THE INTONATION OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH

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Nigerian English is one of the nativised world Englishes. It has developed through years of contact with Nigerian languages. It has identifiable features some of which have been codified (cf Bamgbose 1971, 1982, 1995; Banjo 1971, 1995, 1996). This paper attempts a description of the intonation of the brand of English spoken by a cross section of Nigerians. The subjects of the study were sixty Nigerians of varied educational backgrounds selected by a stratified random sampling technique from twenty linguistic groups in Nigeria. They were given a cartoon depicting the high cost of living in Nigeria to talk about for three minutes and a short passage to read. Their recorded outputs were perceptually and acoustically analysed. The analysis revealed that in spite of differing educational backgrounds the intonation of Nigerian English is characterised by the use of more unidirectional tones than bi-directional ones and the absence of the characteristic fluctuation typical of English speech.

L'anglais nigérian est une des variantes nationales de l'anglais répandues de par le monde. Cet anglais, dévelopé au cours des années de contact avec les langues nigérianes, s'identifie par certains traits qui ont été codifiés dans, p.ex., Bamgbose 1971, 1982, 1995 et Banjo 1971, 1995, 1996. La présente étude tente une description de l'intonation de l'anglais parlé par un profil représentatif de Nigérians. On a choisi par une technique d'échantillonnage au hasard 60 Nigérians de divers niveaux d'éducation, venant de communautés parlant 20 langues locales. A chaque sujet on a présenté un dessin faisant état du haut prix de la vie au Nigéria, afin qu'il en parle pendant 3 minutes; ensuite on l'a invité à lire un bref passage écrit. Ces paroles, enregistrées, ont été analysées des points de vue perceptuel, statistique et acoustique. Cette analyse a révélé que quelque soit le niveau d'éducation du locuteur, l'intonation de l'anglais nigérian se caractérise par des tons unidirectionnels plutôt que bidirectionnels, et par l'absence des modulations qui sont typiques du parler des Anglais.

0. INTRODUCTION

The English language, for historical reasons such as colonialism, exploration and consequent trade between Africa and Europe, as well as the evangelization of the Africans, is now spoken in countries outside England including Nigeria, South East Asian countries, and other African countries. This situation accounts in part for the existence of 'New Englishes' (see Platt, Weber and Lian 1984:2). Nigerian English is one such new English which has become 'nativised' and adapted to its new environment. It has identifiable features some of which have been codified (cf Bamgbose 1971, 1982, 1995; Banjo 1971, 1995, 1996; Eka 1985, 1993; Jibril 1982, 1986; Udofot 1997).

A remarkable feature of spoken English in Nigeria is that it often falls short of the user's ability in written English, mainly because English is learned by most Nigerians in school and the educational system has emphasised "the skills of literacy more than those of oracy", with the result that the system has produced "in many cases individuals with an impeccable ability to communicate in written English and be understood, even admired internationally, without a matching ability in spoken English" (Banjo 1996:71).

It has also been shown that of all the aspects of phonology, the non-segmental features are the most problematic areas for Nigerian speakers. For instance, Tiffen (1974) which assesses the intelligibility of Spoken Standard Nigerian English to British listeners, identifies incorrect rhythm as the greatest cause of intelligibility failure. Adetugbo (1977) and Eka (1985) also agree that the most problematic area of Nigerian English phonology is the area of rhythm. Udofot (1997) specifically identifies stress

and intonation as the most problematic aspects of phonology which tend to characterise Spoken Nigerian English rhythm.

Jowitt attempts an explanation of the situation thus:

> In an English L2 situation, intonation patterns cannot be acquired as they are by native speakers. They have to be consciously learned and since their complexity—like stress-timing—tends to repel all but highly motivated learners, they go for the most part unlearned. (1991:100.)

To make up for the failure to use intonation to convey the shades of meaning other than for questions and answers, Ufomata (1995:7) observes that Nigerians tend to use more words, longer utterances and gestures in place of using tonic placement to agree, disagree or express doubt.

