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Sociolinguistic Variation in the Morphology of Nigerian English

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Abstract

Quite against the backdrop of other studies which view Nigerian English Morphology as errors that are condemnable, this paper investigates sociolinguistic variation in the morphological features of Nigerian English. The goals of this study are: to determine the extent to which the features vary from Standard British English and to identify the linguistic and social variables that characterise Nigerian English Morphology. Anchored on Labov's Variationist Sociolinguitics theory, data for the study was collected from respondents across four universities in the country's northern, southern, eastern and western regions using uncontrolled observation technique. The findings revealed distinguishing morphological features of Nigerian English and proved these features as distinctive from standard British English. The findings equally attest that there is a co-occurrence of linguistic and social factors that shape Nigerian English Morphology. The study concludes that while linguistic norms have to be preserved, it is significant not to ignore how social and linguistic factors shape new varieties of English.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, language variation, morphology, Nigerian English, variant, morphological features

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Introduction

For many centuries now, there has been a continuous extension of the English language speech community and today, English is practically a world language quite more than the language of either the English people or the British people. Above the distinguishing accents, the most apparent differences among English speaking countries are created principally by the environment where the choice of vocabulary, the formation of words, the structure of phrases, clauses and sentences reflect differences in the environment. We have often heard people talk about a Nigerian English (NE) in Nigeria, and linguistic scholars of repute have approved of it as a variety marker and a sociolinguistic reality. Works of linguists like Spencer, Ubahakwe, Pride, Kachru, Platt, Weber and Ho, Jowitt, Bamgbose, Banjo and Thomas among others have popularised the variety and since then, Nigerian linguists have subsequently addressed themselves in greater detail to issues of identification and characterisation of the Nigerian variety of English.

Nigerian English (NE) is not in any way a derogatory term or an inferior variety to others like British, American, Canadian, and Australian Englishes. The English language in Nigeria has been domesticated, and as Achebe points out, "domestication refers to the process of transplanting and developing a language in a foreign or non-native environment" (87). The concept of domestication is what Kachru views as "localisation" while Odumuh sees it as "nativisation". All these relate to the fact that the English language has come to stay with us in all our endeavours, and as Achebe insists, we should bend the language to accommodate our thought patterns since according to him, the English people have colonised us and used us according to their purpose and dictates. So, we should equally colonise their language and make it to perform tasks suitable to us.

Thus, the English language which the colonisers handed down to us and which they, the native–speakers, use is not precisely the same English as we in Nigeria use, decades after its implantation. Ours is a variety of English different in a number of features. These differential features of Nigerian English may be phonological, syntactic, lexical or semantic in import. Nigerian English (NE) is an almost distinctive variety of English which has as a great deal of vivacity as other varieties of English the world over, including British, American, Canadian, Australian, South African, Ghanaian, Indian, Kenyan and Ugandan Englishes (native and non –native speaker varieties). Though as a second language in Nigeria, English is not and cannot be a linguistic isolation. It has not only been in constant competition with the over four

hundred and fifty indigenous mother tongues, but has been responding and acclimatising to the local, social and linguistic environment. Therefore, the linguist studying Nigerian English (NE) Morphology is at once faced up with the significant but often elusory task of recognising, separating and accounting for this linguistic phenomenon that contributes in marking off the Nigerian English (NE) in everyday usage.

A pure grammatical appraisal of the Morphology of Nigerian English without due consideration of the influence of social variables would mean suppressing the Nigerian English variety (NEV) to the formal/descriptive features of grammar, and reducing a viable national variety of English to 'a package of errors'. It would also imply a denial of the significant role played by socio-cultural, geographical, political and other environmental factors in shaping language variation, a sociolinguistic phenomenon that has produced national varieties of English across the globe. It is from this experiential background that this paper provides a sociolinguistics interpretation of the morphological features of Nigerian English.

