

# **A SURVEY OF THE SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF EDUCATED NIGERIAN ENGLISH**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper focuses attention on “A Survey of the Syntactic Features of Educated Nigerian English”. It discusses the syntactic issues and tries to account for possible deviations from British English usage. The purpose of this is to establish a relationship between Educated Nigerian English and British English usage. To achieve this purpose, Nigerians from four majority Nigerian ethnic groups selected by a stratified random sampling technique were studied. These respondents were required to write freely on a given essay topic which ranged from narrative, descriptive, expository and argumentative. The essays were analysed on the bases of syntactic structures of the English language. The results show very slight variation of Educated Nigerian English at sentence, clause, group and word levels from the structures of the British English usage. However, acceptable constructions from informants were obtained at all the levels. The paper concludes that the difference between the syntactic structures of the Educated British English and Educated Nigerian English is not so much. This point to the fact that learner’s habit is inadequate for the learning coupled with inconsistency in managing students and teachers. From the findings, implications, recommendations are made for future researchers, learners, teachers and government for improved performance.*

English language is a non-native language in Nigeria; but it has come to stay in Nigeria. This is possible as a result of official government policy which adopted the speaking and writing of English along with other Nigerian languages as means of communication in both formal and informal situations.

The language “English” is a conglomeration of many languages: Celtic, Danish, German and Latin etc, this gives rise to various roots for word formation in the language. In addition to being a conglomerate of borrowing, spread and nativization have been identified by scholars as being responsible for the changes and divergences experienced in the language over the years. According to Eka. (2005:31-32)

*The language has spread to nearly all parts of the world. Wherever it goes and settles down for a considerable length of time, it is usually known to influence the language of such communities and is in turn known to acquire the local colour of its new*

*environment. This process has been variously described by linguists as nativization, indigenization or localization or even domestication.*

The intercourse between the British English language and the local languages in the course of its spread has given birth to many new Englishes such as American English, Australian English, New Zealand English, Canadian English, South African English, Ghanaian English and Nigerian English, among others. In Nigeria for instance, the variety of English spoken and written has been known to possess the features which qualified it as a variety of English referred to as Nigerian English. It is a variety that is typically known to have varieties within a variety. Scholars have identified these other varieties to include: Sophisticated Nigerian English, Educated Nigerian English, Basic Nigerian English and non-Nigerian English. The exponents of this variety are students from secondary schools, colleges of education, polytechnics and the universities.

These categories of Nigerians have been involved in language learning tasks at various levels of their educational pursuit. Again, given the fact that these groups of learners only learn English as a second language because of the already existence of the first language: Mother tongue (Li) as their background languages, there is bound to be some natural constraints mostly at the phonological and syntactic levels occasioned by the second language situation.

Commenting on the constraints that are likely to occur, Enang.(2009:3),has this to say: *...natural constraints are inevitable because these constraints are non-existence in the first language (MT) or in Nigerian Pidgin English (which is a compromised language) between English and the indigenous languages. It is in pidgin that many Nigerians resort to when there is need for a change of register. It is pidgin also they employ all the linguistic facilities which are markedly absent in the spoken and written forms of Educated Nigerian English. As a result, many constructions which, when analysed at the level of syntax, constitute deviant writings in terms of concord, spellings, punctuation, choice of connectives, transliteration, colloquialism and collocation, among other inadequacies in language learning, speaking and writing in the Nigerian situation which are not in line with the native speaker's norm.*

This very factor has given the Nigerian English its distinctive features which mark it out as a variety in its own right(cf Edem, 2015).

Also, scholars have discovered that the gap which exists between educated Nigerian English and British English usage is not wide in any way. Jowitt:(1991) has observed thus: It is important to realise that while the PNE syntax errors are numerous and often glaring, the gap between ENE syntax and SBE syntax when each is considered in its entirety is narrow, not wide (p.109).

However, at the secondary school level, there is a persistent decrease in the level of competence and performance in English language. As a core subject, English is often seen as a springboard to any good result in the various subjects offered in the final year, since the various text books on these subjects are written in English. Therefore, it

is expected that a fair communicative competence and performance in English would result in a commendable performance in the other subjects, but the reverse has tended to be the case. One known factor which has often been responsible for this poor performance is that the learner/users themselves do not have a good grasp of the syntactic norms of both spoken and written forms of English as they are taught by their teachers of English.

