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Lexico-syntactic innovations and tone in Standard Nigerian English

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Abstract

The authors present and discuss data collected using a corpus-based research method from three newspapers, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, *Punch* and *NewsWatch* magazines as well as news scripts broadcast over a period of six months by The Nigerian Television Authority, Uyo. Based on the assumption that Standard Nigerian English is the variety used in news writing and spoken by journalists and university men and women, they obtain spoken data from university students and lecturers, isolate instances of innovative lexical and syntactic usages from the corpus and describe the data using the Systemic Grammar Model. The spoken data are analyzed perceptually and acoustically. The analyses reveal some peculiar word processes, innovative word order, class shifts and peculiar pluralisation, among others. At the suprasegmental level, it is shown that Standard Nigerian spoken English has syllabic tone: every syllable has a specification. The syllables that are perceived as stressed are not stressed in terms of the pitch accents of Germanic languages but in terms of raised and lowered tone and word boundary lowering, causing English listeners to interpret the pattern as if the stress placement comes on the wrong word. This leads to the conclusion that standard spoken Nigerian English sounds more tonal than intonational and tone-timed rather than stress timed.

Key words: Standard Nigerian English, tone, innovation, lexico-syntax

Introduction

Within the linguistic circle, innovation may be said to refer to the creative adaption of the forms and uses of a language. It involves the partial or full avoidance or abandonment of conventional modes of linguistic practice and the adoption of/and sometimes creation of alternative modes of linguistic practice thereby resulting in new varieties, new idioms, linguistic codes appropriate for specific linguistic contexts of use and provenances. Indeed Bamgbose (1997, p. 16) cited in Udofot (2003, p. 44) posits that innovation is the process of nativization. The source goes on to say that innovations can be "dynamic and systematic" (Udofot 2003, p. 44). In sum, innovations are legitimate adaptive uses of a language.

Innovations in language use are inherently linked to the creativity in language, thus new words, structural patterns like phrases (or groups) and clauses may be modified to accommodate the new experiences of the individual language user or to express new/different dimensions of culture. Yule (2007) states that innovative processes of language "have been at work in [English] for sometime now and a lot of words in daily use today were at one time, considered barbaric misuses of the language (p. 53)." The creation of the word 'handbook' in the early 19th century was viewed at the time as a 'tasteless' innovation and the use of a newly coined word 'aviation' in a London newspaper was not well received (Yule 2007, p. 53).

However, it is an established fact that there are natural processes of language development like narrowing, extension of meaning and the creation of new idioms. These, among other factors, may account for some of the innovations in Nigerian English lexis, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. For example, Yule (2007) records that innovative uses of a language may be necessitated by the functions which the language in question is employed to serve. This paper examines innovative uses of English words both in terms of their structure and function in sentences as well as innovations in deploying group and clause structure in creating new idioms to achieve semantic extension. This is with a view to contributing insight to the codification of Nigerian English.

Research procedure

The corpus-based research method was used in collecting data which comprised innovatively used words from newspaper and news magazine articles and news scripts of *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, *Punch* and *Newswatch* magazine as well as news scripts of the Nigeria Television Authority, Uyo. The words isolated for discussion were selected on the basis of the creative/innovative features that they exhibit in relation to morphology and syntax (Halliday 1970). The period covered spanned from 2008 – 2010. Since the data were not elicited, not every article/new script contained innovative usages particularly with regard to words. The ones which featured in our corpus were mainly borrowed and coined words as well as neologisms and the pluralisation of non-count (mass) nouns.

Theoretical considerations

The Systemic Grammar is the framework for analysis adopted in this study. It emphasizes the function which natural languages serve. According to this model, language has three basic functions – ideational; interpersonal and textual. The ideational function of language serves for the expression of “context” (Halliday 1970, p.143) cited in Malmkjaer (1991). Within this model the term content refers to the speaker’s experience of the world, including the inner world of his consciousness. The functions of language are used in establishing and maintaining social relations. This function is the interpersonal. This function describes the communicative function which language is employed to serve. The third function which language serves is textual. This function refers to the use to which language users put the linguistic elements of a language in the creation of texts/discourses.