This paper therefore attempts a description of the intonation of the brand of English spoken by a cross section of Nigerians.[1] Characteristic performance features are identified, and an attempt is made to account for their existence. An assumption of the study is that what is known as Spoken Nigerian English is a continuum made up of at least three sub-varieties, which we name the Non-Standard, the Standard and the Sophisticated varieties. The Non-Standard and Standard Varieties correspond to Banjo's (1971) Varieties 1 and 2; while the Sophisticated Variety corresponds to Banjo's Variety 3 and Jibril's (1986) Sophisticated Variety. The hypotheses of the study are:

1. The varieties that constitute Nigerian English are significantly different from one another in terms of intonation.
2. The varieties are collectively different from a native speaker's output.
3. There are common core performance features which unite the varieties. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested in their null state while the common core features were identified and described.

1. METHODOLOGY

The subjects for this study were sixty Nigerians of varied educational backgrounds, selected by a stratified random sampling technique from twenty linguistic groups in Nigeria. The main yardstick of stratification was the number of years' exposure to English language learning and use. The subjects were grouped into three categories: Group One consisted of those who had been exposed to formal English learning for a period of nine to twelve years, covering primary and secondary education. Group Two was made up of those who had had, or were in the process of receiving, tertiary education; and had been exposed to English Language learning and use for twelve to fifteen years. Group Three was made up of those who had been exposed to English language learning and use for at least fifteen years, and in addition to having had tertiary education, had received some specialised training in the pronunciation of English, as well as using English for their daily official purposes.

We acknowledge the fact that some speakers who are more motivated than others may perform better within a given time. Also, the informants who come from edu-

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[1] This paper was presented at the 21st West African Languages Congress, Abidjan. I am grateful for the comments of the phonetics and phonology panel, which have helped bring this paper to its present form.

cated homes where English is spoken are likely to perform better than those who are from illiterate homes, or homes where parents use English because they are from different linguistic backgrounds. We are also aware that the subjects' model at some level of education could affect the performance. We have however selected the length of exposure to formal English learning as the yardstick, in order to have a common criterion of assessment of the subjects. We also ensured that most of the subjects had been taught English by teachers who are Nigerians.

Each group consisted of twenty subjects. The educational qualifications of the members of the experimental group ranged from Junior School Certificate to Doctor of Philosophy.

A summary of the socio-cultural groupings of the subjects is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Socio-Cultural Groupings of Subjects

Level of Education	*No. of Subjects*
SSCE / WASC / Attempted	3
Teachers' Grade 2	1
WASC / GCE / SSCE	7
OND /NCE	4
Undergraduates	18
BA / BSC / HND	12
MA/MSC	6
Ph.D	9 + control

Abbreviations:	
SSCE	Senior School Certificate
WASC	West African School Certificate
GCE	General Certificate of Education
OND	Ordinary National Diploma
NCE	Nigerian Certificate in Education
HND	Higher National Diploma
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps

Ethnic Group	*No. of Subjects*		
Hausa	2	Eleme	1
Yoruba	5	Khana	1
Igbo	6	Igede	2
Ibibio	20	Annan	10
Tera	1	Tiv	1
Kalabari	1	Bette Bendi	1
Igbirra	1	Boki	1
Kilba	1	Efik	2
Kwale	1	Tula	1
Urhobo	1	*Total*	60
Ghotua	1		

Professional Status	*No. of Subjects*		
Students	18	Security Staff	1
Lecturers /Teachers	19+ control	Broadcasters	5
Senior Administrative officers	4	Bankers	2
Clerical staff	2	Librarians	2
Messengers	2	NYSC members	2
Technical staff	2	Private Businessmen/women	2

A native British English speaker served as the control. The control was born and brought up in England, spoke English as her first language and had her primary

secondary and university education in England. She did her postgraduate studies in America, majoring in Linguistics. She was sixty years old at the time, and though she has lived and worked in Nigeria for many years, she has a clearly distinguishable British public school accent.

We are aware that one control may not prove adequate for far-reaching conclusions; but since the interest of the paper is in the performance of Nigerian speakers of English, more attention is paid in the analysis and conclusions to the experimental group. We also argue that no two people speak in the same way, so using more than one control may bring up issues of variation which may distract attention from the main thrust of the paper. The control in this test is therefore to be seen as representing what an expected native speaker's performance would be.

The subjects were each required to speak freely for three minutes on the topic 'The high cost of living in Nigeria', guided by the headings in a cartoon from the *Vanguard* newspaper of 4th November 1994. The purpose of the study was to observe the melody of English resulting from the ability to pause at the relevant positions in utterances; to avoid irrelevant pauses; and to use the appropriate intonation tone to express the proper grammatical and attitudinal category as a native speaker would do, both in controlled and spontaneous speeches.