One usually comes across structurally deviant constructions in terms of spellings, punctuations, concord and others such as wrong choice of connectives and passive style. Essays we read from our secondary school students analysed at the level of syntax show numerous problems at the sentence, clause, group and word levels. There are other cases of departure or deviation from norms which according to Odumuh:(1987).

*...in contact situations such as we have in  
Nigeria, a variety/varieties emerge/(s).*

*This emergent variety deviates significantly  
from the parent (as a must) (p.76).*

Other errors include those of number associated with nouns, pronouns and verbs. Structural problems relating to prepositions, form words such as auxiliaries, determiners and content words: nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives, among others, are also identified in their day to day writings. Still, many instances of pleonasm (using more words than necessary) and others that are multi-class in nature and which cut across the ethno linguistic boundaries of Nigerian speech community are also found in their expressions. Other problems trespass the territorial boundaries of morphology, lexis and meaning of the intended expression that make some presentations to offer or yield more than one aspect of the syntax of Educated Nigerian English.

### **The Problem**

An educated Nigerian, like any other educated foreign language learner, can be said to speak at least two languages: he/she acquires the first language (mother tongue) while at home and learns English language mostly at school. He/She applies both the mother tongue (Li) and the English language in various situations. He may use either of the two within the house, while outside and or at his place of work. But he chooses to use English at formal situations because other Nigerians or non-Nigerians who do not speak his mother tongue may be present.

English thus, becomes a vital tool to communication in Nigeria in view of the multi-lingual posture of the country. This observation agrees with Bamgbose's (1970) assertion that:

*of all the heritage left behind in Nigeria  
by the British at end of the colonialism  
probably, none is more important than  
the English language. (p.40)*

The second sense in which English language is used as observes by Eka(2003:33) is that it reminds us about the native speakers, now sometimes simply referred to in descriptive terms, as speakers of English as a first language (L1). However, even with reference to speakers of English as L1, the kind of homogeneity shown on the early stages are almost not there, rather, English today is a language of diversification, having spread to nearly all parts of the world. As Ferguson in his forward to Kachru(1981) puts it:

*...there has never before been a single language which spread  
...over most of the world, as English has done in this century.  
The importance of this fact is often over-looked in discussions  
of the characteristic features of this age. The spread of  
English is as significant in its way as is the modern use  
of computers. When the amount of information needing to  
be processed came to exceed human capabilities, the computer  
appeared on the same, transforming the processes of planning  
and calculation. When the need for global communication  
came to exceed the limits set by language barriers, the  
spread of English accelerated, transforming existing  
patterns of international communication. Kachru (1981:1x)*

English language therefore has become the language of business, mass information and the literary arts, among others, having been firmly established as the official language. As a 'tool' language, English is taught and learned as a second language in Nigeria. The constant use of the English language in the day to day activities prompts the learner/users to strive to use it like the native speaker.

There is a consensus that there is no significant improvement in the competence and performance ability of some Nigerians educated in the language. Even with a credit pass in the English in the school certificate examination, students' performances in spoken and written English during their first year to finals as undergraduates are generally far below expectation.

Given the fact that the SS3 students and the first year undergraduates are drawn from primary and post-primary institutions across the nation, their performance in the Use of English course could be seen as a national problem which requires a national solution. As a native speaker of Ibibio language and as a user of the English language at different levels of education, I have interacted with the educated Nigerians whose use of English falls below the class they claim to belong.

Again, as one who has taught students at certain levels and as a West African School Certificate and a National Examination Council examiner/marker, I have had access to students and have discovered that they have difficulties in the construction of sentences, clauses, group and word formation which could be analysed at the level of syntax.

This and other problems have stirred up this study so as to highlight educated Nigerians' inadequacies in grammar and use same to proffer solutions as contribution towards equipping and helping teachers and students of English with facts for the analyses on English sentences.

This is done in this work through the use of Systemic Grammar Model which makes it possible to: select and analyse sentences and clauses of educated Nigerians from the corpus of data and discuss them, select and analyse the group and word structures and account for the possible differences and influences.

### **On the term: The Syntax of Educated Nigerian English**

The syntactic component of a language deals with the set of rules by which words, groups and clauses may be put together to form grammatical sentences of the language. (Culicover 1976).