The categories of systematic grammar include class, system, unit and structure. Of these five categories the unit is relevant to the discussions in this study. It accounts for the categories which carry grammatical patterns. There are five units of grammar- sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme. Each of these units of grammar has its elements. Thus the elements of clause structure are Subject, Predicator, Complement and Adjunct usually denoted by the symbols SPCA. The group structure which may be Nominal, Verbal, Adjectival, Adverbial or

Prepositional each has its own elements. The nominal group has the elements Modifier (M), Head (H), Qualifier (Q).

The systemic model is concerned with function and language in use. According to Mei-yun (1991) this model of grammar “... is concerned with the way language is organized to fulfill Communicative functions and satisfy human needs...That is, each part is functional with respect to the whole system” (p.7). Owing to the sociological concerns central to the systemic model as well as its use-oriented approach to language, we find it suitable for our purposes in this paper.

Presentation of data

Newspaper/magazine articles and newsreports comprising news reports, feature articles and opinion columns were studied. Words considered to have been used innovatively used may be isolated for analysis and discussion. They occurred in *The Guardian*, *Newswatch* magazine and NTA, Uyo news scripts. The words/expressions are shown in Table 1 below. All the words/expressions that have been isolated for analysis exhibit peculiar Nigerian usage like borrowing, class shifts, and pluralisation of noncount nouns.

Table 1: Innovatively used words/expressions

S/N	Item	Source Language	Lexico-Syntactic Function
1	retirees	English	Noun/object
2	softly-softly	English	Adverbial
3	wuru-wuru	Igbo	Adjectival
4	mago-mago	Igbo	Adjectival
5	wayo-wayo	Yourba	Adjectival
6	staffs	English	Noun/subject
7	Ado Ok	Ibibio/English	Noun/subject
8	Akpabioism	Ibibio	Noun
9	Akpabiomber	Ibibio	Noun
10	properties	English	Noun
11	handkerchiefed-sized	English	Adjectival

Discussion of data

Lexical innovations

Perhaps more than other linguistic units words/lexical items are more susceptible to innovative uses as they are the candidates for class/functional shifts, word order variations, coinages, borrowing, and various other forms of innovative usages. Kujore (1985), Jowitt (1991) and Igboanusi, (2002) document innovations in Nigerian English lexis. In this sub-section, we identify these innovative uses and explain them morphologically, thereby establishing links between lexis and morphology. The following were found in our data.

The data in Table 1 show the adaptive uses to which the words and expressions have been put. Entry number 1 “retirees” is a noun coined from the verb “retire”. It is created to describe a person who has retired from active service. Furthermore, the word may be said to be a neologism (Udofot 1999). Its creation and meaning are similar to the Nigerian creation of the word “invitee” from the verb “invite” (Udofot 1999, p. 97).

Borrowing

Borrowing is a morphological process which involves the taking over of words from other languages. This phenomenon is usually accounted for by the fact that the borrowing language lacks words or expressions which can adequately capture the essence/ meaning of the word(s) in the language from which borrowing takes place.

The second, third, fourth and fifth entries show interesting linguistic creative/innovative abilities of Nigerian journalists. The word formation process described as Reduplication is employed in the creation of the items here. In the expression “softly-softly”, the adverb-forming affix-ly is attached to the adjective stem “soft”, to derive an adverb “softly”, which is then reduplicated. This newly created adverb is employed in this context to express the sense, “relaxed attitude”. It demonstrates one of the many ways that language users can create new idioms and achieve meaning extension (Yule 2007). The third, fourth, fifth and seventh entries are fully reduplicated forms: each of their constituent elements is repeated (Katamba 1993). It is interesting to observe that the elements which make up the reduplicated words have roots in indigenous Nigeria languages: “wuru-wuru” and “mago-mago” are Igbo, and “wayo-wayo” is Yoruba. They all convey the meaning, “dishonest means/measures”. “wuru-wuru”, “mago-mago”, and “wayo-wayo” serve adjectival function in the group/sentences in which they occurred, while “softly-softly”, functions as adverbial in the group/sentence in which it featured. The groups/sentences are provided in 1 – 5 below:

