

**VARIATIONS IN LANGUAGE USE
BETWEEN NIGERIAN ENGLISH AND STANDARD BRITISH ENGLISH:
A CASE OF MASS COMMUNICATION STUDENTS, KANO STATE
POLYTECHNIC**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is the product of my own research efforts undertaken under the supervision of Professor BASHIR M. SAMBO and has not been presented and will not be presented elsewhere for the award of a degree certificate. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my late mother: Hafsat Sani (Mrs), on whose foundation I lay to thrive on the success I have achieved educationally. I am eternally indebted to her for the moral up-bringing bestowed on me as your **SUPERSTAR.**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the variations manifested in the English use of some Nigerian students and traces them to establish their distinctiveness from Standard British English. The study lies in the premise that learning English resulted in the emergence of cultural concepts loaned into the English Language in a bid to achieve communicative appropriateness to accommodate the non-native culture which provides the context within which the language is used and understood. The cultural concept of communicative competence in bilingual situations is useful in this study because it provides a sound cultural background for the variations manifested in the English usage of the students and thus providing the communicative contexts within which such variations can be appropriately used to reflect the socio-cultural experience of the users. This study focuses specifically on students of Diploma Mass Communication, School of General Studies, Kano State Polytechnic and it aims at investigating their lexis and structural usage in an attempt to accommodate actions in response to their efforts to communicate and to assess the factors accountable for those efforts. The findings of the project work is of the premise that the occurrence of elements of variation in Nigerian English in the lexical and semantic alternatives are considered to be deviant from Standard English. Similarly, it has been discovered that the features of Nigerian English constitute the cultural identities and worldviews of the Nigerian users. The research has shown that the mother tongue thus influences Nigerian English lexis. The project work has found out that the occurrence of the elements of variations in Nigerian English, especially in the lexical and semantic alternatives are considered to deviate from the Standard English. It becomes imperative to take into cognisance our socio-cultural settings in learning the English Language. Language is a living thing that changes with time so that some forms become obsolete and archaic while some others come up from the users creativity.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces variations of a language and as it constitutes its dialects. All languages are continuously changing. Various factors, especially the use of spoken and written languages have led to the development of variations in most of the major speech communities—a special dialect of a language that is theoretically maintained unchanged. The research takes a keen interest in the variations of Standard English and Nigerian English.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The users of English around the world have been classified into three concentric circles: the ‘norm-producing’ inner circle made up of native speakers; the norm-developing outer circle made up of second language users and the ‘norm dependent’ expanding circle comprising speakers of English as a foreign language (Kachru 1985). English is a heritage left behind in Nigeria by the British at the end of the colonial administration. However, it is now the language of government, business and commerce, education, literature, mass media, internal and external communication in Nigeria. In practice, therefore, English is an effective medium of communication among Nigerians with different linguistic backgrounds. It is estimated that there are about 400 different local languages in Nigeria. Three of these languages: Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are often referred to as the major languages of the country but very few people speak more than one of these three languages. The multilingual nature of the Nigerian society leads to many regional variations in their use of English because the different local languages have their accents directly or indirectly transferred to English. There are majority of people speaking Nigerian English (NE) as it can be tagged with different accents. The term 'Nigerian English' has come to be recognized and accepted by some scholars as referring to a legitimate sub-type of English which is peculiar to Nigeria.

For effective communication, we adjust our language behaviour according to who we are, what we are using it for and the context in which we are communicating. In

essence, Nigerians use language behaviours derived from the region or locality in which they were born or live in. These variations manifest themselves in pronunciation, speech and writings. As it is assumed that measure of proficiency in the English Language is one's educational attainment, regional varieties of English are influenced by one's level of educational attainment. This ranges from school to University education. One then asks the questions: where does one draw the line? should the primary school leaver be considered a speaker of English? or should we consider only those people who have received University education? The corollary to these is that since even some highly educated people in Nigeria still speak sub-standard English, it is difficult to draw a line. It is worth noting that for a great number of people, even in the British Isles where English is their mother tongue, the dialect of English they learn to speak in childhood is a local or regional dialect and accent. To them, that is what English is. It is only later, usually at school that they are introduced to Standard English as the socially agreed vehicle for education and international communication. Grieve (1965) opined that the point about English in Nigeria is not just that it is different from British or American English but rather that there are several varieties of English ranging from something very near Standard English to the patois of the market place. This concept has informed the topic of this research work in terms of variations.

Each local or regional varieties of English in Nigeria have their own characteristics, especially in phonology and lexis. Certain pronunciations are identified with members of an ethnic group and when all or most of the markers of the group's accents are present in a particular speaker, one can be fairly certain that the speaker in question is a member of that ethnic group by birth or by upbringing or both. Members of several ethnic groups residing in adjacent parts to one another in the country share many characteristics in their spoken English.

Since then English Language was introduced into Nigeria, its contact with many indigenous languages has precipitated phonological, grammatical and lexicosemantic changes in norms and forms of English spoken within the country. In the light of this observation, this project investigates variation in language usage of some Mass Communication students.

1.0.1 STANDARD ENGLISH

MacArthur (1992) observes that the term 'Standard English' (S.E.) resists easy definition but is used as if most educated people know precisely what it refers to. For some of those people, Standard English is a synonym for 'good' or 'correct'

English. Others use the term to refer to a specific geographical dialect of English or a dialect favoured by the most powerful and prestigious social group. Linguists such as Crystal (1995) argues that there is no single definition to 'Standard English'. It is against this backdrop that this work tries to explore some definitions of Standard English:

- Standard English is simply one variety of English among many.
- Standard English was selected (though not by any overt or conscious decision) to become standard because it was the variety associated with the social group with the highest degree of power, wealth and prestige.
- Standard English is the form of English recognised as most appropriate for formal situations and is used widely in public and professional life. It does not identify the speaker or writer with a particular geographical area or social grouping. In Britain, the accent associated with SE is Received Pronunciation. All forms of slang, dialect and grammatical deviations are non-standard.
- Some people call SE a dialect of English but it has no local base because there is nothing in the grammar and vocabulary of a piece of SE to tell us which part of a country it comes from.
- Although SE is widely understood, it is not widely produced. Only a minority of people within a country actually use it when they talk. Most people speak a variety of regional English or an admixture of standard and regional Englishes.

- Standard English is the English used by the powerful.
- Standard English is the variety of English used by the educated users of the language in Britain especially the South of England.
- The linguistic features of SE are chiefly matters of grammar, vocabulary and orthography. It is important to note that SE is not a matter of pronunciation; it is spoken in a wide variety of accents.
- It is the variety which is used as the norm of communication by the community's leading institutions such as government, law courts and media.
- If we read the newspaper or listen to the newscasters around the English-speaking world, we will quickly develop the impression that there is a World Standard English, acting as a strongly unifying force among the vast range of variations which exist.

Nonetheless, Nigerian English largely contains expressions that are not in conformity with the norms of the Standard British English. Such expressions are seen as conspicuous errors or deviance(s).

1.0.2 NIGERIAN ENGLISH

Scholars have described Nigerian English in different ways. While some see it as a language that is evolving from a multilingual background with influences from multiple languages, some see it as a variant from the norm (and therefore a body of institutionalised errors). Many reasons can be adduced for the need to reject the varying grammatical structures in Nigerian English. The purist sees it simply as not conventional and at variance with Standard English. Perhaps, there is the need to recall Adetugbo's (1979) observation that a variety needs not be identical with a standard language. The variation really makes the difference! In Nigeria, where the flora and fauna differ, where the people and their ways of life differ and where

there are a multitude of languages and language clusters, we should expect that the English language, which is a second language to the majority of its users, will differ at different linguistic levels with grammar inclusive.

Nigeria is a land of many languages with over 400 languages spoken by its inhabitants. As a result, the country has a great need for a common form of communication across ethnic groups. English, introduced to Nigeria during the colonial era, was chosen as Nigeria's only official language with this goal in mind. It is widely learned as a second language by speakers of many different Nigerian languages and frequently used in business and education. However, not all the English spoken in Nigeria is the "standard" English recognizable in most English-speaking countries. As is commonly in the case when a language is heavily used between non-native speakers, a new way of speaking has developed with its own unique grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. This form of communication is Nigerian English.