Morphologically, Nigerian English (NE) structures may pose the problem of conformity to Standard British English (SBE) because Nigerian English (NE) has revealed a marked deviation from the way native-speakers use English. However, such deviation does not constitute any impediment to mutual intelligibility within the Nigerian environment, even though it poses challenge of international intelligibility. Most scholars have rather failed to see this as evidence of adaptation of English to a new environment and, as yet, another example of the way through which a living language is able to react to new social and cultural circumstances. Most works carried out on the Morphology of Nigerian English (NE) such as those of Bamiro, Dadzie, Awonusi, Jibril, Jowitt, Odumuh, Okoro and several others, have focused on analysing the features of the variety of English in Nigeria on the basis of errors, inappropriate usages, ungrammaticality and unacceptability, without projecting the sociolinguistic dynamics that have contributed in marking off these morphological features. This paper embarks on a sociolinguistic investigation into the morphological features of Nigerian English. It sets out to determine the extent to which morphological peculiarities in Nigerian English vary from Standard British English; and to identify the linguistic and social variables that shape Nigerian English (NE) Morphology.

Sociolinguistics

For a comprehensive understanding of the concept of Sociolinguistics, it is pertinent to subject it to a morphemic analysis. The term is derived from two words, which

are Sociology and Linguistics. Sociology refers to a science of society; and Linguistics is the science of language. Sociolinguistics, therefore studies the relationship between language and society.

Crystal upholds that Sociolinguistics is a subdivision of Linguistics that investigates all facets of the connection between language and society. He explains that Sociolinguistics studies such matters as "the linguistic identity of social groups, social attitudes to language, standard and non-standard forms of language, the patterns and needs of national language use, social varieties and levels of language, the social basis of multilingualism and so on" (312).

In Romaine's view, the sociolinguist aspires to shift towards a theory that offers a stimulated explanation of "the manner in which language is used in a society and of the choices individuals make in the course of using Language" (45). He elucidates that some scholars differentiate between Theoretical and Applied Sociolinguistics, pointing out that while Theoretical Sociolinguistics is preoccupied with formal models and means for analysing the structure of linguistic communities and language varieties and presents a general account of communicative competence, Applied Sociolinguistics is concerned with the social and political consequences of essential disparity in the use of language in diverse spheres of community life. This paper fits into Romaine's second category which is Applied Sociolinguistics, as it investigates how social variables create linguistic variation in Nigerian English.

Meyerhoff opines that Sociolinguistics is a very wide domain of study which is used to explain the approaches of studying language. Her argument is that though a lot of linguists might portray themselves as sociolinguists, individuals who call themselves sociolinguists may have rather dissimilar interests from each other and they may employ very diverse techniques for collecting and analysing data. She affirms that Sociolinguistics is concerned with: "How individual speakers use language; how people use language differently in different towns or regions and how a nation decides what languages will be recognised in courts or education. For example, if a speaker describes a funny or amusing situation as 'kicksin', they are from, or have spent a good deal of time in the English-speaking Caribbean." (Meyerhoff 1) According to her, individuals draw from their sociolinguistic knowledge when they speak, and they do so by adapting to different speakers and situations. She notes that every time speakers alter the mode they speak, depending on their interlocutor or context, they provide more sociolinguistic information that goes into building up the sociolinguistic repertoire in the community.

Language Variation

Labov, while explaining linguistic variation observes that "in Sociolinguistics, linguistic variation often reflects the relationship between the status of the speaker and the status of the person addressed, rather than the absolute status of either" (206-09). Labov asserts that it is common for a language to have many alternate ways of saying "the same thing". He explains that some words like "car" and "automobile" seem to have the same referents; others have two pronunciations, like "working" and "workin." There are also syntactic options such as "who is he talking to?" And "to whom is he talking?" or "It's easy for him to talk" and "for him to talk is easy" (188).

Similarly, Eckert conceptualised linguistic variation as "an outcome of communities of practice, where individuals with shared interests and goals use specific linguistic features" (204). She emphasised how linguistic variation is intertwined with identity construction and social belonging.

