɔ:/. There is no excuse for this other than inadequate phonological awareness. The teachers are addicted to the pronunciation as we have in words such as *word*, *world* and *church*.



IV. Tokens 5, 6, 7 & 9 are all reflections of *cluster reduction*. Yoruba language forbids clusters, hence elision of the velar plosive /g/ in the initial cluster and the alveolar lateral /l/ in the final position cluster of the word *example* and *beautiful* and also deletion of the palatal approximant /j/ in initial position of *beautiful*; deletion of the velar plosive /k/ in the initial and final cluster position of *expensive*; deletion of the consonant bilabial approximant /w/ from the word *quantity*.

V. Token 10 is a case of vowel lengthening in which the short front vowel /i/ is substituted with the long central vowel /ɜ:/

### Sample WASP/SFS Recording

Fig. 1: Language /'læŋgwerɔ̃/ (Tr's Pron.)

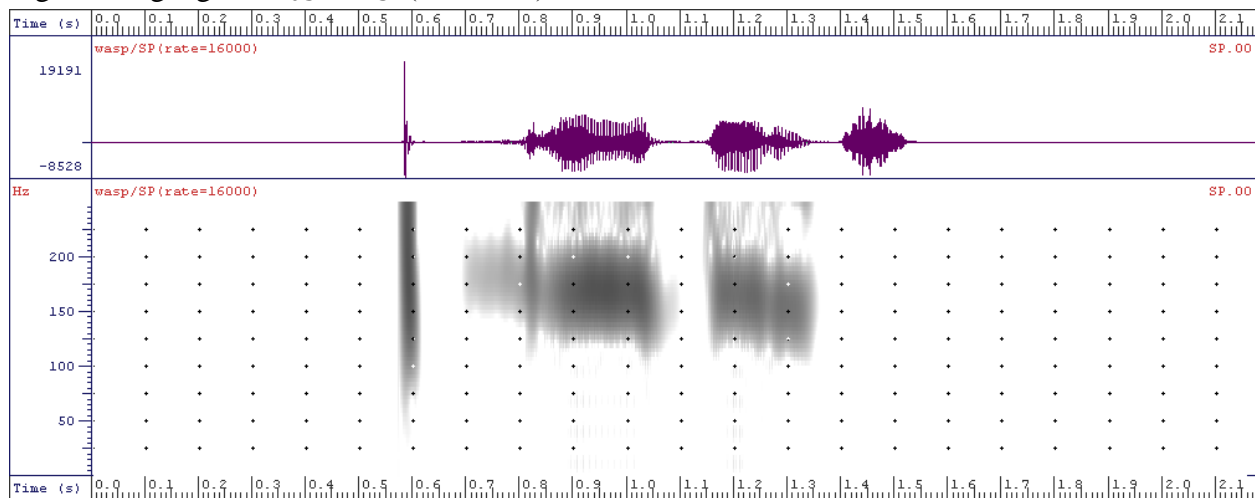
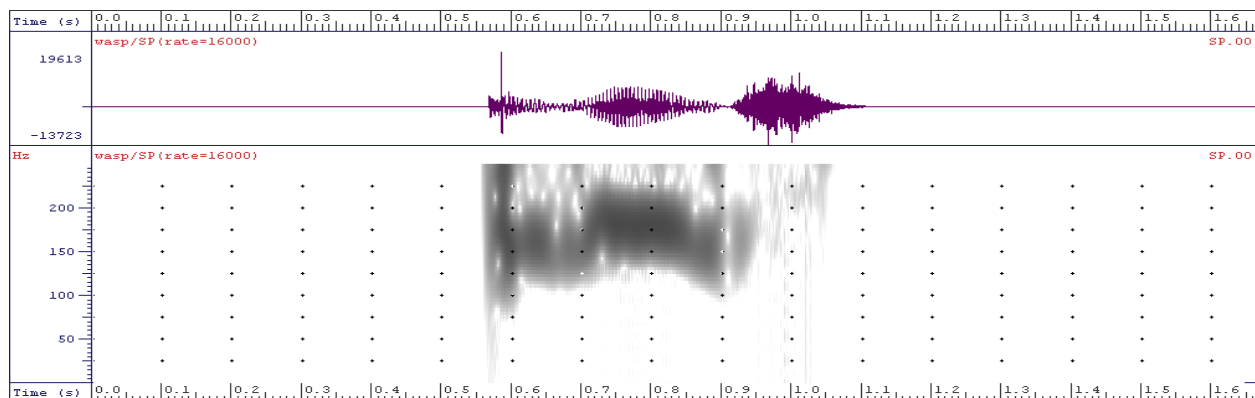