Nigerian English has been described to differ systematically from British English in the areas of stress, rhythm and intonation (Bamgbose 1971, 1982; Jibril 1986; Jowitt 2000). Differences in word stress and the usage of sentence stress have been pointed out: sentence stress is not used for emphasis or contrast and given information is not usually de-accented. In the area of rhythm, it has been suggested that Nigerian English has a syllable-timed rather than stress-timed rhythm. Vowel reduction is less pronounced than in British English which leads to a perceptual impression of equal weight and length of each syllable. In the area of intonation, it has been suggested that Nigerian English reflects the prosodic structure of the speaker's native language and that stressed syllables are associated with a high tone and unstressed syllables with a low tone (Jowitt 2000).

1.0.3 Variations in Language Use

Variations in language use among speakers or groups of speakers are notable criteria or changes that may occur in pronunciations (accent), word choices (lexicon), or even preferences for particular grammatical patterns. Variations are a principal concern in sociolinguistics. Individuals differ in the manner in which they speak their native tongue although usually not markedly within a small area. The differences among groups of speakers in the same speech community can, however be considerable. These variations of a language constitute its dialects. All languages are continuously changing but if there is a common direction of change; it has never been convincingly described. Various factors, especially the use of

written language have led to the development of a standard language in most of the major speech communities—a special official dialect of a language that is theoretically maintained unchanged.

This official dialect is the school form of a language and by a familiar fallacy has been considered the norm from which everyday language deviates. Rather, the standard language is actually a development of some local dialect that has been accorded prestige. The Standard English of England is derived from London English. Use of the standard language is often a mark of polite behaviour. In the United States employing Standard English which largely entails the usage of approved grammar and pronunciation, marks a person as cultivated. Ordinary speech may be affected by the standard language. Thus, many forms of expressions come to be considered ungrammatical and substandard and are regarded as badges of ignorance. As in other fields of etiquette, there is variation. *Gotten* is acceptable in the United States but not in England. The literary standard may differ from the colloquial standard of educated people and the jargon of a trade may be unintelligible to outsiders. Such linguistic variations in English are mainly a matter of vocabulary. An auxiliary language is a non-native language adopted for specific use and such a language is Nigerian English.

1.0.4 DEVIANCE

Deviance is a term used in linguistic analysis to refer to a sentence (or its units) which does not conform to the rules of grammar i.e. it is ill – formed (Crystal 1995). Deviance in Nigerian English occurs because most Nigerian speakers stop learning the language at an adolescent level and, in many cases when the formal use of language is no longer called for. These speakers revert to their first language. The deviant form is as a result of mother tongue interference or imperfect learning of Standard English. Banjo (1979:4) describes it as errors associated with approximate systems. On the other hand, it is distinct from the native speaker's varieties of English. It is a usage form of syntax which does some communicatively disabling violence to the grammar of English as used worldwide and to international intelligibility. As the joint level of lexis and semantics and even of phonology, it represents a way of expressing the elements in the multilingual and the multicultural environment in which this dialect of English is used differently from the ways of the emigrant native – speaker varieties would.

This is truism over the statement that the native speaker varieties may not be able to effectively express the cultures in the Nigerian environment (Bamgbose, 1982).

The following examples from the Nigerian English syntax are instances of deviances.

1 'I hear English '(NE)

'I understand English ' (SBE)

2 "I can hear a smell" (NE)

'I can sense a smell' (SBE)

3 "The food is too sweet" (NE)

'The food is delicious' (SBE)

4 "Don't move with bad boys (NE)

'Don't associate with bad boys" (SBE)

5 "They" are calling you"(for one person) (NE)

He is calling you" (SBE) (near native variety)

6 "He has finished his house in Ibadan "(NE)

"He has completed building his house in Ibadan (SBE)

7 "Don't reverse back your car" (NE)

"Don't reverse your car" (SBE)

Adesanoye (1977)

The expressions in NE are unacceptable to the native speakers of English.

Deviances therefore, are an unacceptable complete departure from the norms of Standard English or from what is considered normal or customary. Adesanoye (1977) notes that many deviant features of syntax in Nigerian English are often as a result of L1 negative transfer and inadequate visualizations, leading to the misspellings of words, inadequate vocabularies and deviant verb forms. Crystal (1995) observes that, "In linguistic enquiry, the notion of individual difference- of linguistic effect which does not conform to a rule or norm- is an aspect of what is commonly referred to as deviance. In its extreme form, deviances produce instances of language effect which does not conform to a rule or norm- is an aspect

of what is commonly referred to as deviance. In this area, deviance produces instances of language which are totally unacceptable; 'cat the' is a deviant form at the level of grammar". There are however different levels of deviance-degrees of departure from the norms which identify the various varieties of English and form the structures they have in common.

Variations are demonstrated by linguistic differences in terms of sound (phonetics) and structure (grammar). There might be only slight variations between forms of a language – such as minor pronunciations of words or a slight changes of grammatical structures that do not inhibit intergroup communication. Sometimes, there are differences between the speeches of men and women, different social classes and differences between age groups. People will identify some of these features as marking the "best" or most "beautiful" forms of the language. Other features will be considered nonstandard or undesirable. Some of these differences may impede intelligibility and intergroup communication.

The study of language variations guides language development activities. For example, when developing a writing system, it is desirable for it to be useful and acceptable to the largest number of speakers of the language. Therefore, it is important to identify the most unifying features of the language. In an attempt to compare Nigerian English with Standard British English, historical antecedents have been guided by four main sources of Nigerian English: linguistic improvisation, old-fashioned British expressions, initial usage fossilized errors incorporated into our linguistic repertoire and a mixture of British and American English.

The variety of the English language that is most popularly used in the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the most populous country in Africa is Nigerian English. It has a whole host of what is called stereotyped phrases that would strike most native speakers as incomprehensible. Some of these words and phrases are creative coinages or semantic extensions based on the cultural uniqueness of Nigerian cultural expressions which the English language has not lexicalised. Stereotyped phrases in Nigerian English are also the product of insufficient familiarity with the conventions and idioms of the English language (Bamgbose: 1996).

‘Say me well to him/her to your family’, some Nigerians use this ungainly verbalism when they want to send expressions of good will to someone through another person. This uniquely Nigerian expression would be puzzling to native

speakers of the language because it is structurally awkward, grammatically imbalance and unidiomatic.

Adekunle (1974) attributes Nigerian English as usages in Lexis and Syntax emanating from mother tongue (M.T.) interference. It is quite easy to show that while some usages in Nigerian English can be so attributive, the vast majority in Nigerian English usage arise from the normal process of language development involving a narrowing or extension of meaning or the creation of new idioms. Most of such usages cut across all first language backgrounds.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study focuses specifically on students of Diploma Mass Communication (aspiring journalists) for various reasons. In the first place, Nigerians look up to them as role models whose English should be considered as a target for other speakers. In reality, not all the students have the same proficiency in English neither do all of them speak "good" English. While the majority of graduates in English can be seen as role models, many students who studied other disciplines like Engineering and Technology may not be so considered. Nevertheless, having been exposed to English as a medium of instruction right from the primary school, it is believed that, given their level of exposure to English and their proficiency especially in spoken English, is usually very high due to the English language being a driving tool in the field of journalism. More importantly, the majority of these students are habitual speakers of English in that, although English is not their ancestral language, they study courses on: English for Mass Communication and English for Journalistic writings. In addition, the students use English very frequently as the language of interaction while carrying out their duties.

It has become pervasive that students of Mass Communication tend to write using Nigerian English Expressions unknowingly thereby jeopardising their chances in Essays and Letter writings not because they are unintelligent in English Syntax but because the form of expressions they use is not acceptable to their examiners.

Moreover, the topic has generated a lot of debatable questions such as: Is there a thing such as Standard English? Who's Standard? What is Nigerian English? Is there such a thing as Nigerian English? If there is, how is it different or similar to Standard English? If there is not, why do we have such radically idiosyncratic usage patterns that make distinction from other users of the English language? These are the hypothetical questions this work will aim to analyse in-

depth in an attempt to explore the variation in language use between Standard English and Nigerian English as applicable by the Mass Communication students of School of General Studies, Kano State Polytechnic.

1.2PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Aspiring to write and speak English that closely approximates the way it is written and spoken in Britain and America is difficult in colonised nations especially because of concerns for mutual intelligibility. However, when students fail to use the English language to communicate well, two options are inevitable: neologism (that is, invention of new words or phrases) and semantic extension (i.e. encoding existing English words and phrases with new meanings to encapsulate our unique socio-linguistic experiences).

The purpose of this study is to explore the efforts of language usage in Standard English as demonstrated by Mass Communication Students.