1. ... the wuru-wuru and mago-mago politics (Newswatch, July 7, 2008. p. 15).
2. The wayo-wayo ways of conducting elections in this country ... (The Punch, August 18, 2009. p. 21).
3. ... I should tread softly-softly. (The Guardian, June 24, 2008. p. 45).
4. Well retained staffs (Guardian, Monday October 4, 2010).
5. The Ado Ok concept of the present administration should be seen as a vision for the improvement of Akwa Ibom people (News script June 24, 2009. p. 3).

The expression “Ado Ok” is an interesting coinage which combines borrowing and acronymy. The first element of the expression, “Ado” is Ibibio meaning “it is”. Ok is a spelling acronym, an expression which is quite widespread and used to mean “all right, satisfactory, acceptable” (Yule 2007, p. 57). It started being used in 1839 as a jocular acronym and had “orl correct” as its original form (ibid, p. 57). The expression is used to embody the vision of the current Governor of Akwa Ibom

State, Chief Godswill Akpabio and serves to express the people’s satisfaction and acceptance of the policy thrusts of his government. “Akpabioism” and “Akpabiomber” are nominal coinages within the same socio-political and cultural milieu of Akwa Ibom people. The former labels the governor’s ideological stance, while the latter describes the salary bonus which the governor offers to state civil servants annually in December. Other studies like Kujore (1985), Jowitt (1991), among others support the findings presented here and confirm this tendency among Nigerian L2 users of English to create new words, borrow and/or coin some from their L1 and create new idioms to express their peculiar cultural experiences.

Reduplication

Usually reduplication is described as a process whereby parts of words or whole words are repeated. When only parts are repeated it is known as partial reduplication but when whole words are repeated it is known as full reduplication. In Nigerian English contexts sometimes the words repeated or reduplicated are borrowed from indigenous Nigerian languages. The reduplicated words ‘wuru-wuru’ and ‘mago-mago’ recorded in *Newswatch*, July 7, 2008 are some examples of this innovative word creation process. Others are ‘softly-softly’ and ‘wayo-wayo’ (See Table 1).

Functional / class shifts

The first element in compound words are generally held to function as a modifier of the head but the function/class of the modifier of the head can shift from one function to another as in “night people” (armed robbers), ‘party-time’. In each of the compound words listed above the first element night and party are nouns but in the context of the compounds they function as adjectival modifiers of the noun heads people and time.

Syntactic innovations

The structuring of sentences is not as fluid as has been observed for words. Consequently, innovations in this area are not common place. However, a few have been observed to exist. The following are some of the ones which are not outright deviant syntactic structures but which illustrate some syntactic innovations:

Semantic shifts deriving from collocation of ‘streets’ and ‘lift’ as in:

- Yesterday at Ekiti, the streets lifted out of their routine doldrums To laugh and joy at the beginning of what Governor Fayemi called a new dawn (The Nation on Sunday, October 17, 2010).
- We travel on our roads with two eyes in front and two eyes at the back of our heads (Newswatch, August 9, 2010).

Pluralisation of non-count (mass) and invariable nouns

‘Staffs’ as in “Well retrained staffs” (Guardian, Monday October 4, 2010). “Properties” (Newswatch June 30, 2009 p. 25).

This may be linked to the understanding of the Nigerian-English users who hypothesize that nouns in English regularly take the –s inflectional ending.

Tone in Nigerian English

Tone is speech melody when it is the property of a word unlike intonation which operates on a sentence or an utterance of sentence status. It has been suggested that the melody of Spoken Nigerian English reflects the prosodic structure of the speakers' native language in a way that stressed syllables are associated with a high tone and unstressed syllables with a low tone (Wells, 1982). In fact, proposals have been made to treat Nigerian English as a tone language with tone on every syllable (Gut, 2002).