There is hardly any human language that is unchanging or unvarying. Akmajian, et al. note, for instance, "that the speech of Americans is notably different from the speech of the British and the speeches of these two groups in turn different from that of Australians" (259). This view is supported by Quirk and Greenbaum who said that there are many varieties of the English language and that typically, English is "a common core or nucleus which is realised only in the different forms of the language that we actually hear or read" (1). They identified six kinds of varieties — regional, educational and social standing, medium, attitude and interferences— which are dominated by the common core of English. According to them, when groups of speakers vary obviously in their language, "they are often said to speak different dialects of the language" (259).

Nigerian English

The term "Nigerian English" has been the object of much linguistic enquiry over the years. Several of those who first focused attention on the English language in Nigeria were, not surprisingly, quite reluctant to acknowledge a legitimate variety of the language preferring instead to characterise usage in terms of errors and non-standard forms on the one hand, or on the other hand, to refute the notion of a "Nigerian English" on the ground that adequate criteria had not yet been established for its identification. Zafar Khan and Vijay Kumar Roy observe that "Nigerian English is comparable in status to native varieties such as, American, British , West Indian, or

Canadian." (163) Okoro has also noted that "there has since been an unequivocal acceptance of Nigerian English as a legitimate variety of English world-wide" (80). He contends that Nigerian linguists have subsequently addressed themselves "in greater detail to issues of its identification and characterisation" (80). He goes a step further to define Nigerian English "simply as the English spoken and written by Nigerians" (80. Adetugbo admits that "by Nigerian English, we mean varieties of English used in Nigeria" (137). He regards Nigerian English as "a dialect of the English language" and points out that "the geographical label, 'Nigeria' will be enough … to set it apart from any other dialect of English" (137). Akindele and Adegbite are of the opinion that the phenomenon known as Nigerian English "is that variety of English that has developed in the Nigerian non–native English situation" (112). They explain that the language results from colonial imposition and the native English culture on the country. The variety thus developed is, according to them, "not wholly native English type and not totally Nigerian. It is a blend of the two situations" (113). Achebe affirms this fact when he says "English language will have to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surrounding" (62).

The English language in Nigeria, by whatever characterisation, cannot be the same as the English language in any other environment. Indeed, Banjo makes this point clear when he states:

> The most refined statement would reveal that every language context is unique. Therefore we say that the markers, whatever they may be, of the L_2 situation in the Sudan or India are not of the same order as those of the L_2 situation in any of the countries in Anglophone west Africa, and in turn the markers are not identical of each of these west African countries….Within west African countries themselves, the situation is bound to be affected in each case by the number of vernaculars in contact with English …(45)

Morphology

Morphology is a term for that branch of Linguistics which is concerned with the form of words in different uses and constructions. Morphology can simply be defined as a minimal unit of grammar that is meaningful in English. According to Yule, the term 'Morphology' which literally means "the study of forms" (75) was originally used in biology, but since the middle of the nineteenth century, it has been used to describe the type of investigation which analyses all those basic 'elements' which

are used in language. He notes that these elements are technically known as morphemes. He defines morphemes as a "minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function" (Yule 75).

Ojo opines that Morphology is a sub-division of Grammar (the other sub-division being Syntax). He says "morphology is the study of words and their constituent units as well as the processes involved in their formation" (36). Tomori defines Morphology as "the study of the structure of words — the rules governing the formation of words in a language". According to Tomori, when we say, for instance, that the word achievement is made up of the two parts achieve-and-ment, we are making a morphological statement" (21).

According to Syal and Jindal, Morphology is a systematic study of morphemes or how morphemes join to form words. Syal and Jindal view the morpheme as a short segment of "Language that meets three criteria: it is a word or a part of a word that has meaning; it cannot be divided into smaller meaningful parts without violation of its meaning; it recurs in differing verbal environment with a relative stable meaning" (77). Morphology, consequently deals with the internal structure of word-forms.

Empirical Review

Several studies have previously been carried out on Nigerian English in general and the morphology of Nigerian English in particular and this undoubtedly is reflected in the plethora of literature available on the subject matter. The point of divergence, however is that the concerns and approaches of these previous studies differ from the current study, hence, the gap in scholarship that this research intends to fill.