1.3SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Two fundamental sources of Nigerian English have been identified by renowned scholars. The first is linguistic improvisation. There are exceptional Nigerian socio-cultural thoughts that simply cannot be expressed in the "standard" form of the English language. Thus, we either convert our local languages to take care of this lack or we appropriate existing English words and phrases and imbue them with meanings that serve our communicative purposes. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (pg. ix) claims that 'proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten'. He was consciously appropriating English lexical items to express a uniquely Igbo cultural thought which could be absurd to a native speaker of English.

These modes of language use take place not only within the society but with extension to schools of higher learning. School of General Studies, Kano State Polytechnic is not an exception with respect to the subject of this research.

1.4SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Nigerian English is a distinct variety of English used by Nigerians. Nigeria, however, is broadly categorised into Northern and Southern regions. To undertake this project effectively, the scope of this study will be limited to students of a tertiary institution in the North-West of Nigeria. Mass Communication students of

School of General Studies, Kano State Polytechnic, will be the focal point for the investigation of the efforts to use Standard English. The school has been selected due to the multi-cultural setting it assumes; drawing its students from across the various parts of the country. Their levels cut across: ND 1 and ND 2.

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This research work aims at investigating the efforts of the students to communicate in English. The researcher aims to investigate usage in lexis and structure by some Mass Communication students of School of General Studies, Kano State Polytechnic in the mode of Nigerian English in their attempts to write in Standard English which must be able to convey the worldviews and cultures of its users. English is a non – native language in Nigeria and the need for it to cater for the demands of Nigerians due to the sociocultural differences between them and native speakers necessitated the ‘nativisation’ of English to suit the Nigerian environment (Bangbose, 1995:1).

The objective of this research work are to:

1. Identify the students’ lexical and structural use in Standard British English.
2. Identify the factors accountable for semantic extension in Nigerian English.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on relevant literature on the topic of this research work by examining some major contributors and also discussing Standard British English with respect to Nigerian English and its two schools - Deviation and Variation.

2.1 VARIATIONS IN ENGLISH

Trudgill and Chambers(1999) find that people speaking with rural accents such as those of Devon and Cornwall in South West England for example are typified as dim-witted but trusting whereas people speaking with urban accent such as Cockney in London are typified as quick-witted but untrustworthy. By contrast, speakers of Standard English with a Received Pronunciation accent are generally thought to be more intelligent than speakers of other dialects and also superior morally as well as socially. Linguists have come to prefer to use the term ‘variety’ when describing variations in language in order to avoid negative connotations. This has none of the negative connotations associated with the terms dialect and accent and fits in with the idea of descriptive linguistics i.e. basing descriptions of language upon actual use. Variety can also be applied across to a wider range of language features than the terms dialect and accent. For example, it could metamorphose into linguistic variation, historical variation, social variation, geographic variation, stylistic variation etc.

The main reason why there is so much geographical variations in English throughout the United Kingdom and England especially is historical. Language operates across two dimensions simultaneously: the horizontal dimension of space, also called the diachronic axis and the vertical dimension of time called the synchronic axis. In addition, there is also a third, social dimension which accounts for variations between social classes. The reason why for example there is so much variation in England today and so little in the USA is historical. Similarly, the negative and prejudicial attitudes commonly held towards linguistic variation particularly in the UK, have their roots in history.

2.2 NIGERIA’S CONTACT WITH ENGLISH

The contact the English language had with Nigeria in the 16th century through colonisation gave birth to Nigerian English. As such, it can be classified as one of the ‘New Englishes’ emerging from British colonies where English is not the mother tongue but used as second language (L2). Platt et al 1984) defines ‘New English’ in relation to second language context, thus:

i) The English Language has developed through the educational system. This means that it has been taught as a school subject and in many cases also used as a medium of instructions in regions where languages other than English were the main languages. The degree to which English is used as a medium of education for other subjects varies considerably from nation to nation and from one type of school to another.

ii) It has developed in an area where a native variety was not the language spoken by most of the population.

iii) The English Language is used for a range of functions among those who speak or write it in regions where it is used. This means that the new variety is used for some purpose such as in letter writing, in parliament, administration, in the media, and sometimes for oral communication between friends and in the family. The English Language may be used as a lingua franca, a general language of communication, among those who speak different native languages or in some cases even among those who speak the same native languages but use English Language because it is felt to be more appropriate for certain purposes.

iv) It has become 'localised' or 'nativised' by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words and expressions. Usually, the language has developed some different rules for using language in communication.

2.3 ATTITUDE TO THE NEW ENGLISHES

The liberal attitude to the new Englishes have emerged and are emerging in countries where English is used as a second or auxiliary language. Gimson (1981) insists that the pronunciation of a mother tongue forms of English should strictly be identified as a model in the training of teachers of English in English speaking communities in India and Africa so as to avoid them. However, in Nigeria, the climate of opinion concerning the varieties and functions of English as used in the country does not tally with the thinking of scholars such as Gimson. Although there is increasing support for the notion that Nigerian English lexis is comparable in status to native varieties such as: British, West Indian and Canadian. Problems

of intra-national intelligibility are recognised within the Nigerian speech community. Evidences of such problem is that the numerous indigenous languages still continue to superimpose their phonology, lexis and structure on the various geographical varieties of English (Banjo 1979). Such ethno linguistic influences have been argued and bound to disappear (Jibril 1979).

Observing the definitions or criteria of 'New English' given by Platt et al (1984), it can be deduced that Nigerian English indeed fits into the class of 'New Englishes' just emerging in the World. While the British variety of English is easy to describe, Nigerian English was 'yet nascent' and to a certain extent controversial (Banjo 1996:74). Due to its controversial nature, linguistic scholars were divided in their arguments regarding it. There are two schools of thought in the argument. The deviation school and the variation school.

The deviation school sees Nigerian English as a "concentration of errors underpinning the superficial mastery of Standard British English" (Adedimeji, 2007). Jowitt (1991) upholds that the British are the "owners of the language. American English is a crude imitation of it and Nigerian English is a deformed creature which ought not even to be mentioned in a good society". To scholars in the deviation school, Standard British English is the target of learning the language in Nigeria because the British are the 'owners of the language'. Anything other than Standard British English (SBE) is unacceptable and wrong.

The second school of thought is the variation school. Those in it were the most outspoken in the 1980s and 1990s. They see Nigerian English as acceptable in view of the socio-cultural differences existing between Nigerian users and native speakers. English in Nigeria is a second language unlike in Britain where it is the mother tongue/native language. Therefore, to ensure its survival in the Nigerian environment, the sociocultural values of the Nigerian society must influence it so that it can meet the needs and demands of its Nigerian users.

Literary writers were not left out in the argument for or against Nigerian English, but they were mostly in favour of the existence of it as a variation. Achebe (1965) cited by (Banjo 1996:126) says:

'I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experiences but it will have to be a new English still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings'.

Soyinka (1988) also says:

‘... when we borrow an alien language to sculpt or paint in, we must begin by co-opting the entire properties of our matrix of thoughts and expressions. We must stress such a language, stretch it, impact and compact it, fragment and reassemble it with no apology as required to bear the burden of experiencing...’.

The ‘alteration’ of Achebe and ‘impacting, compacting and fragmenting’ of Soyinka point to the fact that for English to fully express the mind of the Nigerian writer, it must conform to Standard British English to express the Nigerian cultures and environment.

Jowitt (1991) opines that “the usage of every Nigerian user is a mixture of standard forms and popular Nigerian English forms which are in turn composed of errors and variants”. However, Jowitt (1991) later agrees that Nigerian English is a variety of ‘New Englishes’ by saying: ‘Any variety of New English which did not have this capacity for growth through nourishment from popular root but only had it been grafted upon. Standard English (SE) forms without local adaptation would be an uninteresting object kept in being artificial’. Popular Nigerian English forms, as Jowitt (1991) posits, are the popular roots through which Nigerian English gets its ‘nourishment’ because such forms are the manifestations of the rich cultural heritage of Nigeria.