Gut and Milde (2002) further suggest that 'words of particular grammatical categories seem to be associated with specific tones and that articles, prepositions and conjunctions tend to have a low tone, whereas nouns, verbs and adjectives are usually produced with a high tone'. Udofot (2007) analyses the tonal structure of the brand of English spoken by educated Nigerians, that which can be regarded as standard Nigerian English to corroborate or refute these assertions and possibly characterize the tonal structure of Nigerian English.

What the study (Udofot, 2007) set out to do was to examine previous descriptions of the tonal structure of Standard Nigerian English and carry out a preliminary investigation into the tonal structure of Standard Nigerian English. This preliminary investigation was to examine the description of the stress pattern and tonal structure of Standard Nigerian English by non-Nigerians (Wells 1982, Gut, 2002, Gut and Milde, 2002) from the perspective of a speaker of Standard Nigerian English. The two previous studies on the prosody of Standard Nigerian English though done acoustically in combination with the TOBI System for analysis used five Nigerian subjects and were done as part of a larger study of the prosody of Standard Nigerian English. Udofot's study concentrated on the analysis of the tonal structure and only analyzed pitch accents and stress because they have to do with tone. Also twenty speakers of Standard Nigerian English chosen from a wider spread of linguistic backgrounds were used as subjects so as to have more representativeness of the sample. The TODI (cf. Gussenhoven, et al. 1999) system which has already been used to analyze the tonal structure of Standard British English was used for the analysis.

The results corroborate the earlier findings to some extent. Standard Nigerian English is shown to have more level tones and very few contour tones; the few contour tones tend to occur at intonation phrase boundaries and utterance finally. The tendency to produce stressed syllables with a high tone and unstressed ones with a low tone as proposed by Wells (1982) was found to be true to some extent but not consistently. The results also showed that generally, Standard Nigerian English features more

stressed syllables than expected in a native variety and some stressed syllables are produced with low tones.

The proposal that words of particular grammatical categories tend to be associated with certain tones - content words with high tones and structural words with low tones was not corroborated by our data because although some structural words were given prominence, in the productions of our subjects, they were not produced with a high tone. The right-spreading tone rule on multi-syllabic words was also confirmed and put down to juncture raising but it was noted that this situation occurs when the multi-syllabic words are in company not when they are produced in isolation. This phenomenon is observable in the following phrases: returning from (LHHL), forcibly taken (HHHL), friendly neighbours (HHHL), and children left (HHL).

Gut and Milde (2002) actually suggests that the prosody of Standard Nigerian English is close to the one of tone languages that have tones associated with grammatical rather than lexically contrastive function but our investigation suggests that there are exceptions since some structural words were stressed. In the example below, for instance, lexical words have high tones while structural ones have low tones in spite of the tendency to stress some of the structural words. For instance, the preposition 'from' and the auxiliary 'was' were stressed in the utterances of some of the subjects but these words are not spoken with high tones..

Ma/ry was/ re/turn/ing /from /the/ bank.

H L L L H H L L H*L

The present study set out to study the speech of another group of twenty Nigerians who could be said to speak 'Standard' Nigerian English', where Standard Nigerian English refers to the English spoken by university men and women, precisely those who have had university education in any discipline and those who are studying or have a degree in English as a discipline and in addition use English for their daily communication purposes outside and at times in the home.