The native speakers' features with which English language left England many years ago have with the passage of time gradually peeled off and replaced them with the features that are perennial (nativized) into the new environment it has set its foot. If English language were to return to England its native home, it definitely would have undergone a lot of metamorphosis that it would not be easily recognisable anymore.

Educated Nigerian English is a non-native variety of the world Englishes, a highly nativized subset to suit the socio-cultural need for communication is a product of the multi-coloured one language. (Eka. 2005). Therefore, its syntactic features are bound to tilt faster to the local provisions for communication than to those of the parent's stock.

With the above explication in mind, we see the syntax of educated Nigerians English to be concerned with the rules that provide for the use of words and structures which, even though may deviate from native speaker norms, are facilitators for sentences that bring about communication in Nigerian English usage

### **Problems with Sentences:**

At the sentence level, educated Nigerian English Syntax tends to accommodate a lot of constructions which range from simple to compound complex sentences, poor coordination, punctuation, concord problems, colloquial expressions and transliteration from background languages, poor lexical collocation, ambiguous expressions, wrong diction and coinages coupled with pleonasm or superfluous expressions, among other syntax related shortcomings. For instance:

1. SISTER I would not believe that even in your Wildest dream Elopement could be ONE of your choices of getting a husband and infact it is the most Primitive and Unpopular ways of getting married to an Unpopular guy as a Suitor
2. This is a small strong village with very strong people because a real raw child died as a result of the outbreak and every political wagon is quiet.

3. The stairs were Burning and Ada couldn't get down without the baby, the delayance was long, so, he jumps inside and carried the already death baby out.

4. If we wait for a long time and nothing come out of the pipe lines as promised by Mr. President, they now go and break the pipe to see the things whose Mr. president said was in the pipe line. When we ask them for our share of the national cake.

### Problems with Clauses:

The clauses located in the sentences from the corpus were also analysed on syntactic rank scale. The results reveal that of the ten sentences isolated for identification four of which have discussion on the clauses in them, one sentence contains two main clauses and one subordinate clause, two sentences contain one main clause and two subordinate clauses each while one sentence contains one main clause and one subordinate clause. In all, it was discovered also that syntax related problems such as poor punctuation; poor coordination, elements of transliteration, tense problems, colloquial expressions, concord related problems in almost all the sentences constructed by Nigerians educated in the English language. Let us look at these sentences:

5./// *The outbreak occurred between my home the filling station // which I was an eye witness // the tanker driver is the cause///.*

6./// *Infact the mouth of the fire was so tall // that I start to draw myself back // in spite of the heavy damages it causes ///.*

7./// *We all requires a carry born knowledge // before we can succeed in marriage // which is stress free ///.*

8./// *We had enjoy sixteen several years of friendship // before we departed from each other///.*

### Problems with Group

The four essay questions administered on the informants gave room for each respondent to show ability by constructing sentences to reflect group structures in language usage. The results however reveal that most of the respondents did not find it easy to construct sentences that were devoid of problems with the various groups, while a great majority of the informants still found it difficult to part with the problems arising from the background languages. Again, let us look at these:

9. *The car, / capsided / totally after / the crashing.*

S            p            A            C

10. *The newly receive suitor / smoke / cigarret / greatly daily.*

S                            P            C            A

11. *The spokesman / spoked / to us / bluntfully also carefully.*

S            P            C            A

12. Wrongful drivers / drives / the long tanke muchly too  
 S P C A

*Problems with Word:*

Tomori (1977) describes morphology, asserting that Morphology is the study of the rules governing the formation of words in a language.

From our corpus of data, we found that a great majority of the informants still found it difficult to part with the problems arising from allomorphic variation- a practice whereby the addition of the ‘S’ element to a word in the English orthography does not mean anything more than the formation of plural at the word level- whether noun or verb, while the absence of ‘s’ only means singular.

The results also show that at the word level, most of the informants flouted the morphological processes of pre-fixation and suffixation known in SBE such that most of the morphemes are formed into potential words coinages as are allowed by the phonotactics of English.