With the arguments for and against Nigerian English, it can be said that there is indeed a type of English existing in the Nigerian environment distinct from Standard British English. This type of English has been adopted as Nigerian and can function in the capacity of any indigenous language in the country. Awonusi (1987) considers it as a chain ranging from acrolectal Nigerian English through mesolectal Nigerian English down to basiclectal Nigerian English. Basiclectal Nigerian English is substandard or non-standard with medium social acceptability and very low international intelligibility. While its phonetic features approximate those of Nigerian languages, its lexical items are characterised by loan words, misappropriate coinages and incorrect choices. The mesolect has high social acceptability and medium international intelligibility. It is characterised by relative closeness to Standard British English in written and formal usages but is maximally deviant in spoken and informal usages. The acrolect is marked by medium social acceptability and high international intelligibility. Lexically it is close to Standard British English but allows some divergence. The acrolect syntactically maintains Standard British English in formal and written usages.

Jowitt (1991:44) reviews some of the varieties differentiations done by scholars before him and asserts that ‘arbitrariness is inevitable in the search for lines of

demarcation between one variety and another'. This implies that a definite line cannot be drawn between the varieties of Nigerian English as features of a variety. In order to avoid the difficulties associated with identifying the varieties of Nigerian English, Jowitt (ibid: 47) says that "the usage of every Nigerian is a mixture of standard forms and popular forms which in turn compose of errors and variants". He therefore represents Nigerian English in a continuum starting from the usages that are heavily affected by mother tongue interference to Standard English. The continuum also involves the use of educational attainments. Very close to the Standard English is 'Near-Standard Nigerian English' spoken by graduates. Having reviewed the varieties of Nigerian English identified by linguistic scholars towards the identification of the Standard Nigerian English, it can be said that 'broad' Nigerian English contains both variants and deviant forms but the usage of educated Nigerians has been identified as being socially acceptable and internationally intelligible by most scholars. On the other, Standard English (SE) is the one most commonly used to label the language: 'English'. It is the variety of English used in public life in England and other English speaking countries, for example in: education, law, medicine and government. Nowadays, it has no geographical boundary and is used across the whole of England and other English speaking countries. In England, it also has an accent associated with it, known as Received Pronunciation (RP). SE and RP are closely associated with the language of the upper classes in English society known as 'the Queen's English' or 'BBC English' because of their origins and history. The concept of RP is a peculiarly an English one. SE is best defined as the written form of English, on the grounds that Standard English is not a matter of pronunciation and is thus not tied to any particular accent (Crystal 1995 and Trudgill & Chambers 1980). SE is a matter of grammar, vocabulary and orthography, that is, spelling and print face and not of pronunciation.

Nevertheless, linguists, such as Stubbs (1986), argues that accent is involved in notions of standardisation since people have an idea of what is and is not 'standard' in pronunciations. That is, the accent RP is widely regarded as the 'standard' accent of British English just as 'standard English' is widely regarded as the standard written form of English as used in education and other public institutions such as the law and government.

There is enough evidence in the literature that Nigerian English (NE) is heterogeneous and that the variation that exists within it can be linked to two major factors namely the region of origin and the level of education (Awonusi 1986,

Jibril 1986, Udofot 2004). By listening to the spoken English of a Nigerian, it is normally possible to predict the part of the country such a person comes from (Bamgbose 1971) and this is because the accents of most speakers of NE differs depending on the region they belong to. There is also a correlation between the level of education and proficiency in English (Jowitt 1991). However, this correlation is not a clear-cut one as there may sometimes be a mismatch between the level of education and proficiency in English. The point to note here is that language variation is a complex phenomenon, especially in a multilingual, multicultural setting with diverse socio-religious and family backgrounds such as are found in Nigeria.

2.4 ENGLISH IN NIGERIA

‘Nigerian English’ is the term used for the totality of the varieties of the English used in the Nigerian environment. Bamgbose (1983:2) defines Nigerian English as a, “Conglomeration of legitimate variants of English in Nigeria, which retain intelligibility, reflect a common Nigerian culture or perception of the world, has a mother tongue influence and a common socio-political environment”. The term ‘Nigerian English’ can also be defined “broadly as the variety of English spoken and used by Nigerians” (Adeniyi 2006:205 as cited by Adedimeji 2007:159). Adebija (1989:166) identifies the socio-cultural differences between the cultures of the Nigerian users of English and the native speakers of English as one main reason. Also corroborating Adebija’s reason, Akere (1984) states that “because of socio-cultural differences, there is not likely to be a one to one correspondence between situations and context of language use in native speakers environments and those of non-native speakers’ environments”.

In view of the reason stated by Adebija, Nigerian English evolved due to the faulty use of English to display or exhibit the socio-cultural experiences of Nigerians which are different from those of the native speakers. The erratic use of English in Nigeria is not only in the areas of phonology, lexical, syntactic and semantic patterns which have been made to conform to Nigerian languages but also in the creative development of the English usage in Nigeria and the pragmatic use of the English language (Bamgbose 1995).

Indeed, there is much disagreement as to whether or not Standard English can be dialect at all. Scholars, such as Trudgill and Chambers (1980) and Milroy (1987), argue that all speakers speak at least one dialect and that Standard English is as much a dialect as any other form of English. Consequently, some speakers may

have no other variety than SE whilst others may have either a regional variety or SE. Standard English differs from other dialects in a number of ways especially in the fact that it has its own writing system. Dialects and the study of dialect should concentrate upon speech due to the aforementioned. This position however ignores the fact that many nonstandard English dialects in England such as that found in the Black Country in the English West Midlands or Geordie in the North East of England have an established tradition of writing. Also, if Standard English is not a dialect, then it is difficult to see what else it could be. Whilst regional accents and dialects go hand in hand, Standard English must be spoken with its standard accent. Although, it is possible (but not very likely) that someone may speak the Geordie dialect with an RP accent, it is both possible and probable that someone may speak Standard English with a Geordie accent. Indeed the BBC, once an important gatekeeper in the maintenance of Standard English has in recent years adopted a much more liberal policy towards the use of regional accents amongst its presenters. When the BBC was founded in the 1930s, all broadcasters spoke Standard English with a uniform RP accent. Nowadays, no such training is given and presenters can be heard speaking Standard English in a variety of different regional accents. Indeed, attitudes towards the use of regional dialects and accents in public life has altered significantly since the 1930s that in 2005, the BBC launched a national campaign celebrating and promoting regional English linguistic diversity called *Voices*. This campaign, in addition to television and radio programmes has used the internet and phone-ins to undertake a national dialect survey on the use of regional dialects in England today. Working together with dialectologists at the universities of Leeds and Cardiff, this initiative aims to produce a comprehensive survey of contemporary English dialects and accents. This BBC sponsored project takes issue with the correlation between RP and BBC English and is fighting hard to disassociate the BBC from any 'gate-keeping' role in language use. It argues that the fact that BBC news broadcasters spoke RP in the early days was more of the product of a restricted group from which BBC employees were drawn rather than being part of any deliberate policy. Employees outside that group at the time were given elocution lessons to ensure use of RP. The project also questions the role of the BBC in championing a particular accent and thus potentially holding back the tide of language change. It also takes issue with the fact that some linguists have relabelled RP as BBC English and called it such in pronunciation dictionaries for foreign learners. However, if you call the accent normally used in BBC news broadcasts BBC English and that it is an example of RP then by definition, the people the BBC employs as news

broadcasters are therefore RP speakers. This circularity in defining BBC English in relation to RP and RP in relation to BBC English renders both concepts meaningless. It is also ironic that this is happening at a time when the relationship between RP otherwise known as the BBC English is more logically viewed as a thing of the past.

2.5 VARIATION AS A CONCEPT

Variability is one of the most fundamental and pervasive facets of language and its study is today a very prolific area of linguistic research. Variation in language use has traditionally been the subject of both psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. Within psycholinguistics, the factors and individual cognitive mechanisms involved in speakers' choices are addressed and to a smaller degree also those involved in listeners' coping with variation in their linguistic input. Within sociolinguistics, socially meaningful variation is focused in the variationist approach, relating systematic variability to factors such as social stratum, regional provenance, ethnicity, gender or social network.

The variety of uses and functions of English in today's world- as a native language in several continents as: language of education, business or diplomacy in many countries is a universal medium of communication. These varied demands on the English Language raise complex questions regarding the standard or standards that should be maintained both for its written and spoken forms.

There are some variations in the use of English in Nigeria which could be noticed in the lexical and the grammatical aspects. According to Bamgbose (1971) some of the more common lexical forms include borrowings like 'kiakia bus" (a Volkswagen bus; *kiakia* is a Yoruba word for 'quickly' and this is so named because it goes very fast). This is an example of the mixture of English with vernacular expressions which linguists call 'language interlarding'. It is also evident in idiom translations like the common greetings exchanged by two people on meeting each other: 'How far?' 'Not too far'. There is another example such as: 'I hear the smell'. The word 'hear' is a literal translation of a Hausa word 'ji' which means 'hear'. Sometimes, the translation is indirect. The notion of variation varies from region to region.