Next, they were asked to read the following passage adapted from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart:*

> He stretched himself and scratched his thigh where a mosquito had bitten him while he slept. Another one was wailing near his ear. He slapped the ear and hoped he had killed it. Why do they always go for one's ears? When he was a child, his mother had told him a story about it. Mosquito, she had said, had asked ear to marry him, whereupon Ear fell on the floor in uncontrollable laughter. 'How much longer do you think you will live?' she asked. 'You are already a skeleton!' Mosquito went away humiliated; and anytime he passed her way, he told Ear that he was still alive. (*Things Fall Apart* 53.)

The second production of each member of the experimental group and that of the control were tape-recorded.

The productions of the experimental group were classified into Variety 1 or Non-Standard corresponding to the performance of Group One; Variety 2 or Standard corresponding to the performance of Group Two and Variety 3 or Sophisticated corresponding to the performance of Group Three. The rationale behind this grouping is that proficiency in the use of a second language increases with the length of the period of exposure to the language (cf. Bansal 1990:218).

The tape recorded productions were played back. The number of intonation phrases and distribution of tones of each subject were indicated both in the spoken prose and the spontaneous productions, using a modified version of Pierrehumbert's (1980) Tune–Text Association, which adopted two tonal elements H(igh) and L(ow) to represent the speech contours. Translating from O'Connor and Arnold's (1973) system, the high fall is represented as (HLL); the fall-rise as (HLH); the rising as (LH); the rise-fall as (LHL); the high rise as (H) and the low fall as (HL). The performance of the control was used as expected frequency in the spoken prose and the difference

of each subject's performance and that of the control as regards the number of intonation phrases and distribution of tones was calculated. The rank of difference of the subject's performance from that of the control was calculated using the Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Ranks Test.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical test was then used to test for any significant difference in the performance of the three varieties.

With regard to the spontaneous productions, the intonation phrases and tones in all the utterances of the experimental group and the control produced within the given time of three minutes were calculated.[2]

To corroborate our perceptual analysis, a compound complex sentence from the passage of spoken prose—"Mosquito went away humiliated; and any time he passed her way, he told Ear that he was still alive"—as produced by six members of the experimental group (two from each variety whose performances could be said to be typical of the group) and the control, were fed into a Macintosh (Performa 450) computer through a Mac recorder. The sentence was broken into three utterances for the purpose of the analysis (UTT. 1, UTT. 2, and UTT. 3). A pitch extraction of UTT. 2 using the FFT (Fast Fourrier Tranform) routine included in the Signalyze™ (Signal Analysis) package was done to determine the intonation pattern used by the subjects (see Appendix).

2. FINDINGS

We observed that many of our subjects across the varieties had more intonation phrases[3] than the control. In the spoken prose for instance, whereas the control had 20 intonation phrases, some of the members of the experimental group had up to 24. Our subjects also showed an inclination towards using the falling and rising tone (unidirectional tones) in both the spoken prose and the spontaneous productions. Bidirectional tones were more frequent in the production of the control, for instance in the spoken prose, where some of our subjects—particularly in the Non-Standard and Standard Varieties—used the falling tone throughout the spoken prose passage. A summary of performance in both the spoken prose and the spontaneous productions is shown in the tables below.

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[2] A model of expected performance was not imposed contrary to what was done with the spoken prose, because experience and research has shown the futility of assigning tones to utterances on the basis of grammatical or other considerations. See for instance Fries (1964:242–253) and Udofot (1991:107–108) on the intonation of Yes/No questions in American English and Ibibio respectively.

[3] Our intonation phrase loosely corresponds to the conception of the unit of intonation in Liberman (1975), to the domain of tone unit in Crystal (1969), to the sense group in Armstrong and Ward (1931), to the 'tone group' in Halliday (1967), to the breathgroup in Liberman and Prince (1977), and to the intonation group in Cruttenden (1986).