Although many studies in Nigerian English prosody including the ones cited above note the presence of more accented words/syllables in Nigerian English than there would be in a native English version, the basic assumption in this paper is that the speaker of Nigerian English does not really represent the accents in terms of the pitch accents of West Germanic languages but in the word tone patterns where each such pattern sounds like a pitch accent to English ears. For instance, the compounds *everyone* and *anyone* have word boundary lowering between *every* and *one*; *any* and *one* causing the words to sound like *everyONE* and *anyONE* rather than the native speaker's *EVERYone* and *ANYone*. The same is true of words like *life line* and *landlord* which would be produced as *life LINE* and *landLORD* rather than the native speaker's *LIFE line* and *LANDlord*. It would therefore be wrong to say that the Nigerian speaker places the pitch accent/stress on the wrong word here; rather,

he/she uses tone on each word/syllable causing the native English speaker to interpret the pattern as if the stress and therefore the pitch accent comes on the wrong word. In this study, the following hypotheses are investigated:

- that the Nigerian speaker uses tone on each syllable/word causing the native English speaker to interpret the pattern as if every syllable is stressed.
- the Nigerian English speaker tends to lower the pitch at word boundaries therefore appearing to stress the wrong syllable/word as in LANDLORD, ANYONE, EVERYONE, LIFELINE
- tone, rather than stress, characterises the rhythm of Standard Nigerian English.

Research procedure

The subjects of the study were twenty university men and women aged between twenty six and fifty seven whose educational qualifications were not below the Bachelor's Degree. They were either post graduate students, lecturers, or National Youth Service Corps members. The control was a British national born and brought up in London. She was educated in London and Cambridge. She was however married to a Nigerian and has lived and worked in Nigeria for many years. Although it has been shown that some university lecturers in Nigeria do not speak standard Nigerian English while some Nigerians with lower qualifications who come from literate homes and attended good secondary schools speak standard and sometimes Sophisticated Nigerian English (see Jibril, 1986, Banjo, 1996, Udofot, 2004, 2007, Jowitt, 2008), such cases are in the minority. The majority of Standard Nigerian English Speakers according to several studies including the ones cited above are university men and women. Our subjects represent varied linguistic groups in Nigeria. A summary of information about the subjects whose speeches were acoustically analysed is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Sociolinguistic and educational status of the subjects

Subject	Degree	Discipline	Mother Tongue	Occupation	Sex	Age
S_001	PhD	English	Annang	Teaching	F	45
S_002	BA	English	Igbo	Student/MA	Male	35
S_003	Ph.D	English	Ibibio	Teaching	Male	42
S_004	BA	English	Igbo	Student/MA	Female	26
S_005	MA	Public Admin.	Yoruba	Student/MA	Male	36
S_006	BA	English	Annang	Student/MA	Male	38
S_007	Ph.D	English	Annang	Teaching	Female	57
S_008	MA	English	Efik	Teaching	Female	30
S_009	PhD	English	Edo	Teaching	Male	50
S_0010	BA	Fine Arts	Ibibio	Artist	Male	26
S_0011	BSc	Mass Comm.	Hausa	NYSC	Male	28
S_0012	HND	Accounting	Igbo	NYSC	Female	26
S_0013	BSc	Pol. Science	Boki	NYSC	Male	29
S_0014	M.ED	Education	Ikwerre	NYSC	Female	32
S_0015	BA	Education	Annang	Teaching	Female	33
S_0016	BA	Fine Arts	Igbo	NYSC	Female	28
S_0017	BA	English	Igbo/Yoruba	Student/MA	Female	27
S_0018	BSc	Pol. Sc	Igbo/Yoruba	NYSC	Male	28
S_0019	BA	Comm. Arts	Igbo/Ibibio	Student/MA	Female	29
S_0020	BSc	Pol. Science	Hausa	NYSC	Male	27
S_0021	BSc	Finance	Fulfulde	NYSC	Male	28
S_0021C	MA	Latin	English	Educationist	Female	75

The corpus-based research method was used to collect four sentences from each subject as answers to questions they answered in their own words(See Appendix1). The recording was done in the researcher’s office using a VN2100 digital voice recorder . Every subject was recorded twice and the better of the two recordings was used for the analysis. Since the recording was not done in a soundproof studio, many of the productions had background noise while some were either too loud or not loud enough. The productions of the subjects listed above were the only ones that were of acceptable quality for analysis.