On the level of syntax and semantics, there are translations of different local proverbs and expressions into the English Language. The novels of Nigerian writers like: Achebe, Kamal, Soyinka, Aluko, Okara, Ekwensi etc. who are from

different regions in Nigeria have the following typical examples of translations of local proverbs: (i) 'the lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no one else did', (ii) 'you can tell a ripe corn by its look (Achebe, 1958). 'Amity resides in the feet' ... or we can buy white Maggi (Kamal 2012:57); 'Eye, who do you hold in contempt? And it answers, 'Those I see every day (Kamal 2010). Also, in Okara's 'The Voice' has a proverb: 'If you roast a bird of the air before a fowl, the fowl's head aches' (p.89). The following sentence is extracted from a letter written by a son to his father in Aluko's 'One Man One Matched': It is with much gladness in my heart that I write this letter to you' (p.51). In Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest has the following: 'The pot that will eat fat, its bottom must be scorched'. These examples show that though they are all written in English, there is the glaring influence of local languages on the structures of their sentences and in the type of images they used.

The regional languages have different influences on English because of both the positive and negative transfer of their accents into English though the varieties still manifest the same 'langue' of the English language. Grieve (1965) opined that the problem posed by the coexistence of these varieties is probably most keenly felt by the examiners of English who are found to decide between 'right' and 'wrong' English.

However, on the whole, the attitude of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has been that, while Standard English should form the basis of examinations and tests, varieties (which experiences have shown are acceptable to educated members of the appropriate community) may be accepted for examination purposes. The questions one will ask are: How much local or regional variation should be accepted? What is genuinely a regional variant and what is merely an error? How much regional variation can be allowed without reducing the ability of the Nigerian speaker or user of English to communicate effectively with users of English from other countries? What pronunciation model should teachers aim at?

On these, Bamgbose (1971) explains that it is generally agreed that the aim is not to produce speakers of British Received Pronunciation (RP) (even if this were possible) but to evolve a local variety of English pronunciation that will satisfy the minimum requirements of national and international intelligibility. In view of the existence of Nigerian languages alongside English which causes regional variations, according to Bamgbose (Ibid), the suggestion has often been made in

the legislatures and also in the newspapers that the country should decide on a national language. It is generally agreed that the choice should be between one of the regional languages and English.

The problem of choosing a national language has been so complex since the First Republic that the governments have so far been avoiding taking any decision on the issue because of the multi-lingual nature of the country. The prospect for the foreseeable future is that a decision on the question will continue to be avoided. The prospect means that English will still remain the Nigerian official language. This buttresses the suggestion that the regional varieties of English in Nigeria should be brought together and standardized so that a standard Nigerian variety of English (SNE) will evolve eventually.

The controversy which has been raging over the acceptability of non-native varieties of English has continued unabated. Nigerian English and other world varieties are establishing legitimacy. There is a growing acceptance of the idea that English means the English of non-native speakers. On the whole, the Hawaii Conference (1978) recommended that 'attitudes towards Indian English, Malaysian English etc. need to be revised.

Discourse within the sociolinguistic framework of Halliday's systemic grammar which later developed into Functional Linguistics places emphasis on the issue of meaning in grammatical theory. Typical Nigerian English innovations are related to the local sociocultural and linguistic contexts of Nigerian culture and society. Nigerian English is yet to be accorded its rightful status as a legitimate dialect of 'World standard English' whose emergence and stabilisation is attributed to several factors: historical, educational, linguistic, sociological, etc. This development is inevitable because of a new sociolinguistic truism that when a language is imported and used as a second language far from its native home, then they are bound to be deviant from the norm (Odumuh 1987).

Adekunle (1974) opines on three major dimensions of the Nigerian English. Adekunle states that there are varieties such as the ones that can be said to be the 'near native speaker variety' which can be identified with the educated elite in Nigeria. The local colour variety is commonly found among the Nigerian literary prose writers; and the 'incipient bilingual type' which is characterized by local sociolinguistic factors. To expatiate on Adekunle's claim, Umummwangho (2007) explains that it is equally desirable to briefly sketch the varieties of English in

Nigeria. Using purely sociological praxis, Adekunle (1974) provides three convincing types that are identifiable. The first is the near-native speaker variety whose main characteristics is that it is not much influenced by local sociolinguistic factors. Expressions that are commonly used can be traced to either American or British variety of English in terms of structural patterns, lexical items, idioms, allusion and proverbs. The variety is more prominent in the written form than in the spoken form. The local colour variety is marked with a preponderance of local ideas, attitudes and conceptual peculiarities. Here, there are borrowings, adaptations and translations influenced by the local lexical items, neologisms, idioms and proverbs from local languages and norms. Examples of this abound in the prose of some Nigerian authors.

The third variety is that which he calls the incipient bilingual type marked by local sociolinguistic factors with traces of inappropriate choice of synonyms or prepositions as well as omission of articles which may reflect initial stages of the proper mastery of the English language. For example, the labelled named as Standard British English are typified in the 'near-native' variety'; the instances cited from Achebe's works represent the local colour variety in which the aspect of the one noted in variation could be found while the incipient bilingual types are characterized by the wrong omission or inclusion of articles and prepositions or influenced by the apparent influence of the Nigerian indigenous languages seen as the 'defiant ones'.

This Chapter has reviewed variation in language use and examined its definition and some major contributors to the development of its study. Nigerian English varieties and Standard English as opined by linguistic scholars were reviewed and the distinct features of Nigerian English were identified and discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to describe the methods used in selecting the sample and the instruments for collecting the data. It will also describe the methods of administering the instrument, gathering the data and how it is analysed. The implication of variation in Nigerian English will be discussed with reference to intelligibility and communicative strategies. The data was from students of Mass Communication, School of General Studies, Kano State Polytechnic, Kano State.

3.1 TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

The techniques and procedures adopted for gathering the research data were sub-divided into:

1. Sample and sampling techniques.
2. Research instrument.
3. Procedure for data collection.
4. Data analysis techniques.

The desired target sampling population are the Mass Communication students of School of General Studies, Kano State Polytechnic. Their levels cut across Diploma1 and 2. The students of Mass Communication have been chosen as a case study of this research being the Department that has the majority of Nigerian ethnic tribes in the school. Students of the Department are from varying states of the Federation.

The methodology of data collection for the work is random sampling of the rather consistently common utterances of the English language speakers and students in Nigeria. A qualitative research approach is proposed for this study. Mezirow et al. (1975) and Rubenson (1999) have acknowledged that studies using qualitative methods are not only admissible and appropriate, but have added vitality as well as knowledge to the field of research.

In this study, questionnaire (Appendix A) shall be used and oral interviews shall also be conducted. These interviews will be modelled on the Labovian sociolinguistic interview in which some questions are normally used to elicit as much free conversation as possible with some reading tasks designed to elicit a range of styles. The major aspect of Labov's model (1978) that will be used is attention to speech. The major method that will be used to make the interview as casual and friendly as possible will be to ask questions that can provoke emotional reactions on the part of the respondents.

The oral interview is divided into two sections. During the first section, the respondents were informally interviewed to allow the researcher to access information about their previous language backgrounds and their age. This section is designed to enable the researcher to obtain details on several issues, including how the respondents think they use the English language, their parental backgrounds and whether or not they used English at home when they were young and perhaps also the perceived effect of usage or non-usage of English as it affects their English usage now. As is usual in sociolinguistic interviews, this section generated both personal information and speech that were analyzed.

The second section of the interview (Appendix B) focused on a linguistic domain. Test questions with sentences were given to be read aloud. The respondents probably concentrated on the validity of the constructions rather than on the words. The respondents first of all read the test questions and then answered questions from the researcher. They were also encouraged to comment on the sentences in the test questions given to them.

The interview and follow-up interviews were conducted during the course of the research. In addition, follow-up clarifying oral discussions were conducted with some of these students who are in their first and second academic year.

All interviews were conducted in an informal and open-ended style and carried out in a conversational style. In addition to the interviews and follow-up interview(s), other data related to the study will be obtained including papers or other related literature review.