Table 2. Intonation: Performance in Spoken Prose, Variety 3

Informants	IP (O)	IP (E)	(O–E)	RoD	HL	LH	HLH	LHL
MS 62 (Control)	20	–	–	–	13	0	7	0
MS 1	22	20	2	12.5	22	0	0	0
MS 3	23	20	3	15.5	18	3	2	2
MS 4	24	20	4	17.5	16	2	6	0
MS 16	20	20	0	0	13	1	6	0
MS 20	19	20	–1	–1	16	1	2	0
MS 21	19	20	–1	–1	15	1	3	0
MS 22	19	20	–1	–1	14	3	2	0
MS 23	19	20	–1	–1	13	2	4	0
MS 35	22	20	1	12.5	16	2	4	0
MS 38	22	20	2	12.5	16	2	4	0
MS 39	21	20	1	12.5	15	4	2	0
MS 43	21	20	1	1	16	2	3	0
MS 45	20	20	0	0	15	2	4	0
MS 49	21	20	1	1	15	2	4	0
MS 50	21	20	1	1	12	4	5	0
MS 54	24	20	4	17.5	13	8	3	0
MS 60	21	20	1	1	18	0	3	0
MS 61	23	20	3	15.5	11	3	9	0
MS 65	22	20	2	12.5	16	3	3	0
MS 67	21	20	1	1	15	3	3	0
	424	400	24	118	305	49	70	2
Percentage					71.6	11.5	16.4	0.5

Key

IP(O) — Intonation Phrases (Observed)
IP(E) — Intonation Phrases (Expected)
HL — Fall
LH — Rise
HLH — Fall-rise
LHL — Rise-fall
RoD — Rank of Difference

Table 3. Intonation: Performance in Spoken Prose, Variety 2

Informants	IP (O)	IP (E)	(O–E)	RoD	HL	LH	HLH	LHL
MS 62 (Control)	20	–	–	–	13	0	7	0
MS 9	20	20	0	0	16	4	0	0
MS 17	21	20	1	1	14	0	7	0
MS 18	18	20	–2	–11	16	0	2	0
MS 19	18	20	–2	–11	14	2	2	0
MS 24	19	20	–1	–1	19	0	0	0
MS 26	20	20	0	0	15	1	4	0
MS 28	19	20	–1	–1	15	2	2	0
MS 29	18	20	–2	–11	13	2	3	0
MS 30	19	20	–1	–1	19	0	0	0
MS 34	21	20	1	1	14	5	2	0

(*continued...*)

Informants	IP (O)	IP (E)	(O–E)	RoD	HL	LH	HLH	LHL
MS 37	22	20	2	11	18	1	3	0
MS 41	19	20	–1	–1	15	3	1	0
MS 42	19	20	–1	–1	13	2	4	0
MS 46	21	20	1	1	15	6	0	0
MS 47	22	20	2	11	21	1	0	0
MS 51	23	20	3	15.5	13	8	2	0
MS 52	20	20	0	0	20	0	0	0
MS 55	23	20	3	15.5	20	1	2	0
MS 59	23	20	3	15.5	16	6	1	0
MS 66	23	20	3	15.5	23	0	0	0
	408	400	8	48	329	44	35	0
Percentage					80.6	10.8	8.6	0

Table 4. Intonation: Performance in Spoken Prose, Variety 1

Informants	IP (O)	IP (E)	(O–E)	RoD	HL	LH	HLH	LHL
MS 62 (Control)	20	–	–	–	13	0	7	0
MS 5	24	20	4	16.5	24	0	0	0
MS7	17	20	–3	–13.5	17	0	0	0
MS8	21	20	1	1	18	2	1	0
MS 11	19	20	–1	–1	17	0	2	0
MS 12	20	20	0	0	16	1	3	0
MS 13	18	20	–2	–8.5	15	1	2	0
MS 15	16	20	–4	–16.5	16	0	0	0
MS 15	19	20	–1	–1	16	2	1	0
MS 25	18	20	–2	–8.5	18	0	0	0
MS 27	18	20	–2	–8.5	17	1	0	0
MS 31	20	20	0	0	13	6	1	0
MS 32	22	20	2	8.5	17	3	2	0
MS 33	21	20	1	1	13	1	7	0
MS 36	20	20	0	0	19	1	0	0
MS 48	23	20	3	13.5	19	4	0	0
MS 53	23	20	3	15.5	19	4	0	0
MS 57	23	20	3	13.5	8	5	0	0
MS 58	22	20	2	8.5	21	1	0	0
MS 68	22	20	2	8.5	14	5	3	0
MS 70	21	20	1	1	19	2	0	0
	407	400	7	28	346	39	22	0
Percentage					85	9.6	5.4	0