The stress pattern of the sentences were analysed using Schane’s (1979) modified version of the Metrical theory while the tonal patterns were analysed using the TODI (cf Gussenhoven, C., *et al* 1999) system which has already been used to analyze the tonal structure of Standard British English and Standard Nigerian English.

Notation

We have adopted Schane’s (1979) version of the Metrical Theory where S and W are assigned directly to base forms and suffixes taking into account both syllable structure and morphological information. Also, our notation admits ternary structures, as in Schane (1979) and Selkirk (1984). TODI is based on TOBI but the conventions are fewer and less abstract. In the TODI System, the falling accent is represented as H*L; the steeply falling as H*+L; the rising accent as L*H; the rise fall as L*HL while the boundary tones are H%, L%, %, %H and %L. TODI differs from TOBI in that it has no phrase tone, one intonation phrase and a single boundary and no Break Indices but the system can account for the full range of nuclear and pre-nuclear tones in Standard British English (Gussenhoven, Rietveld and Terken 1999). In addition, H and L tones are linked to stressed syllables and intonation phrase (IP) boundaries. The main advantage of TOBI is that it makes a distinction between the speakers’ choice of intonation units from an intonation lexicon and the acoustic-phonetic implementation of those choices making it possible for transcription to be compared across dialects of one language and across languages. The TODI System is therefore very suitable for our analysis of Standard Nigerian English which is a variety of Standard British English.

**Presentation of Data
Typical Tonal Patterns**

Out of the 50 subjects recorded the recordings of twenty shown in Table 1 above were clear enough for analysis. First, four utterances, two from the spontaneous speech (UTT.A: I am from -----State; UTT.C: My mother tongue is -----) and two from the read passage (UTT.D: In our house, scolding was the order of the day and UTT.E: Everyone scolded and thrashed everyone else) were selected for metrical and tonal analyses.

The typical patterns (rhythmic and tonal) are shown below. Of the twenty subjects’ performances which were analysed the patterns that were typical of the experimental group together with the pattern that showed slight deviations from the general in the selected utterances are shown. It was observed that most of the subjects’ performances fell within the typical patterns while a few of the subjects had slightly different patterns. The control’s performances in the utterances are also presented for comparison.

Utt.A: I am from — State

I’m	from	A kwa	I bom	State
S	W	S S	S S	S
L	L	L !H	L H	HL

I’m	from	A bia	State
S	W	S S	S
L	L	H !H	HL

Utt. B

I’m	from	Borno	State
S	W	S S	S
L	L	!H H	HL

I’m	from	E do	State
S	W	S S	S
L	L	!H H	HL

Utt. C: My mother tongue is -----

My	mo	ther	tongue	is	A nnang
S	S	W	S	S	S S
L	H	H	!H	L	H HL

My mo ther tongue is I bi bio
 S S W S S S S S
 L H H !H L L !H H

My mo ther tongue is I gbo
 S S W S S S S
 L H H !H L H L

My mo ther tongue is Yo ru ba
 S S W S S S S S
 L H H !H L H L H

Control

My mo ther tongue is English
 W S W S W S W
 L H* L H*L L H* LH

Utt. D

In our house, scold ing was the or der of the day
 W W S S W S W S W W W S
 L L L !H H L L !H H L L L*

In our house, scold ing was the or der of the day
 W W S S W S W S W W W S
 L L H H L L L H L L L L L*

Control

In our house, scold ing was the or der of the day
 W S S S W S W S W W W S
 L H L*H H L L L H L L L L H*L

Utt E:

E very one scold ed and thrashed e very one else
 S W S S W W S S S S S
 !H H H H H L H !H H H L

Control

E very one scold ed and thrashed e very one else
 S W W S W W S S W W S
 H L L H* L L H H L L H

Discussion of data

Stress and tonal patterns

It is clear from the data presented that Standard Nigerian English is different from British English and other native Englishes. First in the area of having more stressed

syllables, the data shown above confirms that there are more S than W syllables in the metrical analysis than there would be in a native English version as shown in the performance of the control. In the following stretch from *Utt.3: My mother tongue is...* which occurred in the speeches of all the subjects and that of the control, the typical Nigerian rhythmic pattern was: S S W S S while that of the British speaker was WSWSW, showing a rhythmic alternation :

	My	/	mo/	ther	/	tongue /	is ---
Nig. E	S		S	W		S	S
	L		H	H		!H	L
Br. E	W		S	W		S	W
	H		H*	L		HL	L

Also in the utterance UTT.E the contiguous strong syllables are evident.