In a study on "Errors and Variation in Educated Nigerian English: A Case Study of Verb Usage by Selected Lecturers and Students in Nigeria" (13-26), Ekundayo, et al. examined how educated Nigerian users of English deploy conversion and affixation to fabricate and use verbs that may not be obtainable in Standard British English. The study was concerned with errors of usages of verbs, but the current study looks beyond verbs and examines variation as a natural sociolinguistic phenomenon in the morphology of Nigerian English.

Uba carried out a morphophonemic investigation of the linguistic behaviour of Nigerians towards the phonology of English prefixes de- and re- post +" -tion/ -tian and post nasal-b- and -g. Though this study is on morphology, it focuses on the morphophonemic aspect of morphology only, with no methodological or theoretical approach that is similar to the current research.

Awobi and Amodu in a study on "Morphosyntactic Inconsistencies in the Written English of Final Year Students in Selected Nigerian Universities" (117-29) analysed the extent of inconsistencies in morphosyntactic rules using an objective test to collect data. The findings showed that the extent of the students' understanding of English morphological rules is marginal. The study differs from the current study since it is on morphosyntax, and not exclusively on morphology.

In "Morphological Features in the English Language of Selected Nigerian Paramilitary Formations in AkwaIbom State," Uwen investigated the official communicative activities among Nigerian paramilitary formations in AkwaIbom State, with a view to determining the peculiar forms generated through morphological processes that occur in their interactions. The findings indicated that the operatives used English language for their formal conversations to communicate paramilitary ideology. Like previous reviews, this study departs from the concerns of this paper in its content scope, theoretical and methodological approach.

Fakoya, in "Nigerian English: A Morpholectal Classification," examined the Nigerian English variety against the backdrop of Crystal's suggestions and observations, noting that for the Nigerian variety of English to attract world attention, the morphological flaws presented in the data must be addressed and redressed. Using the methodological conversation analysis approach, data was drawn from real-life fragments of English in context. The paper posited that for viable international rapport, Nigerian English needs to adhere to morphological meanings accessible to other varieties of English, especially Standard British English. This study, like the one before it, varies from the preoccupation of this thesis in scope, theoretical orientation and methodology.

Ekundayo and Balogun in another work on Nigerian English, focused on the deployment of morphological processes for socio-cultural concepts and experiences in Educated Nigerian English. Their concern here was not on bringing out the morphological features of Nigerian English, they were interested more in examining how educated Nigerians deploy the word-formation and lexico-semantic process of lexicalisation, compounding and reduplication to store and transmit socio-cultural concepts and experiences (35-44).

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on Labov's Variationist theory of Sociolinguistics. The Variationist sociolinguistic approach to language began during the 1960s, when Willaim Labov and Uriel Weinreich, developed a "theory of language change which mostly

adopted an ethnographic dialectological, probabilistic approach to the study of linguistic variation" (Weinreich et al. 92).

According to Chambers, "Variationist Sociolinguistics is an approach that focuses on studying linguistic diversity at many levels" (57). It aims at describing and modelling the sociolinguistic factors that affect the choice between expressive variants. Within the theory, language variation is seen as existing at two levels: intra-systemic variation which is variation across related varieties of a language, also known as dialectal variation or micro variation; and inter-systemic variation which refers to the use of certain linguistic items as observed in the speech patterns of language users. Labov's efforts to systematise the methodology of scrutinising language variation and change later expanded the field from an approach into a theory known as "variation theory" (Chambers 55).

Going by the variationist Sociolinguistics' theory, variables are of two types: linguistic variables and social variables. Labov sees linguistic variables "as a set of alternative ways of saying the same thing" (97). According to Wardhaugh and Fuller, "Linguistic variable is an item in the structure of a language, an item that has alternate realisations, as one speaker realises it one way and another a different way, or the same speaker realises it differently on different occasions" (151). On the other hand, Labov defines **s**ocial variables as social factors that can give rise to a variant use of language in a given society. Dittmar affirms that "a social variable is simply a set of alternative linguistic realisations (variants) with social significance" (57). Dittmar explains that a set of two or more realisations of an abstract linguistic unit such as a phoneme, a grammatical function or a semantic unit is what makes up a linguistic variable. He maintains that if these alternative realisations also carry different social meanings, each of them evoking a certain social or situational prototype, we can be dealing with a sociolinguistic variable.