For instance, delayance, friendshipness, wrongful, muchly, greatly, capsided, uncomplainingly, trickish, bluntfully, unbendability, binded and spoked (from speak) etc were found to have occurred in their constructions and duly sorted and accounted for. Eg

13. My friendshipness / have made / a fool of me  
 S p C

14. You / have to obey / Daddy/ uncomplainingly because he has a very high level of unbendability for serious issues.  
 S P C A

15. The police / asked / me / a trickish question.  
 S P C C

16. The delayance of the burial / is caused / by the police.  
 S P C

**The Data Collection Procedure:**

Data for this study were collected between May, 2014 and June, 2015. We employed the questionnaire /test items technique, personal encounter with external examination candidates/ situational observation. These techniques combined to give a controlled survey approach essential for success in this study.

The instrument consisted of four essay type questions of the test. The four test questions were prepared to reflect the curriculum for the final year students of secondary schools and tertiary institutions. The primary aim of the test was to determine the informants’ general knowledge of syntax in line with the level of their academic attainment (exposure).

All the tests were written or conducted in an atmosphere which accorded the informants a conducive air to contribute leisurely and with unrestricted generosity on the topic of their choice and were expected to work under strict anonymity and total self effacement.

This study was carried out at Federal Government College, Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, Federal Polytechnic, Unwana Afikpo, Abia State, Federal College of Education, Obudu, Cross River State, University of Uyo,, Akwa Ibom State and the Federal Civil Service workers resident in Akwa Ibom State.

The justification for the choice of federal institutions all together is the need for equal representation of the sample required for the analysis since most Nigerian language groups are represented by stratified sampling. This selection was done in anticipation of analysis with problems which may come from mother tongue (Li) conceptual processes.

Table 1 below shows the schools, the states, the numbers of students and the class of each while Table 2 shows the population with their nearest language location selected for the study.

**Table 1**

<i>No Of Schools</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>No.Of Students Selected</i>	<i>Class Of Student</i>
<u>Fed. Gov't College,Ik. Ekpene.</u>	<u>Akwa Ibom</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>SS 3</u>
<u>Fed.Poly, Unwana Afitkpo</u>	<u>Abia</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>HND 2</u>
<u>Fed C O E Obudu</u>	<u>Cross River</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>NCE 3</u>
<u>University of Uyo, Uyo</u>	<u>Akwa Ibom</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>Yr. 4</u>
<u>Fed Civil Service</u>	<u>Akwa Ibom</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>SSCE,HND NCE, B.A, BSc.</u>

**Table 2**

<i>State</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>No Selected</i>
1	Efik/Ibibio/Annang	25
2	Igbo	25
3	Hausa	25
4	Yoruba	25



## **Discussion**

Educated Nigerian English is fast becoming a multi-coloured one language due to the ethno-linguistic climate parental in the various regions of Nigeria, bearing in mind that each of these regions has its own language in existence before the advent of English in Nigeria. So, the multi-lingual posture of Nigeria has been responsible for the varying degrees of nativization of the English language which has led to the emergence of the subset so referred to as educated Nigerian English.

Again, the simple fact that every human being thinks or reasons in his mother tongue (Li) before translating it into or expressing it in English language for the purpose of communication calls for constraints. This is because there is obviously no one to one equivalence of sentence, clause, group and or word of the background languages (MT) spoken and written in Nigeria with the English language. It is the markedly absence of the possible equivalence of the word, group, clause and sentence in the background languages that creates rooms for interferences, transliteration, colloquialism, poor lexical collocations, concord shortcomings, coinages, pleonasm, ambiguous expressions among many other problems in their constructions when analysed at the level of syntax.

As Edem (2015:227) observes, despite the fact that the mother tongue is said to form a natural and easy means for a child's further intellectual, emotional, social, and linguistic development, it (the mother tongue) interferes in the efforts of students to learn a second language.

The exponents of educated Nigerian English are students from Secondary Schools, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and the Universities. The concern of this study was to find out how the grammatical part of English has been with educated Nigerian learner/user of English and to suggest what could be done to contribute to the solution of these problems as to the kinds that are identified in this research work. All together, it has been observed that each of the sixteen items isolated from our corpus of data and pasted accommodates not less than five or more of the syntax related problems highlighted earlier.

Consequently, it is the test yield from a large corpus of data which we will analyse at the level of syntax to be sure of what constitutes *Educated Nigerian English deviations* at the clause/sentence and word/group categories of the British English syntax. From the out set, it is these deviations from the native speaker's norms which have given the English usage in Nigeria the features distinct from those of its parent and so enable this variety to assume the status of a new variety called Nigerian English.