Table 5. Intonation: Performance in Spontaneous Production, Variety 3

Informants	IP	HL	LH	HLH	LHL
MS 62 (Control)	44	25	5	14	0
MS 1	30	26	3	1	0
MS 4	35	17	13	5	0

(*continued...*)

Informants	IP	HL	LH	HLH	LHL
MS 16	27	10	16	1	0
MS 20	29	20	5	4	0
MS 21	26	22	2	2	0
MS 22	21	12	9	0	0
MS 23	17	7	9	1	0
MS 25	24	14	7	3	0
MS 38	30	19	7	4	0
MS 39	25	13	12	0	0
MS 43	38	18	12	8	0
MS 45	30	14	11	5	0
MS 49	28	18	8	2	0
MS 50	22	7	13	2	0
MS 54	44	12	27	5	0
MS 60	35	22	8	5	0
MS 61	38	20	8	9	0
MS 65	36	15	19	2	0
MS 67	40	14	22	4	0
	594	319	212	63	0
Percentage		85	9.6	5.4	0

Table 6. Intonation: Performance in Spontaneous Production, Variety 2

Informants	IP	HL	LH	HLH	LHL
MS 62 (Control)	44	25	5	14	0
MS 9	26	16	7	3	0
MS 17	31	15	10	6	0
MS 18	24	11	12	1	0
MS 19	24	9	11	3	0
MS 24	24	15	9	0	0
MS 26	26	19	6	1	0
MS 28	24	10	11	3	0
MS 29	22	13	7	2	0
MS 30	19	19	0	0	0
MS 34	22	16	3	3	1
MS 37	26	18	6	2	0
MS 41	24	20	4	0	0
MS 42	28	16	4	8	0
MS 46	32	19	9	4	0
MS 47	33	24	8	1	0
MS 51	29	16	14	0	0
MS 52	23	13	8	2	0
MS 55	34	21	13	0	1
MS 59	44	17	20	7	0
	550	331	167	50	2
Percentage		60.2	30.4	9.1	0.4

Table 7. Intonation: Performance in Spontaneous Production, Variety 1

Informants	IP	HL	LH	HLH	LHL
MS 62 (Control)	44	15	5	14	0
MS 5	28	16	11	1	0
MS 7	21	13	7	1	0
MS 8	27	17	9	1	1
MS 11	15	10	5	0	0
MS 12	20	17	2	0	0
MS 13	20	18	2	0	0
MS 14	21	18	2	1	0
MS 15	26	22	3	1	0
MS 25	30	26	4	0	0
MS 27	22	21	0	0	1
MS 31	27	12	15	0	0
MS 32	21	12	7	2	0
MS 33	26	14	6	5	1
MS 36	18	16	2	0	0
MS 48	36	18	18	0	0
MS 53	33	32	1	0	0
MS 57	34	22	12	0	0
MS 58	32	30	2	0	1
MS 68	32	22	8	2	0
MS 70	36	24	12	0	0
	525	380	128	14	3
Percentage		72.3	24.3	2.6	0.6

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 SPOKEN PROSE

In the spoken prose, our control had 20 intonation phrases made up of 13 falls and 7 fall-rises. The highest difference was observed in Variety 3, where there was a total of 24 extra intonation phrases; while Varieties 2 and 1 had a total of 8 and 7 each. This means that Variety 3 used more intonation phrases than Variety 2 and Variety 1. In terms of individual performances we noted that two subjects in Variety 3 had the same number of intonation phrases as the control; three subjects in Variety 2 and two in Variety 1 also had twenty intonation phrases. The distribution however varied. The two subjects in Variety 3 had thirteen falls, one rise and six fall-rises; and fifteen falls, three rises and two rise-falls respectively. The three members of Variety 2 similarly had sixteen falls and four rises; fifteen falls, one rise, four rise-falls; and twenty falls respectively. The subjects of Variety 1 who recorded twenty intonation phrases/tones also had sixteen falls, one rise and three fall-rises; nineteen falls and one rise. In effect, despite having the same number of intonation phrases, none of the members of the experimental group had the same distribution as the control. It must be noted here that the majority of the subjects had more or less intonation units than the control, showing that they did not observe the mandatory pauses (as shown for

instance by the punctuation of the spoken prose passage); while the control observed all mandatory pauses (cf. Udofot 1997:141–149)—contrary to Ufomata (1995:4), who observes that "[Nigerian] students tend to pause at the same points in an utterance as native speakers would."[4]