Methodology

Primary source data were collected from four randomly selected Federal universities in Nigeria. These were: the University of Ibadan from the West, the University of Calabar from the South, the University of Nigeria Nsukka from the East, and Federal University Dutsin-ma from the North. The primary source of data, through the tool of uncontrolled observation, made original data possible where sampled subjects use such morphological features freely. Similarly, the use of primary source data was to ensure the viability, reliability and authenticity of the data.

The researcher directly observed the speeches of the subjects who use Nigerian English morphological patterns without the subjects being aware of their being observed. Hence, it was not possible to fake linguistic behaviour and data collected using this method was very reliable. The speeches which were made in both formal and informal contexts were easily recorded by the researcher. The researcher used smart phones to record the subjects, and the identified morphological features in the speeches were transcribed and documented for analysis. The selection of a university from each region was to ensure equal representation and a fair coverage of the country, while the choice of a federal university in each region was purposive and was informed by the belief that admissions and employments in federal universities are based on the principle of federal character which warrants that students and staff come from different ethnic groups and states of the federation, and not just from the host state. From this kind of heterogeneity, more robust morphological features of Nigerian English were revealed in the recorded speeches of the subjects and by extension, a more reliable corpus for analysis. In addition, the choices of the university students and staff as subjects to be observed for data collection was validated by the fact that they are educated users of English and form the basis for measuring standard Nigerian English. This selection was also informed by the fact that these subjects constitute different social classes and are likely to exhibit different linguistic and social variables in their communicative choices. Using random sampling, a total of thirty four (34) morphological features of Nigerian English were selected from a pool of over sixty (60) initially gathered from each of the federal universities representing the regions.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Morphological Process Variation

S/N of Data	Linguistic variables		Social variables
	Standard British English (SBE)	Nigerian English Variety (NEV)	
1	Chan**ce**	Chanc**ed**	Language contact and language change; Regional/ethnic background of the Nigerian speakers of English.
2	Opportu**ne**	Opportun**ed**	
3	**Impregnated**	Pregn**anted**	
4	**Un**disciplined	**In**disciplin**ed**	
5	Instalm**ent**	Instalmentall**y**	
6	Sever**al**	Severall**y**	
7	Plum**p**	Plump**y**	
8	**De**flower	**Dis**virgin	
9	----------	**De**shine	
10	De**fect**	**Decamp**	Language contact and language change; Regional/ethnic background of the Nigerian speakers of English.
11	Exp**a**tiate	Exp**an**tiate	
12	----------	**Cross carpeting**	
13	----------	**Strong headed**	
14	----------	**Quotarisation**	
15	----------	**God fatherism**	
16	----------	**Face-to-face**	
17	----------	**Ghana-must-go**	
18	----------	**Prayer warrior**	
19	----------	**Pure water**	
20	----------	**No-go-area**	
21	----------	**Bush meat**	Language contact and language change; Regional/ethnic background of the Nigerian speakers of English.
22	----------	**Open-teeth**	
23	----------	**Eye service**	
24	----------	**Media practitioner**	
25	----------	**Native doctor**	
26	----------	**National cake**	
27	----------	**Bottom power**	
28	----------	**Area boys**	
29	**Tiny**	**Tiny tiny**	
30	**Fast**	**Fast fast**	
31	**Furniture**	**Furnitures**	
32	**Equipment**	**Equipments**	
33	**Homework**	**Homeworks**	
34	**Stationery**	**Stationeries**	

Source (The researcher's compilation 2025)