From The View Point Of TRANSLITERATION, items 2, 3, 6, 7 and 10 for instance, yielded structures which appear to be more of transliteration from **the** background language milieu in Nigeria as in Item 2 which has such expressions like 'small strong village', 'very strong people', 'real raw child'.

Item 3 again bears the preposition 'inside' which does not collocate with 'jump' and so the expression 'jump inside' and 'carried' do appear to be inconsistent with the syntactic requirements of the native speaker's norms. Item 6 equally have elements of direct lifting from the Li. The expressions: 'the mouth of fire' instead of 'the flame of

fire' and 'start to withdraw myself back' instead of 'I started to withdraw' are not in line with BrE usage. In item 7, the use of 'carry born knowledge' instead of 'in born knowledge' is a glaring departure from the BrE usage even though clearly communicating.

Item 10 for instance, has 'to drink' which is a direct transfer of the Li lexis collocating with 'water' to replace SBE 'to smoke' which collocates with 'cigarette' in the native speaker's norms. This expression is typical of the Nigerian English user since there is no possible word to replace 'smoke'. Therefore, 'drink' and 'smoke' are taken to mean 'drink' in the Nigerian local languages.

WITH REGARD TO COLLOQUIALISM, items 1 and 2 and 4 further reveal these features which is a word or phrase that is used in conversation but not in formal speech or writing. The word 'guy' in item 1, 'political wagon' in item 2 and 'national cake' in item 4 are all colloquial expressions. Colloquialism is here treated as an aspect of the syntax of a variety of English which deviates from the norms of the SBE and as such becomes a peculiar feature of one of the world Englishes. This is because a 'guy' for instance, is a model of a man dressed in old cloths that is burnt on a BONFIRE on 5<sup>th</sup> November every year during the celebration of BONFIRE NIGHT (in BrE usage) whereas in Nigerian English usage, a 'guy' refers to a person popular and liked by all, such that it is seen as a plus in the Nigerian English context.

Again, educated political class in Nigeria makes use of the phrase 'political wagon' to refer to a politician who is able to carry many people along without any form of discrimination while the SBE refers to such a people as 'Big Short' or 'political heavy weight' or top gun.

Also, Nigerian English refers to the money obtained from the various natural resources meant for sharing to all the states of the federation, using the equal entitlement formula as 'national cake' whereas to the SBE, it means to have the advantages of something without its disadvantages from the national coffer. Therefore, 'guy', 'political wagon' and 'national cake' have gained a passport or acceptance into the Nigerian English lexicon.

### **Coinages**

This is an act of inventing new word or phrase in any natural language. This is a very interesting aspect of the syntax of educated Nigerian English which adds to the peculiarity of the features that justifies it as a variety in its own right. So many strange words have been found to have occurred in the course of word formation by the respondents. These words are formed by the process of derivation from the existing SBE morpheme which forms the base or root from which other morphemes are obtained by prefixation or suffixation processes.

The phonotactic system of the English words has shown that such words do not actually occur in English but are not prevented from occurring by the combinatorial requirements of the language, hence, they are said to be potential words and are combinatorially possible. Eka(1996:45).

In this study, we are treating coinages as words or phrases that are non-existent or strange in the SBE lexicon but are very effective in effecting communication in the ENE norm. Six out of the sixteen items isolated for discussion contained features of coinages. These are items 9, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16. Item 9, for instance, has coinage in the verbal group ‘capsided’. This word strange in the SBE lexicon and from the context it is used, one easily realizes that it is a morphological error committed by the informant. The correct choice would be ‘capsized’ to make the nominal and the verbal groups appear thus:

The car/capsized/  
S P

Error of this nature is almost always identified with varieties 2 and 3 educated users of Nigerian English, for they still use ‘capside’ in place of ‘capsize’ whenever they wish to refer to a situation where a vehicle or boat ‘turns over’, ‘tumbles’ and or ‘somersaults’.

In item 12 again, the rankshifted adjectival group ‘wrongful drivers’ is a strange coinage derived from the root ‘-wrong’+ ful, thereby coining out another adjective ‘wrongful’ from the existing one ‘wrong’. The case is the same with ‘much’ which provides the base for the suffix ‘-ly’ for ‘muchly’ to be obtained and so may be regarded as potential words. Again, the word ‘bluntfully’ is a rankshifted adverbial group derived from the root ‘blunt’. Many of such coinages are in the lexicon of the educated Nigerian English and very effective in communication.