Fig. 2: Language /'læŋg.wɪɔ̃/ (BrE)





The above WASP/SFS shows a display of the teacher's pronunciation in Fig. 1 with start (s) of 0.0000 and ends (s) with duration (s) 2.1760 while in Fig.2, the BrEP starts with 0.0000 as well but ends(s) with a duration of 1.6640 showing difference in duration of 0.5120. The RMS (value) for the Tr'sP is 1255.2233 while that of BrEP reads 1359.0537. The level (dB) for Tr'sP shows -25.3240 while that of BrEP reveals -24.6337. The two figures reveal a disparity between the Teacher's pronunciation and the BrE realization of the word 'language'.

## Conclusion

This study has shown distinction between the Nigerian English Pronunciation (NP) through the selected teachers and the British variety; and exposed the confusing nature of the English language pronunciation teaching in Nigeria in relation to English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum. The purpose of this study is far from indicting the teachers, but for policy makers on English as a second language in Nigeria to decide the way forward to help our young ones in school.

Every year it is recorded that students fail English Language in Nigeria, but we fail to address certain contributive factors to their failure. As long as we still examine pupils in oral English, expecting them to pass at a credit level for both national and international intelligibility, English Language teachers at all levels should endeavor to pronounce words accurately not necessarily targeting native pronunciation or accent but at least near-native pronunciation. It is obvious that, no matter how we try, we cannot attain the native accent but at least we can learn the language with a view to realizing the sounds accurately to ensure intelligibility and, to a large extent, meet the requirement.

As of today, despite the fact that the British or Americans could no more lay claim to the sole ownership of the English language, the BrE variety still remains the standard for academic purposes in Nigeria. As a result, till the policy changes, it is required of the English Language teachers to brace up in pronunciation teaching as the curriculum demands. The onus lies on the teacher to be familiar with the necessary varieties of English and to decide the variety to teach since it is not one variety pupils will come across with in life.

The findings of this study have some implications for educational practice and further research. For classroom implementation, teachers should complement their efforts with available technologies. The use of Android phone should not be a taboo in an English language classroom. It should be allowed in pronunciation classroom especially, for students to access the pronouncing



dictionaries available online. This will make pronunciation learning more concrete and interesting. We are in the technology age and we are dealing with the Net-generation set of children; we cannot afford to be slower than their pace. Teachers should endeavour to work at learners' pace if not ahead of them technologically. This will enable both teachers and learners work in conjunction with the curriculum with a view to achieving the set goals for English pronunciation teaching in Nigeria.

This research is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It has, therefore, opened channels for further research on the English language curriculum in Nigeria, with a specific focus on the two-faced nature of pronunciation teaching in Nigerian classrooms. A study covering a wider range of data would go a long way to further establish or nullify the facts given in this study as the case may be.

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APPENDIX

# Questionnaire

*You are implored to please fill this questionnaire honestly for the purpose of a research being conducted.*

**Class:** .....

**Age:** .....

**School:** (*Private or Public*) ..... **(Don't write the name of your school)**

1. Is English language compulsory in your school and for your class? Yes----- No .....

2. How many periods do you have for English language per week? .....

3. Is your English teacher a male or a female? .....

4. Is Oral English one of the topics in your scheme of work? Yes ----- No .....

5. Do you have period(s) for Oral English/Pronunciation? Yes -----No.....

6. Does your teacher like teaching Oral English/Pronunciation? Yes ----- No .....

7. Do you enjoy Oral English/Pronunciation class? Yes ----- No .....

Why? Give your reasons .....

8. Does English language terminal examination questions include Test of Orals/Pronunciation in your school? Yes ----- No .....

9. Does your teacher pronounce English words the same way he/she teaches you to pronounce them in class? At what rate? (Tick as appropriate.)

(1) Excellent ----- (2) Very Good----- (3) Good ----- (4) Fair ----- (5) Poor .....

10. (a) Do you pass English pronunciation well? Yes -----No .....