Data presented under this category in the above Table are those that relate to variations resulting from different processes of word formation in the Nigerian English Variety (NEV).The NEV deploys different morphological processes that create linguistic variations and this sets it apart from Standard British English. The NEV takes the regular past tense –ed too far from the norm of the native speakers by over generalising the rule. In this process, NEV speakers can generate other words which vary significantly from SBE or sometimes do not exist in the SBE variety. In the –ed words in datum 1 to 3 under the NEV (chanc**ed**, opportun**ed** and pregnant**ed**), the morphological process followed in creating these NEV words is similar to that of numerous verbs in SBE, but the rule has been over applied in the Nigerian English morphological process to create a peculiar morphological feature that is identified with the NEV. In datum 4, the word 'indiscipline' has received a facile affixation of the –ed morpheme to generate the adjectival form **in**disciplin**ed,** which has the same semantic import as the SBE variant "undisciplined." The process of forming adverbs of manner and time by adding –ly morpheme to adjectives, creates entirely new words in the NEV, which do not exist in SBE or exist with a different meaning from that created in the NEV. This is evident in data 5 and 6 where instalmental**ly** and several**ly** in the NEVare adverbs of manner created from SBE 'instalment' and 'several' respectively. The SBE adjective 'plump', has a Nigerian English variant, 'plumpy' in datum 7. These words have not only been assimilated into the general sociolect of Nigerian English but also have been identified as a distinctive feature of the variety.

English words are essentially negated by affixing certain elements such as de-, mis-, un-, dis- etc., and this is a guide applied to create new words. The NEV applies it as a rule rather than a guide, even among educated users of the variety, and this gives room for such morphological formations as witnessed in the NEV in datum 8 to 10 (disvirgin, deshine and decamp).Some of these NEV morphological formations either do not have SBE equivalents or exist in SBE with different semantic import. For instance, while the NEV 'disvirgin', is peculiar to the variety, its morphological formation in SBE is 'deflower';'deshine' in the NEV does not exist in SBE; 'decamp' is used in the NEV datum 10, principally to mean 'leaving one political party for another' as against 'being sent out of a camp' that is envisaged in SBE.

Other processes of word creation are peculiar to the NEV and are not attested to in SBE. For instance, datum 11 'expantiate' which is derived from 'expand' is different from the SBE 'expatiate'. From datum 12 to 28, we see the morphological

processes of lexicalisation and compound formations which create new words in the NEV, with such forms completely absent in the SBE. For instance, the use of data 12 and 13 'cross-carpeting' and 'strong headed' to mean 'defect from a political party to another' and 'to be wilful' respectively, do not exist in SBE. While 'quotarisation' in datum 14 is created through lexicalisation to attest to the federal character principle of quota system, this is quite unattested to in SBE.

Data 15 to 28 are compound formations in the NEV with no SBE equivalents. 'God fatherism' symbolises the thought of having a godfather and the domineering influence of a godfather, whether positive or negative, principally in politics; 'face-to-face' is a phrase used to depict anything or circumstance that brings you face to face with another; 'Ghana-must-go' is a bag and it is the most familiar and symbolic of bags. It is moderately affordable and durable, used to carry huge cash to banks and to bribe government officers. Consequently, the second and symbolic meaning of the bag is money, bribery and corruption. 'Prayer-warrior' is a phrase widespread among Pentecostal churches and used to mean Christians who have the spiritual strength to pray at length and efficiently too. 'Pure-water' is used to mean water sold in a sachet or nylon or cellophane. 'No-go-area' is an area to be avoided; an issue or subject not open to (public) debate, discussion or changes; an already settled issue. 'Bush meat' is meat from the forest animals like antelope, rodents, etc. as contrasted with domestic meat like beef, mutton, chicken, etc. 'Bush meat' is also used to describe rural, primitive girls who can easily be brainwashed for sex. 'Open teeth' as a compound formation is a phrase for gap-toothed, having an opening in between the two front upper teeth, which gives a lovely smile. 'Eye-service' means pretentious words, fake feelings, deceptive actions and pride that one displays to impress someone, say a senior, a boss or an officer, etc. only in their presence. It is also called notice-me. 'Media-practitioner' is used in the same way of medical practitioner/legal practitioner; this is used by some journalists to point out journalists, broadcasters and publicity professionals. 'Native doctor' is not only a compound formation but a coinage, corresponding to a medical doctor or surgeon. It is used for a native healer who uses herbs and spiritual powers, not modern medical knowledge and tools. 'National cake' is a compound formation that invokes cake sharing in a social ceremony. National cake here is a symbol for state or national/federal resources and money to be shared to the federating units: Federal government, state and local government and then to individuals. 'Bottom power' is the deliberate use of sex by women for money, pleasure of life, to get a job or promotion and influence. 'Area-boys' is a compound formation and a coinage that describes young (jobless) men

