



Variant Word Stress Patterns in the Spoken English of Selected Nigerian Teachers

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Abstract: Earlier studies on word stress patterns in Nigerian English (NE) have focused mainly on how it differs from British English (BE) and have presented a picture of homogeneous and deviant word stress patterns in NE. Currently, little is known about the variant word stress patterns in NE. In line with the above statements, this study examines empirically the variations in the stress patterns in spoken English, but does so in relation to selected Nigerian teachers. The data were sourced through a text-based research instrument designed to test the stress placement of some English words by purposively selected teachers drawn from Kano, Oyo and Imo states, representing the three major ethno-linguistic groups in Nigeria. From each of the three states, 108 teachers who were indigenes were selected from primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education making 324 in all. They were made to read prepared passages made up of 50 items in context and in isolation. A close perceptual analysis was carried out to ascertain the differences in the performance of the respondents on word stress. The paper employed Metrical Theory for the data analysis. The study revealed that the subjects manifested sophisticated (VIII), standard (VII) and non-standard (VI) variant word stress patterns in their articulations. It concluded that variant stress patterns of the NE are direct consequences of some sociolinguistic variables.

Key Words: Nigerian English, word stress, variant patterns, and sociolinguistic variables

1. Introduction

The distinct spoken English of Nigerians has been ascribed to phonological, social, historical, political and pedagogical factors. Gut (2002) specifically links the distinct pronunciation of Nigerian English (NE) to its prosody. Since this study concentrates only on the word stress aspect of the English prosody, it is essential to clearly contextualize the meaning of stress. The term 'stress', from the

production/articulation's point of view is the degree of force with which a syllable is produced (Roach 2000 and Adeyanju 2003). Scholars with this view agreed that greater muscular energy is exerted when a stressed syllable is uttered than the one used for an unstressed syllable. From the listener's perspective, Roach (2000:94) also explains that "all stressed syllables have prominence as their basic feature". In this study, the term 'stress' denotes

performance that is articulatory which gives relative prominence to syllables in words, phrases or utterances.

Word stress in Nigerian English has attracted the attention of scholars like Atoye, (1991) and Fajobi, (1998) who have described word stress patterns of some words in NE as either 'deviant patterns' or 'outright errors'. This categorization stems from their employment of linguistic and contrastive approaches using the British English (BE) notion of 'correctness' in their assessment of NE word stress patterns. The findings from these studies were based on a sociolinguistic fallacy that all Nigerians, irrespective of their educational and linguistic backgrounds, have homogeneous stress placement patterns that are uniquely Nigerian. This fallacy occurred because these scholars disregarded Tagliamonte's (2006) caveat that the English language should be defined based purely on the group of people who speak it.

Therefore, NE is viewed in this study as a variety of English that reflects the sociolinguistic ecology that it finds itself. As earlier works on variation in NE, like Jibril (1982) and Akande's (2008), focus mainly on the segmental level, there is a dearth of studies using variation scales in describing NE word stress patterns, hence the motivation for this study. The present study

investigates the variation in word stress placement in the English pronunciation of teachers from three major ethno-linguistic groups in Nigeria. It describes the variant stress patterns noticeable in NE using the Metrical Theory tenets.

2. Earlier Studies on Variety Differentiation in Nigerian Spoken English

A language variety is often open to multiplicities of forms which occur across social and geographical groups (Biber *et al*, 2007 and Salami, 2010). Variation, according to Labov (1969), involves different ways of saying the same thing. It is a complicated occurrence, especially in multilingual and multicultural settings like Nigeria. The different forms of English usage in Nigeria have been variously described as 'errors of usage' (Salami, 1968 and Vincent, 1974). This paper however treats NE as a variety of English that has responded to the Nigerian sociolinguistic realities which has therefore evolved some distinct linguistic features, especially at the level of word stress placement patterns.

Variation study, according to Tagliamonte (2006), is premised on the heterogeneity and mutability of language as a result of time and space which make a language to change from one generation to another and from one region to another. This heterogeneity of

language forms has led to the emergence of world Englishes of which NE is one. Also, language variation conveys abundant non-linguistic information such as social identity, history and socio-economic status of speakers.

The spoken English of Nigerians manifests some varied forms because speakers produce different forms in different contexts whether formal or informal. Literature abounds on the heterogeneity of spoken NE (Jibril, 1982; Udofot, 2007 and Akande, 2008). Akande (2008:431) remarks that “by listening to the spoken English of a Nigerian, it is normally possible to predict the part of the country such a speaker came from”. In spite of the noticeable distinguishing features existing in the spoken English of Nigerians, little has been done in investigating the correlation between variability and social variables as they affect word stress placement among speakers of NE. This study intends to fill this gap.