An analysis of the distribution of tones used in the spoken prose also showed that, of the 424 intonation tones used in Variety 3 by all twenty subjects, 305 (71.6%) were falls, 49 (11.5%) were rising tones, and 70 (16.40%) were fall-rises, while 2 (0.5%) were rise-falls. Variety 2 produced a total of 408 tones, out of which 329 (80.6%) were fall-rises and none featured the rise-fall. Of the 407 tones produced by the twenty subjects in Variety 1, 346 (85%) were falling tones, 39 (9.6%) were rising tones and 22 (5.4%) were fall-rises, while none of the subjects in the group used the rise-fall, a tone that was also not used by the control. This observation reveals that in the three varieties of Nigerian English, the most frequently used intonation tone was the fall followed by the fall-rise in Variety 3 and the rise in Varieties 2 and 1. Although the fall formed the bulk of the tones, the other tones—the rise and the fall-rise—featured in the performances Variety 3. Variety 2 followed with a decreasing frequency of occurrence of the rise and the fall-rise.

On the whole, the unidirectional tones (the fall and the rise) featured more frequently in the performance of the three varieties of Nigerian English than the bi-directional ones. In the performance of the subjects in Variety 3, 354 out of 426 of the tones used were unidirectional. This represents 83.1%. In the other two varieties, the unidirectional tones formed 91.4% (373 out of 408) and 94.6% (385 out of 408) tones for Varieties 2 and 1 respectively. Of the bi-directional tones, the fall-rise was the most frequently used by all the varieties and the control.

4.2 STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESULTS OF THE SPOKEN PROSE

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical test revealed that in spite of some observed differences, there is no significant difference in the performances of the three varieties of Spoken Nigerian English identified as regards their ability to break up English sentences into intonation phrases. The calculated value of 1.2 was less than the table value of F (2,57) at 5% confidence level, which was 3.15. This implies that there is no significant difference between Varieties 3, 2 and 1. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Ranks Test however revealed a significant difference between the performances of the varieties that make up Nigerian English and the native speaker's English in terms of intonation phrases in the spoken prose. The sum of the ranks for Variety 3 was 118, that of Variety 2 was 48, while Variety 1 recorded a rank sum of 28. All three figures (118, 48, 28) are positive and greater than 0, indicating therefore that the group with the highest rank sum (Variety 3) is the one that is closest to the control's performance.[5] Variety 3 (Sophisticated Spoken Nigerian English) is also the one that exhibits the widest diversity in the number of intonation phrases used by individual members. The high rank sum also suggests that members of this group observed more pauses, resulting in more intonation groups, than members of the other

[4] See also Udofot (1996) on the phenomenon of pausing in Spoken Nigerian English.

[5] If the rank of difference is +0 the variables are discarded. The further the statistical value, which is the sum of the ranks, is from zero positively or negatively, the greater the chance of rejecting the null hypothesis.

varieties—implying that the members of this group took liberties to pause at optional places as well.

4.3 SPONTANEOUS PRODUCTIONS

The performance of the experimental group across the varieties maintained the same tendencies in the spontaneous productions as in the spoken prose. As regards the number of intonation phrases, the highest number was observed in Variety 3 (594) and the lowest in Variety 1 (525), while Variety 2 recorded a total of 550. We note therefore in Spoken Nigerian English a tendency to use more intonation phrases in the Standard and Sophisticated Varieties. The failure to observe mandatory and optional pauses may be responsible for the fewer intonation phrases in Variety 1. This tendency can be attributed to the subjects' disposition to pauses, which stems from an insufficient mastery of the language in the Non-Standard Varieties (cf. Udofot 1996 41–46). The preference for unidirectional tones (mainly the falls and the rises) also features in the spontaneous productions. These two tones formed the bulk of the tones used in Variety 3, with the fall accounting for 54%. In Variety 2, 90.6% of the total number of tones used were unidirectional, with the fall accounting for 60.2%. In Variety 1, 96.6% of the total number of tones were unidirectional with 72.3% representing the number of falls. Though the control also used more unidirectional tones (the falls and rises formed 57% of the total number of tones in her output), we note that compared to the 90% of Variety 3; the 90.6% of Variety 2; and the 96.6% of Variety 1, the varieties of Spoken Nigerian English exhibit an overwhelming preference for unidirectional tones—particularly the fall. The tendency to use bi-directional tones increases as one goes up the ladder of quality from Non-Standard to Standard to Sophisticated.