Item 13 for instance the word ‘friendshipness’ as another noun formed from the already derived noun ‘friendship’ from the base ‘friend’. The word now passes through the base thus:

Base	1 <sup>st</sup> derived noun	Newly derived noun
Friend	friendship (SBE)	friendshipness (ENE)

Therefore, ‘friendshipness’ as a newly coined noun is suggestive of the extent or depth to which one is in friendship thereby contributing to the addition of a new form of derived meaning and usage from the word ‘friend’.

In item 14, we have the formation ‘unbend’+ ability. It is a combination of both prefix ‘un-’ and suffix ‘ability’ from the base ‘bend’ which is a verb as we can see:

Base	Prefix/class Base	Derived word/Class
bend (Verb)	un-bend-able (Adj)	unbendability (Noun)

From the morphological process, it is clear that the verb ‘bend’ has ‘unbend’ and ‘unbendable’ as adjective and then ‘unbendability’ as a noun, which is suggestive of the ‘the impossibility of attempting to bend’. This item again is of interest to this study as it contributes to the enlargement of the vocabulary of the educated Nigerian English. More so, the morpheme has again gained added a new entry into the educated Nigerian English repertoire as it is possible to derive other word forms from the base thus:

Prefix/class	Word/Base	Suffix
derived/class		
uncomplain (adj)	complain(N/V)	uncomplainingly (adv)

This entry has been in use and has its own meaning which is suggestive of ‘strict obedience without any complains to an instruction or order’.

Another coinage ‘trickish’ occurs in item 15. it is coined from the word ‘trick’ > tricky> trickier > trickiest in the superlative form almost always used by Nigerian English users of varieties<sup>2,3</sup> and most of them in variety 4, such as professionals, publishers, journalists, broadcasters and some university dons with bias in the sciences mostly use the word ‘trickish’ instead of ‘tricky’ in their daily communication with during conversation and on the students they teach. The morphological process involved here is derivational thus:

Base	suffix	derived word	derived word
trick (n/v)	-ish	trickish (adj)ENE	tricky(adj)SBE

This word is suggestive of a person or animal being full of tricks, but in the SBE sense, it means ‘being tricky’.

In item 16, another strange occurrence is ‘delayance’ derived suffixation from the base ‘delay’ (n/v) by the addition of ‘-ance’ to an existing noun/verb to have another noun ‘delayance’ which is suggestive of a ‘a period of time when an action has to wait due to one problem or the other that slows it down or makes it late’

### **Pleonasm or Superfluous Expressions**

The first superfluous expressions commonly referred to as pleonasm by linguists has been discovered in item 8, 11, 12 and 13. in item 8 for instance, the adjective ‘Several’ means ‘more than a few, but not very many’ in BrE context. But to educated Nigerian English users of varieties 2 and 3, it means ‘many’ and most often, the use of ‘several’ to denote ‘many’ has cut across the ethno linguistic boundaries of the Nigerian languages. Therefore, the expression:

‘We have enjoyed sixteen several years of friendship before we parted from each other’,

is functionally determined with two main clauses and one subordinate clause, though not in line with the SBE norm, is an acceptable usage to Nigerian English users because communication has taken place.

Another of such expression is found in item 11, where the informant uses ‘bluntfully also carefully’ in adverbial group. The informant may have wanted to say how ‘blunt and careful’ at the adjectival group but has rank shifted to the adverbial group for purpose of emphasis ‘that even though the spokesman was blunt in his speech, yet he was careful at the same time’.

Again, in item 12, the expression ‘wrongful drivers’ occurs at the nominal group and ‘muchly too well’ at the adverbial group are superfluous apart from being derogatory and emphatic respectively. ‘Wrongful drivers’ is suggestive of the extent or

depth to which certain group of drivers sink into perpetrating wrong activities whereas 'muchly too well' is a polite strategy for being emphatic on a speech act by most educated Nigerian English users of varieties 2 and 3. The adjunct, apart from being unEnglish in the BrE usage has a communicative function of registering contentment and satisfaction on the part of the user in spoken Nigerian English usage. Also, the informant uses 'muchly' to modify the existing modifier 'too' of the adjective, 'well' to show the extent to which 'wrongful drivers' drive long tankers well.