3.2 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data derived from the research were analysed using a simple percentage formula to show and determine the responses of the respondents.

$$P = \frac{F \times 100}{N}$$

P= PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES

F= FREQUENCY OF EACH RESPONSE

N= TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the findings of the study. Data were analysed on the basis of the research question: Does the usage of Nigerian English blur the meaning of some Standard English Concepts? The research focuses on the variation in the usage of language of Diploma II students of Mass Communication, Kano State Polytechnic— with a view to finding variations in Nigerian English and Standard British English. The category of the analysis is divided into: test question analysis (Appendix A) and questionnaire analysis (Appendix B). Stratified simple random sampling was used in sampling students’ opinion via questionnaire in addition to the test questions and recorded interviews.

The test questions were raised based on their frequencies as they appear in the written and spoken forms of the students. The total number of Diploma II Mass Communication students is 132 divided into A and B classes. Reference to Krejcie and Morgan’s format (1970) for determining sample size from a given population in a research activity. A total of 97 students have been randomly selected from the two different strata. Thus, from the ‘A’ Class, 48 questionnaires with test questions were analysed while 49 questionnaires with test questions were analysed in the ‘B’ Class. Therefore, the calculation of the tables below is in simple percentage to show and determine the responses of respondents and the result. Subsequently, a conclusion is further drawn from the findings.

4.1 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE TEST QUESTIONS

S/N	TEST QUESTIONS	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
1	I am writing this short letter to congratulate you <u>for</u> your success.	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%
2	I live at Nassarawa <u>Quarters</u> .	77	79.4%	20	20.6%	97	100%
3	<u>How is your body?</u>	89	91.8%	8	8.2%	97	100%

4	Trouble started since he gave her his <u>complimentary card</u> .	95	98%	2	2%	97	100%
5	I want to <u>ease</u> myself.	58	59.8%	39	40.2%	97	100%
6	I am <u>opportuned</u> to write you this letter.	97	100%	0	0%	97	100%
7	<u>With due respect Sir</u> ,I am applying for the post of a clerical officer in you organisation.	97	100%	0	0%	97	100%
8	I want to <u>request for your permission</u> .	97	100%	0	0%	97	100%
9	Please, <u>reply me</u> as soon as possible.	91	93.8%	6	6.2%	97	100%
10	We are going to resume school <u>upper Monday</u> .	79	81.4%	18	18.6%	97	100%

KEY

F	FREQUENCY
%	% OF FREQUENCY
TT	TOTAL

TABLE 1: REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER ONE OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
1	I am writing this short letter to congratulate you	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%

	<u>for</u> your success.						
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Majority of the respondents (75.2%) are of the opinion that the verb ‘congratulate’ collocates with the preposition ‘for’. Their response is not unconnected with the fact that the use of the preposition “for” to collocate with congratulation is an anomaly that the students have been using in their writings. However, this expression is mostly adhered to in Nigerian English. The preposition that usually collocates with the verb ‘congratulate’ in the Standard English is ‘on’. Thus, the expression should read: ‘I am writing this short letter to congratulate you on your success’. Only a few of the respondents (24.8%) detest the appropriateness of the expression.

TABLE 2: REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER TWO OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
2	I live at Nassarawa <u>Quarters</u> .	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%

Some expressions in English always end in ‘s’. Examples of such expressions include: headquarters, barracks, measles, surroundings, scissors etc. Words of this calibre are termed ‘pluralia-tantum’. These words are attached with the ‘s’ even in their singular form. The word ‘quarter’ in this sense is a part of a town or city. It does not take an ‘s’. Due to the rampant mis-use of the word: 75.2% of the respondents have answered ‘yes’ because they feign ignorance due to the fact that the crude version has been passed one generation to another.

TABLE 3: REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER THREE OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		

3	How is your body?	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%
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Semantic extension is a concept that has gained momentum in Nigerian English. Concepts from local languages have been borrowed directly into English. In Hausa language, when one ailing, the sympathiser would write or say to the ailing patient: ‘ya jiki’ meaning: ‘How are you feeling’. ‘jiki’ in Hausa means ‘body’. Nigerian users have fondly used this expression with direct influence of their native language. This has accounted for the high percentage of the respondents (75.2%) to oblige that the expression is standard.

TABLE 4: REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER FOUR OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
4	Trouble started since he gave her his <u>complimentary card</u> .	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%

In Standard English, a card with ones address and contact numbers which is issued out to people is simply known as business card.

TABLE 5:REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER FIVE OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
5	I want to <u>ease</u> myself.	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%

‘I want to relieve myself’ or ‘I want to go to the toilet’ is acceptable in the Standard English’. This is a polite way of referring to going to the toilet. ‘Ease’ is to make something bad less severe or to move somewhere slowly and carefully. The exposition, ‘I want to ease myself’ has shown that Nigerians are creative in their use of language. This manifest in various forms by way of extension or

redefinition to bring about invention. The activity is spontaneous and rapid in spread which can be seen as a result of the influence of the MT which provides some ingredients for manufacturing the special language forms and the ingenuity which Nigerians possess.

TABLE 6:REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER SIX OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
6	I am <u>opportuned</u> to write you this letter.	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%

This is a unique form of Nigerian English reclassification of word classes. One of the hallmarks of Nigerian English which makes it at variant to Standard English is its fondness for reclassifying parts of speech of words. Adjectives and adverbs often tend to be made into verbs. A typical example of this instance is the adjective ‘opportune’ which means suitable e.g. That’s an opportune moment to revise your notes. However, this adjective is often used as a verb in Nigerian English. This is the reason being why expressions such as ‘I was not opportuned to see him’, ‘I am opportuned to write you this letter’ etc. are common in Nigerian English. What exist in Standard English is ‘opportune’ without the ‘d’ at the end. ‘Opportune’ in Standard English means ‘timely. e.g. ‘wait for an opportune moment to tell him how you feel’. In Nigerian English, ‘opportuned’ is used in expressions where privilege is the appropriate word to use.

TABLE 7:REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER SEVEN OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
7	<u>With due respect sir</u> , I am applying for the post of a clerical officer.	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%

Native English speakers find this typically Nigerian English usage of ‘with due respect’ bewildering. The usual rendering of the expression is ‘with due respect’. In Standard English, this expression is only used when one wants to politely disagree with someone. e.g. ‘with all due respect that statement is not accurate’. Whenever this expression is used in Standard English, the people to whom it is addressed to always prepare themselves for a mild criticism. When Nigerians use ‘with due respect’ and don’t follow it up with a criticism or disagreement, native English speakers become confused.

TABLE 8: REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER EIGHT OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
8	I want to <u>request for</u> your permission.	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%

This expression is ubiquitous among students and it is Nigerian. Only Nigerian English speakers ‘request for permission’ or ‘request for your help’. In Standard English, ‘request’ does not take a preposition. Instead of ‘request for your permission, native speakers use ‘request your permission’. Similarly, rather than use ‘I request for your help’ in Nigerian English, the Standard Form is ‘I request your help’ should be emphasised.

TABLE 9: REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER NINE OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
9	Please, <u>reply me</u> as soon as possible.	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%

It is worthy to note that the verb ‘reply’ always co-occurs with ‘to’ in Standard English. ‘Reply me as soon as possible’ is typically Nigerian to say or write. Little wonder that most Nigerian Newspaper headlines are often filled with expressions like ‘Jonathan replies Obasanjo’ (The Nation newspaper:12/02/2015). in no circumstance in as much as ‘reply’ will be used than it collocates with the

preposition ‘to’. Therefore, ‘reply to me as soon as possible’ is the Standard English equivalent which would be perfectly suitable for usage.

TABLE 10:REFERENCE TO SERIAL NUMBER TEN OF THE TEST QUESTION

S/N	TEST QUESTION	YES		NO		TT	%
		F	%	F	%		
10	We are going to resume school <u>upper Monday</u> .	73	75.2%	24	24.8%	97	100%

Innovations such as false hypothesisation in Nigerian English can be accounted for in terms of MT transfer or lack of contact with the native speakers. Borrowing is natural in language and it is one of the most resourceful qualities of language. ‘Upper Monday’ has perhaps been borrowed from the local languages in the Nigerian domain and it is widely gaining momentum due to its usage. 75.2% of the respondents acknowledged that the expression is correct while 25.8% detest the appropriateness of the expression.

Other than the test questions administered on the students, questionnaires was also administered to them. The questionnaire sort to analyse the background of the students and their knowledge on the form of English they speak and write in their quest to communicate effectively.