5. ACOUSTIC ANALYSIS

To confirm our perceptual observation that Nigerian English speakers, particularly those of the Non-Standard and Standard Varieties, are more inclined towards using the falling tone where the rise-fall is used by the native speaker, a pitch extraction of UTT. 2 for the three representatives of the varieties was carried out. UTT. 2 ("... and any time he passed her way...") is a non-final subordinate, and in an unmarked rendering should be realised with the fall-rise (HLH), as in the production of the control and that of the representative of Variety 3 (see Appendix). The representatives of the Non-Standard and Standard Varieties used the falling tone (HL). The data from the acoustic analyses therefore corroborated some of the perceptual observations, and also added fresh dimensions to our perceptual analysis. The tendency to use the falling tone has been corroborated. Our acoustic data has also shown that Spoken Nigerian English has a characteristic pitch pattern which is similar across the varieties in terms of its preference for the falling tone, yet collectively different from the pitch melody, and therefore the intonation pattern, of a native speaker.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article has been to describe the intonation of Nigerian English by analysing both the controlled and spontaneous outputs of sixty Nigerians who

were divided into three groups, depending on the quality of their spoken English and their length of exposure to English language learning and use. The paper has been able to bring out the differences in the tendency to break up utterances into proper intonation groups and the choice of intonation tones in the three varieties of Spoken Nigerian English studied, and in the performance of a native English speaker represented by the control. The Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Ranks Test proved this in the spoken prose. This was corroborated by the performance in spontaneous production. Typical performance features of Spoken Nigerian English with regard to intonation have been shown to include a high frequency of the falling tone, and a preference for unidirectional tones. The Analysis of Variance revealed that the varieties differ in their performance levels, but that put together the three varieties do not differ significantly from one another. Thus Nigerians, no matter their level of education, cannot be said to speak English with the melody of a native speaker.