In item 13, the expression, 'my friendshipness' in the nominal group is superfluous. The informant may have wanted to express regret about the relationship and so went to a level of personifying 'friendship' by adding the suffix '-ness' thereby forming another noun from the existing one in order to drive home his feeling of regret.

Therefore, these expressions are useful and of interest to this study because new structures at the group level have emerged and contribute to the enlargement of the repertoire of the educated Nigerian English syntax.

FROM THE VIEW POINT OF MECHANICS, six out of sixteen sentences constructed by respondents have been found to have had punctuation related problems ranging from wrong capitalization, poor positioning of commas and full stop as well as wrong spellings which cut across the entire corpus thereby making it difficult to express the intended meaning if not making it impossible.

For instance, in item 1, the words 'sister' and 'one' are written in block capitals. This informant goes on to select certain words within the sentence 'wildest', 'elopement', 'primitive' 'unpopular' and 'suitor' and treats them on first letter capital basis. This, by the researcher's calculation, is the informant's way of emphasising on those words and so begins such words with the capital letters.

These items are 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 and 15. For instance, in item 1, the words: 'sister' and 'one' are written in block capital. This informant goes on to select certain words within the sentence; 'wildest', 'elopement', 'primitive', 'unpopular' and 'suitor' and treats them on first letters capital basis. This, by the researcher's calculation, is considered to be the informant's way of giving prominence to those words and so begins such words with capital letters. There is also the absence of a comma (,) after the word 'sister' and a full stop after the word 'husband' to mark off the end of the long sentence, thus, bringing the two long sentences into one long and complex sentence.

Item 2 is equally not properly punctuated. A comma (,) should come after the word 'people' before the beginning of the second clause which offers a reason adverbially beginning with connector 'because'. In item 3, there is the use of first letter capital on the word 'burning' which again is typical of many Nigerian English users for laying emphasis in a written medium. Item 4 for instance, is another example of a case where sentences and clauses are mumbled jumbled since they are not properly punctuated. This item lacks proper punctuation. The result is that the constructions in this item meander into long and winding sentences with incomplete thought expression.

In item 14, the words 'in' and 'fact' are contracted into one word: 'infact' with a criminal disregard to rules governing punctuation. Again, the commas (,) after the words 'infact'(compressed) and 'back' are not used. Item 15 also should have a comma(,) after the word married.

Therefore, the absence of punctuation marks at their proper places has greatly affected the structural patterns of our informants' grammar and the meaning conveyed by their sentences.

Another syntax related problem is that of poorly coordinated constructions. Items 5 and 6 have been found to display this shortcoming. For instance item 5 contains the following clauses:

//The outbreak occurred between my house and the filling station //  
//which I was an eye witness. //  
//The tanker driver is the cause //.

The first clause has the omission of the word "fire" to qualify "the outbreak". The last clause has tense problem because of the word "occurred" in the first clause which refers to the past and so the auxiliary verb "is" does not agree, instead "was" should be used. Again, the comma should have come in after the words: "station" and "witness". Therefore, the absence of these vital elements makes it poorly coordinated, thus, making it difficult for an idea in one clause to link freely with the idea in another. The lack of proper connective device between these clauses leaves much to be desired.

### **Summary of Findings.**

From the study, the following findings are made:

1. At the sentence level, educated Nigerian English has four sentences structurally or in form such as simple, complex, compound and compound complex.
2. The simple sentence of educated Nigerian English structure has a clause with elements such as subject, predicator, complement and adjunct(SPCA) while other sentence types contain the main and the subordinate clauses.
3. Four functional sentence kinds are found to exist in educated Nigerian English which include declarative, imperative, interrogative and exclamative types.
4. It is also found that educated Nigerian English contains some strange occurrences and mostly of the initial position while the obligatory elements remain in the SAP(C).
5. There are two categories of prepositional groups found to exist in educated Nigerian English syntax. There are : simple and complex. Attempts to relate these groups to other grammatical categories tend to result in wrong collocation structure. For instance, "confide to" instead of "confide in", "acquaint on" instead of "acquaint with", "take up" instead of "take off", "rounded up" instead of "rounded off"
6. Educated Nigerian English syntax also reveals a number of expressions which are direct transfers from the background languages of our respondents. For instance, 'a small strong village with strong people', 'the mouth of the fire', 'a real raw child', and 'a carry born knowledge' to mention just a few.