4.2 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were administered to the students. The total number of the students is 132. Reference to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) the students were divided into two: ‘A’ and ‘B’.thus, from ‘A’ class, 48 questionnaires were analysed while 49 questionnaires were analysed in the ‘B’ class. The analysis of their responses is as follows:

Table 11: Respondents’ gender.

SEX	FREQUENCIES OF THE RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
MALE	52	53.6%

FEMALE	45	46.4%
TOTAL	97	100%

Table 11 sums up the responses of the 97 respondents to the question on GENDER. The result of each test item is obtained using the simple percentage method and average. A total of 52 respondents(53.6%) respondents are males while 45 (45%) are females.

Table 12: Respondents' age

AGES	FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
18-25	59	60.8%
26-39	26	26.8%
40-ABOVE	12	12.4%
TOTAL	97	100%

Table12 shows that 60.8% of the total number of respondents range in age from18-25. It is apparent that those that fall under this category are the majority in the A and B classes. This is not unconnected with the fact that most of them were secondary school leavers that gained admission to read Mass Communication due to the increasing passion to study Journalism related courses. 26.8% of the respondents are media practitioners who are either attending a high school programme for the first time or have obtained certificates in fields other than Mass Communication and are willing to get a professional qualification. 12.4% are seasoned media practitioners who are in need of a higher qualification in order to be elevated from their stagnation rank in their various media houses.

Table 13: Classification of Nigerian English according to the respondents.

CLASSIFICATION	FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
STANDARD	2	2.06%
SUBSTANDARD	91	93.8%
STANDARD REG. VARIETY	4	4.1%
TOTAL	97	100%

Table13 sought to find out if there is still a wide belief that Nigerian English is simply a crude form of the Standard English. A large number of the respondents (93.8%)are of the opinion that Nigerian English is the same as Pidgin English. Their response is due to the fact that they could not distinguish between Nigerian English and Pidgin English. A minimal of 4.1% view it as a Regional Variety which ispeculiar to the Southern part of Nigeria. This is not unconnected with the fact that they confuse Nigerian English with Pidgin English.

Table 14: Usage of Nigerian English

USERS	FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
EDUCATED NIGERIANS	25	25.8%
NON EDUCATED NIGERIANS	72	74.2%

TOTAL	97	100%
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In the analysis of the responses collected from the respondents, there is a wide perception (74.2%) that Nigerian English is used by non-educated Nigerians. An insignificant 25.8% are of the opinion that Nigerian English is used by the Educated Nigerians.

Table 15: which people speak Nigerian English?

USAGES	FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
EDUCATED NIGERIANS	9	9.3%
NON EDUCATED NIGERIANS	88	90.7%
TOTAL	97	100%

From the analysis of the data above, there is a wide conception that Nigerian English is the English which is used amongst non-educated Nigerians. 90.7% of the respondents are of this opinion. Only a few of the respondents are of the opinion that Nigerian English is also used by educated Nigerians.

Table 16: Standard English Usage

USAGES	FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
YES	88	90.7%
NO	9	9.2%
TOTAL	97	100%

Standard English is recognized as the most appropriate for formal situations and is used widely in public and professional life. It does not identify the speaker or

writer with a particular geographical area or social grouping. In Britain, the accent associated with Standard English is Received Pronunciation. All forms of slang, dialect and grammatical deviations are non-standard. What counts as Standard English will depend on both the locality and the particular varieties that Standard English is being contrasted with. A form that is considered as Standard in one region may be non-standard in another. From the responses of the respondents, it could be deduced that most students (90.7%) are aware that the Standard English is used in Nigeria. 9.2% are of the opinion that only native speakers use Standard English and a few Nigerians imitate them.

Table 17: Frequency in the usage of Standard English

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
ALL TIMES	26	26.7%
OCCASSIONALLY	71	73.19%
TOTAL	97	100%

In a multi-cultural setting such as Nigeria, non-standard accents and word forms are increasingly accepted and promoted in the mass media and the concepts of Standard English and Received Pronunciation as standards of correctness are at risk and possibly seen as ‘elitist’. This semantic extension leads to the occasional use of Standard English in the Nigerian domain. Nigerians often speak or write with the form that suits them — they mostly attempt to use near Standard English only in the classrooms or in formal situations. 73.1% of the respondents opine that Standard English, an equivalent of ‘good English’ is occasionally used while 26.7% are of the view that it is used at all times. For the latter, it is of their opinion that irrespective of variation in the mode of expression, one cannot shy away from the usage of Standard English words.

Table 18: Do Nigerians use same theWords as the British?

WORDS IN USE	FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES

SOMETIMES	81	83.5%
OFTEN	14	14.4%
NOT AT ALL	2	2%
TOTAL	97	100%

Lexical and semantic differences count as variants. There are certain lexical differences that do not conform to Standard English. This is because they are contingent upon interference or imperfect attempts to reproduce the native speakers' standard. Reference is to the use of the word 'academic', as in 'I am going into business because I was never good at academics'. 'Academics' refers to individuals not an institution. The use of 'academics' to mean institution is common in Nigeria but is stigmatised by educated speakers. 83.5% of the respondents say that Standard English has often been used due to the fact that most of the words uttered or written are of English origin.

Table 19: Nigerian English Expressions altering Standard English Concepts.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
SOMETIMES	58	59.7%
NOT AT ALL	7	7.2%
ALL THE TIME	32	33%
TOTAL	97	100%

Since the English Language is operating outside a native speaker domain, socio-cultural variables will account for certain innovations. The English Language is used because of the different cultural setting and different experiences. This different cultural development is legitimate because American English, a native speaker variety, differs from Britain English because of exposure to different flora

and fauna and partly for political reasons such that some items developed independently on both sides of the Atlantic. The majority of the respondents (59.7%) view that English words are sometimes blurred in meaning because they cannot be comprehended by native speakers with the exception of a very few whose meanings have been forcibly changed to suit the Nigerian context. This is not unconnected with the fact that the meaning of the words have either been changed or extended.

Table 20: Extension of meaning in Nigerian English

RESPONSES	FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGES
SOMETIMES	64	66%
NOT AT ALL	28	28.8%
ALL THE TIME	5	5.1%
TOTAL	97	100%

The tendency on the part of Nigerians to over extend the meaning of words has been ascertained. The example cited of ‘ill’ compared to ‘sick’ is a point to explore. In Standard English, ‘He is ill’ will be preferred to ‘He is sick’. The reason being that ‘sick’ connotes a stronger degree. Nigerians do not stop at that, the meaning has also been extended to insanity. ‘He suffered a fatal accident but has recovered’. This is yet another popular collocation which receives extension of usage. In Standard English, one does not recover from a fatal accident but dies. It involves loss of life or lives but in Nigerian English lexis, ‘fatal accident’ will be an accident that involves sustaining serious injury or injuries. The exposition and the response in Table 10 have shown that Nigerians are creative in their use of language. This manifests in various forms they add by way of extension or redefinition. The activity is spontaneous and rapid in speech which can be seen as a result of the influence of the MT which provides the same ingredients for

manufacturing the special language forms and the ingenuity which Nigerians possess.

4.3 DISCUSSION

The variety of the English language that is used in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa is Nigerian English. It has a whole host of what is called stereotyped phrases that would strike most native speakers and incomprehensible to them. Some of these words and phrases are creative coinages or semantic extensions based on the cultural uniqueness of Nigerian cultural expressions, which the English language hasn't lexicalised. The term 'Nigerian English' has come to be recognized and accepted as referring to a sub-type of English which is peculiar to Nigeria. For effective communication, we adjust our language behaviour according to who we are, what we are using it for and the context in which we are communicating. In essence, Nigerians use language behaviours derived from the region or locality in which they were born or live in. These variations manifest themselves in intonation and pronunciation and in speech and writing.