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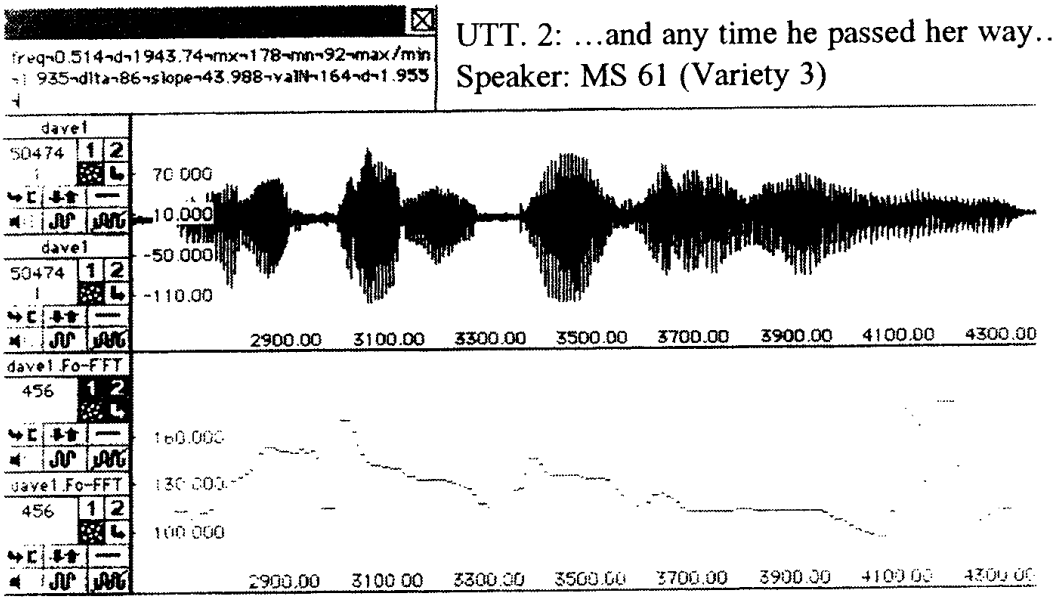
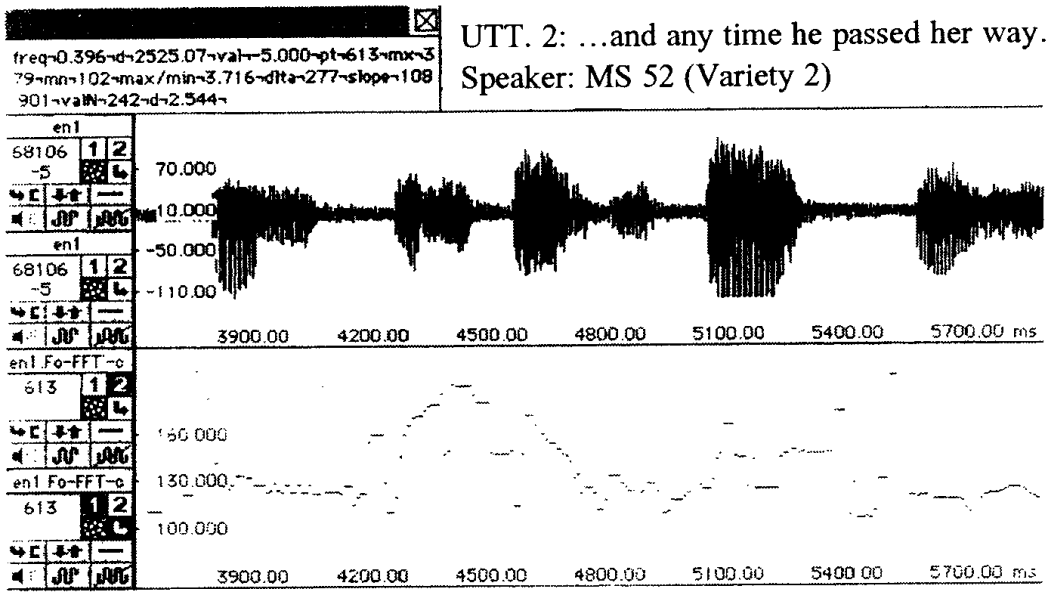
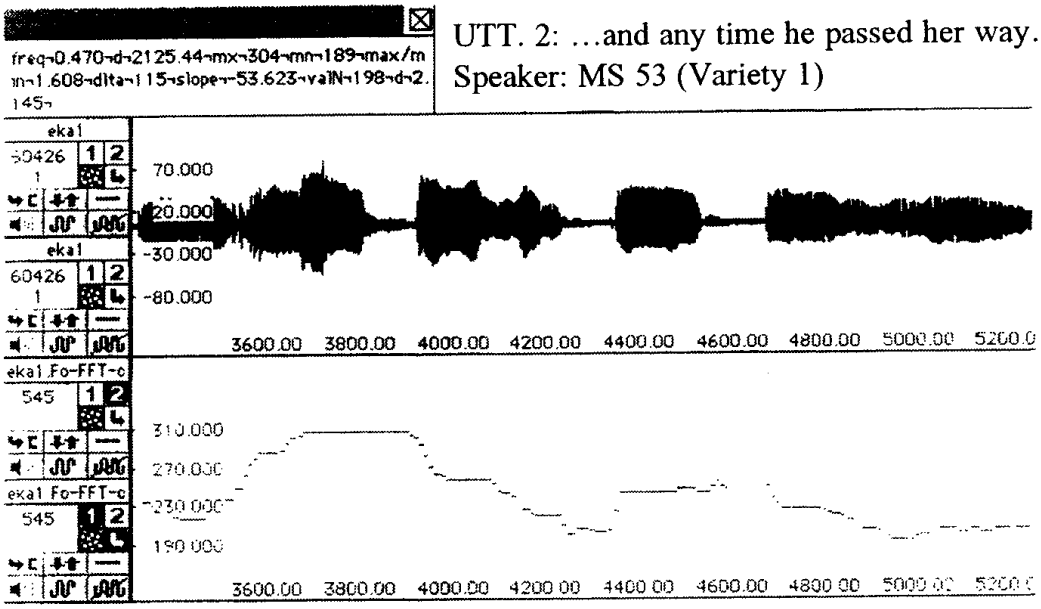
APPENDIX



UTT. 2: ...and any time he passed her way...
Speaker: MS 61 (Variety 3)



UTT. 2: ...and any time he passed her way...
Speaker: MS 52 (Variety 2)



UTT. 2: ...and any time he passed her way...
Speaker: MS 53 (Variety 1)