that live in an area and sometimes amount to a nuisance. Almost all these forms are not mere morphological formations unique to the NEV, the most interesting thing about them is that they are defined by the Nigerian character and as such, are not seen in other varieties of English.

Datum 29 and 30 are NEV morphological formations out of reduplication. 'Tiny tiny' for SBE tiny and 'fast fast' for SBE fast. The morphological import is that the NEV is reduplicative. Datum 31, 32, 33 and 34 are instances of plural formations in the NEV which depart grossly from what is obtainable in SBE. Such plural formations as 'furnitures', 'equipments', 'homeworks' and 'stationeries' have become institutionalised forms of plural formation in the NEV even among educated users of the variety.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study have shown that there are distinguishing morphological features which characterise the Nigerian English variety. These features include variation resulting from different processes of word formation in the Nigerian English Variety such as the over application of morphological rules to create Nigerian English Variety words, the creation of entirely new words with new meaning, morphological process through lexicalisation and compound formation as well as reduplication.Datum 1 to 34 as presented in the Table and analysed have proven that the morphological features that characterise the Nigerian English Variety vary from Standard British English.

Similarly, the findings also show that the morphological features of the Nigerian English variety are often peculiar and distinctive from Standard British English to the extent that most of the features are a deviation from the norm of SBE. However, such instances of the Morphology of Nigerian English usages are not extensive enough to impede intelligibility within the Nigerian English speech community.

Also the findings prove that there is the co-occurrence of linguistic and social factors that shape the Morphology of Nigerian English. Besides the overwhelming linguistic features that characterise the Morphology of Nigerian English, there are a combination of other linguistic and social factors which have contributed in shaping the Morphology of Nigerian English among which are the Nigerian multilingual environment, which sometimes provides the morphological structures, the cultural influences which provide the local flavour of the Nigerian English, the distinct evolution of English in the Nigerian context which is a product of language contact

as well as other social factors like gender, socio-economic status and level of educational attainment.

The analysis done thus far falls under Labov's Linguistic variability of his variationist theory since they are instances of variation in language usage occasioned by linguistic factors within the language itself. This implies that the data presented and analysed from 1 to 34 have also confirmed that linguistic and social factors shape the Morphology of Nigerian English.

Conclusion

The leading linguistic paradigm in examining the Nigerian English phenomenon among most linguists in the past has been a watertight perspective of examining a legitimate sociolinguistic variety under the prescriptive norms of Standard British English, and subjecting the Morphology of Nigerian English variety to ungrammaticality, deviance and condemnable errors. While upholding the fact that linguistic norms have to be preserved, it is equally significant, not to overlook the momentous role played by the interactional forces of linguistic and social factors such as culture, ethnicity, gender and other environmental dynamics in shaping new varieties of English across the globe.

An exclusively prescriptive-grammar reading of the morphological features of Nigerian English is unidirectional and this undermines the linguistic legitimacy and distinctiveness of the Nigerian English Variety. A more descriptive sociolinguistic approach that seeks to understand and document the variety's unique characteristics would be more beneficial and convincing in recognising the validity of the Nigerian English variety; reflecting the unique Nigerian cultural and linguistic identities; demonstrating language evolution and innovation outside traditional norms; and allowing an enquiry of how language use correlates with social factors to reveal language change in the Nigerian society.

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