The endless activities of man are responsible for the increment in vocabulary terms and expressions. Words are loaned into the English Language where they are absent or when they do not provide satisfied forms of the native language variety. This process has therefore added to the vocabulary of Nigerian English lexis, although in variant to the Standard English. In the process of doing this, creativity is exhibited. In the interview conducted in relation to the sentences explored in the test questions, a very good number of respondents (58%) attested that they have heard of the words and that they are not aware of Standard equivalents. 15.4% are of the opinion that the English words do not depict adequately certain Nigerian features; the only way then is to loan the MT forms into the English Language. The ability to adapt such loan words and compounds in order to conform to the morphophonemic combinatory rules of the language is of great importance to the language. Adebija (2004) says 'to a very large extent, the grammar of English in Nigeria is still in conformity with the grammar of native varieties of English'. Only syntactic distortions can impair intelligibility not only internationally but even locally. Syntactic structure intact and almost on a par with British and American standard, the special use of the English Language in Nigeria is to achieve special effects such as giving the use of English a local flavour that creates a Nigerian national identity. It must also be realized that Nigerian English vocabulary 'contains a large number of words which are either not found in Standard English

or are used in ways peculiar to the Nigerian situation' (Igboanusi, 2002). This is evident in instances where English does not have required expressions and nuances for a Nigerian experience, the desire to communicate often results in peculiar expressions that are most appropriate for the Nigerian context therefore amounting to an invariable variation with the Standard English. (Adegbija 2004).

In the interview session, they also attested to the fact that particles and mannerism unconsciously used by Nigerians are more emotional than the Standard English version e.g. 'Oh! Okay' and phrases like 'It's a pity'. For Hausa speakers: 'Ayya! ko!' For Yoruba speakers: 'Sha! Abi!' For Igbo speakers: 'Ewo! Inna!' This clearly demonstrates the influx of loanwords into Nigerian English from Nigerian languages.

Reduplication is another common form of collocation in Nigerian English. They are coined into English and are quite vivid because most of them make clear one's intention. They are mostly loaned from the MT into the English Language. Reduplication instances are: now-now, quick-quick, small-small, big-big, etc. Certain expressions are now archaic and obsolete in Standard English but are still in circulation in Nigerian English e.g. 'parlour' in SE is 'sitting room' and 'harlot' in SE is 'prostitute'.

The oral interview has shown that some words are purely Nigerian. Therefore, words used in the test questions were used to ascertain the existence of Nigerian English lexis in various forms. Investigation into the variations in the use of language between Nigerian English and Standard British English became necessary in order to uniquely identify features that often occur in lexical forms. There is little wonder when one considers history, communication, the role of tutors and the mass media in the dissemination of the English Language in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the overall summary of findings of the research work on the variations in language with close reference to Standard English and Nigerian English. It concludes the chapter by giving the researcher's recommendations on the project undertaken.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The research has shown that the mother tongue thus influences Nigerian English lexis.
- The research has found that the measure of proficiency in the English Language is one's educational attainment. Regional varieties of English are influenced by one's level of education. This ranges from the primary schools to University education.
- The project work has found out that the occurrence of the elements of variations in Nigerian English especially in the lexical and semantic alternatives are considered to deviate from the Standard English. It becomes imperative to take into cognisance our socio-cultural settings in learning the English Language. Language is a living thing that changes with time so that some forms become obsolete and archaic while some others come up from the users' creativity.
- From the analysis conducted, it has been discovered that the features of Nigerian English constitute the cultural identities and worldviews of the Nigerian users. Various examples of these features are distinct and only peculiar to the Nigerian environment. For instance, the extension of usage in Nigerian English is that it deviates from the Standard British English as it

can only be interpreted and understood when the Nigerian context is taken into consideration.

- Certain idioms used in Nigerian English are Standard English idioms but they have been given another interpretation in the Nigerian environment thus used in different contexts. An example is “take your time” which means to take as much time without hurrying in doing something in Standard English but it is used to mean “be warned” in Nigerian English.
- It has been discovered from the analysis that proverbs used in Nigerian English are reflections of the Nigerian indigenous philosophies. Most of these proverbs have been translated into English and as such portray largely the aesthetics of Nigerian cultures thereby resulting into conversational implicates.
- It has become pervasive that students of Mass Communication, Kano State Polytechnic tend to fail courses in Use of English and English for Mass Communication not because they are unintelligent in English Syntax but because of the forms of expressions they use are not acceptable to their examiners.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Variations are common features of any living language and such variations do not vitiate the importance or acceptability of the various forms but these variations

must be within the confines of acceptable forms that are mutually intelligible. Nigerians who use the English language for media purposes take cognizance of variations as a common feature of any living language. The English used by media men is a response to their peculiar situations and environment, without breaking basic rules of syntax and at the same time making purists realize that a living language such as English cannot be a closed system. The assessment of any variety of English such as Nigerian English should therefore be endonormative rather than exonormative, bearing in mind local peculiarities and particularly creative and pragmatic use of the language. In essence, obvious cases of Nigerianism that identify NE constitute a semantic hindrance especially in the written form of Nigerian English. i.e. there is the likelihood of lack of mutual intelligibility in NE to native speakers or those used to Standard English because of words and expressions are used in an unconventional manner. L1 lexicon items are used alongside Standard English words leading to code mixing or outright code switching. It hinders intelligibility, as the context of such words do not provide the required meaning. Thus, intelligibility is an essential requirement of communication. Yet, NE is a deviation from the British or American standard. This has to be so because there are certain aspects of the grammar of English as spoken internationally which any diatopic variety interferes with at its own peril. To a very large extent, the grammar of English in Nigeria is not in conformity with the grammar of native varieties of English. Syntactic distortions impair intelligibility, not only internationally but even locally. With a deviant syntactic structure markedly different from British and American standards, the erratic use of the English Language in Nigeria to achieve a local flavour creates a great deal of problems. Nigerian English vocabulary contains a large number of words which are either not found in Standard English or are used in ways peculiar to the Nigerian situation. The use of the English Language to achieve local flavour is evident in instances where English does not have required expressions and nuances for a Nigerian experience. The desire to communicate often results in peculiar expressions that are appropriate for the Nigerian context but amount to deviation from Standard English.

To develop Nigerian English, it has to be dependent on the Standard English variety or any other variety especially in the areas of lexis, semantics and to some extent phonology as variants could easily be located at the mentioned levels of linguistic analysis.

From the brief account of the variation in usage between Nigerian English and Standard English, certain recommendations may be made and drawn. The first goes to the tutors of English in our schools and colleges. The project recommends that they should give focus to the areas of variation between Nigerian English and Standard English for contrastive studies. The focus should be on the areas of phonology, lexis, syntax and semantics. More assistance should be given to learners in the areas of variation between English and the local languages in order to facilitate learning and mastering the use of the English language.

Secondly, since it is apparent that English has been firmly established as a second language in Nigeria bearing in mind that it is the official language and it is likely to remain so for a long time. The Standard variety should be learnt and taught in a better way. This contradicts what Salami (1968) who stressed that with time, many of the features of the regional varieties are likely to become stable and eventually be standardized, leading to the emergence of a distinct Nigerian variety of English, probably associated with a certain level of education.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick the most appropriate information and comment briefly where applicable

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. SEX:

a. MALE b. FEMALE

2. AGE:

a 18-25 b. 26-35 C.36-above

3. MOTHER TONGUE

a. HAUSA b. IGBO c. YORUBA d. OTHERS

If you have selected others, please specify _____

4. How would you classify Nigerian English?
a. Standard b. substandard c. standard regional variety
5. Which people speak Nigerian English?
a. Educated Nigerians b. non educated Nigerians
6. Is Standard English used in Nigeria?
a. YES b. NO
7. How often is Standard English Used in Nigeria?
a. All times b. occasionally c. seldom
8. Do Nigerians use same words and expressions as their British counterparts?
a. Sometimes b. all the time c. not at all
9. Does the usage of Nigerian English blur the meaning of some English concepts?
a. Sometimes b. not at all c. all the time
10. Does extension of meaning of words occur in the usage of Nigerians?
a. Sometimes b. not at all c. all the time

APPENDIX B

BELOW ARE EXPRESSIONS COMMONLY USED IN NIGERIAN ENGLISH, PLEASE TICK 'YES' IF YOU THINK THE UNDERLINED EXPRESSION IS CORRECT AND 'NO' IF IT IS WRONG. (SELECT THE CORRECT ONE FROM THE WRONG ONES)

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-------|-------|
| 1. To congratulate you <u>for</u> your success. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. I live at Nassarawa <u>quarters</u> . | _____ | _____ |
| 3. <u>How is your body?</u> | _____ | _____ |
| 4. He gave her his <u>complimentary card</u> . | _____ | _____ |
| 5. I went to <u>ease</u> myself. | _____ | _____ |
| 6. I am <u>opportuned</u> to write you this letter. | _____ | _____ |

7. With due respect Sir, _____
8. I want to request for your permission. _____
9. Please, reply me as soon as possible. _____
10. We are going to resume schoolupper Monday. _____