7. Cases of irregular pluralization in the subject-verb agreement of the concord were also revealed, e.g. 'wrongful drivers drives...', 'fire fighters extinguishes the fire...', 'the goods destroys...', 'the problems appears...S'.

8. There exist strange and unusual coinages or occurrences in the syntax of educated Nigerian English, e.g. uncomplainingly, friendshipness, unbendability, trickish, delayance and muchly etc.

9. The word group sometimes bear wrong selection of lexical items, e.g.

He drinks cigarette, instead of 'smokes', 'the mouth of the fire', instead of 'flame' etc.

### **Conclusion**

Following the nature of the findings, it is noted that the highest area of inadequacies are those from the group and word levels. They are particularly noticeable in the verbal and morphological realization by most varieties 1, 2 and 3 learner/users.

For most learner/users, the Nigerian students especially, there is the likelihood of finding it difficult to part with patterning in the background or regional language usage, hence, the intrusion of the mother tongue expounded by the high degree of the transliteration experienced in their written and spoken forms of the educated Nigerian English syntax structure.

Again, most differences in the structure of their expressions are explicable from the poor knowledge of the rules which may come as a result of limited exposure of teacher/users to acceptable norms of Standard English. It may also be traceable to poor habit and lack of interest on the part of learner/users toward learning. It may probably be accounted for by the attitude of students who use pidgin as a dominant language of the Nigerian university campuses irrespective of the level they are.

Generally, most final year secondary, NCE, HND and university undergraduates in this study often demonstrate a poor mastery of the norms of Standard English syntax, thereby breaking the native speaker norms through nativization, hence, the emergence of a new variety called Educated Nigerian English.

### **Implication for further Research**

In view of the colossal index of inability of learner/users to speak or write acceptably in English, it may be said in the first place that the acceptable norms of the language can be learned from users who can themselves apply the rules of grammar appropriately. Constant exercises can emphasize the norms until acquisition of facts is achieved.

Learning at any level involves the learner and the authorities from whom the training comes. So, attitudes are therefore involved. The implication here is that the right human resources would be required for appropriate training. This is because the right attitude toward training is bound to produce positive effect on the learner and his attitude to learning. No non conscientious teacher anywhere can produce competent and diligent learner with a rewarding output.

Another implication for further research is that government should as a matter of urgent national importance select language specialists from the major Nigerian language regions to come together with a view to coming out with data on common core features which will unite all the regional subvarieties into an emerging subset of a sophisticated Nigerian English.

Furthermore, there are certain sections of the course which pose problems more than others. Where such areas of the course content are neglected, there is bound to be inappropriateness.

Finally, at other times, there is need for the trainers to be empowered to apply some level of disciplinary measures in order to obtain the expected results from the learners.

### **Recommendations**

A major aim of research in language is to uncover certain properties in that language which are common and uncommon because there are certain properties that human languages have in common, even though not all these properties can be attributed to historical connections between them. Therefore, following the findings and possible implications, the following recommendations are offered:

More researches should be made into the survey of the syntactic features of educated Nigerian English with a view to finding out some of the syntactic properties that would make this variety of English have international recognition as a language in its own right.

The government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the mission school operators should quickly come to the realization that the quality of English language acquired during colonial and immediate post independent period has seriously been nativized may be by some traceable factors which could be taken care of and so embark on a re-instatement of quality teaching and learning approaches to English language.

The peer groups in our Nigerian schools should be given proper direction so that they do not what they desire but are made to have what they deserve so as to be founded in the rules that govern word combination in the language of instruction.

Also, our schools (nursery, primary and secondary) should come together and engage themselves in meaningful exercises which may result in competitions on the written aspect of English, because it is generally observed that many a student hardly writes in English as much as they speak in English.

Furthermore, every new study at the level of syntax of educated Nigerian English should serve as a springboard into further studies with a view to establishing the properties which constitute educated Nigerian English and those of the sophisticated Nigerian English.

Finally, this work recommends that adequate incentive and or motivation be given to language teachers in all levels of our educational system, while our university dons who are language specialists should be encouraged to set up their consulting



websites in the internet to further enhance effective access and research into what would be expected to constitute the syntactic properties of educated Nigerian English as a variety in its own right.

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