E / very / one / scold / ed / and / thrashed / e / very / one / else

Nig. E. S W S S W W S S W S S
 !H H H H H L H !H H H L

Br. E. S W W S W W S S W W S
 H L L H* L L H H L L H

This supports earlier findings (cf. Bamgbose 1982, Udofot 1997, 2003, 2007, Gut 2002 and Jowitt 2007) among others. But there is a new dimension: the strong syllables do not necessarily correlate with high tones nor do the weak syllables correlate with low tones in Nigerian English, while they do in the speech of the control representing British English. What this suggests is that Nigerians' tendency to use tone on every syllable is transferred to English and tone not stress is used on every syllable strong or weak which gives the auditory impression that many and at times all syllables are stressed. This confirms our first hypothesis that the Nigerian English speaker uses tone on each syllable/word causing the native English speaker to interpret the pattern as if every syllable is stressed. The variety of Nigerian English studied here is Standard Nigerian English used by highly educated Nigerians. Udofot (1997, 2003) actually confirmed that in the Non standard Nigerian English, almost every syllable is stressed which is responsible for the usual description of Nigerian English as syllable-timed because the tone on every syllable gives the impression of stress. The feature stress is not used in Nigerian Languages (see, for example, Essien 1990 for Ibibio). What happens is that emphasis is shown by raised pitch not other correlates of stress such as duration and pitch accent but tone.

Also, it has been shown that the syllables that are heard as stressed are not actually stressed in terms of the pitch accents of Germanic languages but in terms of raised

and lowered tone and word boundary lowering causing English listeners to interpret the pattern as if the stress placement comes on the wrong word. Thus the Nigerian speaker's *anyone* sounds to the native speaker as a wrong placement on the second rather than the first syllable to realise it as the native speaker's ANYone (see Figs 2 a & b). This may well account for other stress shifts in such words as MAdam, saLARY, caLENDAR etc.

This work has shown that the Nigerian Speaker hardly uses stress but tone and word boundary lowering which gives the impression of pitch accent and shifting of stress to English ears. It can therefore be suggested that the Nigerian English speaker hardly uses stress the way it is understood by speakers of Germanic languages but more or less uses tone the way it is used in Nigerian languages. Also vocalic intervals alone may not be conclusive evidence of syllable timing since as in this study full and reduced vowels do not necessarily correlate with high and low tones. The relationship of stress to tone in Nigerian Spoken English needs further investigation.

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NTA Uyo newscrypt, June 24, 2009, p. 3.

NTA Uyo newscrypt, February 5, 2010, p. 1.

The Punch, August 18, 2009, p. 21.

Appendix

Sample data obtained from four media sources (2008–2010)

S/N	Item	Media Sources
1	Retirees	The Guardian, June 19, 2008, p. 6
2	softly-softly	The Guardian, June 24, 2008, p. 45
3	wuru-wuru	Newswatch, July, 2008, p. 15
4	mago-mago	Newswatch, July, 2008, p. 15
5	wayo-wayo	The Punch, August 18, 2009, p. 21
6	Staffs	The Guardian, October 4, 2010, p. 23
7	Ado Ok	NTA, Uyo news scripts, June 24, 2009, p. 3
8	Akpabioism	NTA, Uyo news scripts, August 10, 2008, p. 3
9	Akpabiomber	NTA, Uyo news scripts, Feb. 5, 2010, p. 1
10	Properties	Newswatch June 30, 2009, p. 25
11	handkerchiefed-sized	Newswatch June 28, 2008, p. 74