The study draws insights from the schemas of Banjo (1971, 1996) and Udofot (1997) in its description of variant stress patterns in NE. It focuses on speakers of Banjo’s (1971) Variety III of NE who are university graduates, which was later modified in Banjo (1996:78) to include home background and the quality of education, which such graduates received at the primary

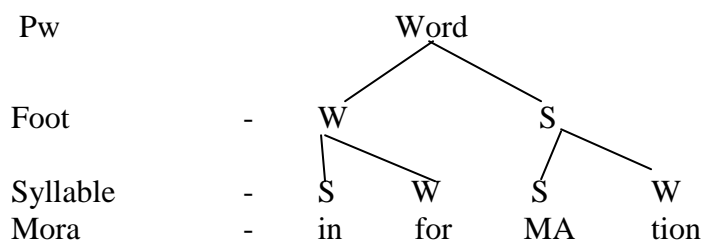
and secondary levels. Speakers of Variety III of NE make vital phonemic discrimination which makes it satisfy the twin criteria of acceptability and intelligibility. Bamgbose (1982) has described this variety as Educated Nigerian English (ENE).

In identifying the variant word stress patterns noticeable in NE, insights were drawn from Udofot’s (1997) NE schema of VIII, VII and VI for the sophisticated, standard and non-standard variants, respectively. Udofot (2004:108) identifies that spoken English in Nigeria at times is not “a correlate of educational status”. Her classification differs from Brosnahan’s (1958) and Banjo’s (1971) classifications in that she categorises VII as the standard variety in line with Jowit’s (1991) identification of popular NE as the standard, which Nigeria should aim at. Consequently, she categorized the varieties based on NE speakers’ training in English pronunciation and the quality of their linguistic backgrounds. Realizing the relevance of accentuation in determining the varieties of NE, Udofot (1997) categorises the variant stress patterns in NE under three levels. First, the VIII, Sophisticated Variety stress pattern, shares some features with the BE patterns in terms of syllable that receives the primary stress. The only difference between it and the BE pattern lies in its accent

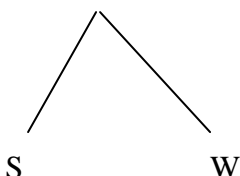
(cumulative aural effect which identifies where a speaker comes from). Next is the VII, which she calls, ‘Standard Variety’. It is the English spoken by teachers with tertiary education which shows some significant differences from the speakers of VIII in terms of stress placement. Finally, the VI, non standard variety, includes stress patterns that fail the twin criteria of international acceptability and intelligibility among the educated NE speakers. This variant stress pattern is characterized by the creation of more syllables which involve vowel substitutions and insertions. It equally involves the progressive stress shift strategy noticed in the VII.

3. Theoretical Framework

This paper draws insights from Metrical Theory which uses a binary approach in reflecting the relationship of prominence between the constituents in a word in describing of the variant stress patterns in NE. Using Napoli’s (1996) prosodic hierarchy, Prosodic word (PW), Foot (F), Syllable (δ) and Mora (α), the study focuses on the syllable and the foot units because they form the domains that are relevant to the description of stress and rhythm in NE. A foot contains two or many syllables which exist in binary relationship of strong (S) and weak (W) as shown in the diagram below:

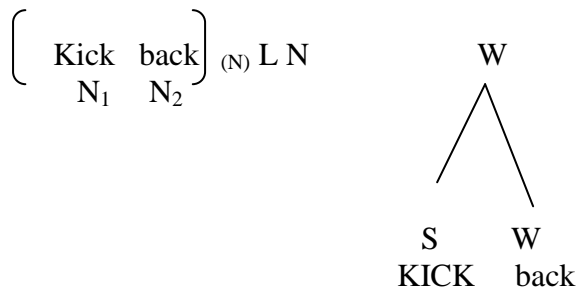


The assignment of S and W nodes is governed by two rules: Lexical Category Prominence Rule and Nuclear Stress Rule. Lexical Category Prominence Rule applies only to simple and compound words. Applying this rule to the word ‘madam’ will produce *MAdam* with the SW pattern as shown in the below diagram

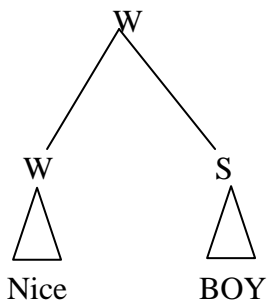


MA dam

Similarly, the compound prominence rule, according to Giegerich (1992:256) states that “in a pair of sister nodes $[N_1N_2]_L$ where L is a lexical category, N_2 is strong if it branches above the word level”. It follows, therefore, that since the compound word, *kickback* falls within the word level; the N_2 will be weak while N_1 will be strong. This rule can be exemplified with *kickback* thus:



The Nuclear Stress Rule applies to constituents above words like phrases and clauses, hence the Phrasal Prominence Rule which states that “in a pair of sister nodes $[N_1N_2]_p$ where P is a phrasal category, N_2 is strong” (Giegerich, 1992:253). So, in a phrase like *nice boy*, *boy* will be strong (S) while *nice* will be weak (W). The reason is simple. English is a head-last language and because the headword usually comes after the modifier. In phrases, the headwords are more prominent than the modifiers; so they usually receive the primary stress.



Additionally, a Metrical Grid is further employed to visually represent the syllable that is next in rank to the most prominent one thereby helping us to illustrate stress as “a hierarchical rather than a relational property” (Kager 1995:328). The metrical grid representation of the stress pattern on the word *MAdam* is:

x	
3	
x	x
1	2
MA	dam

The metrical grid representation for SW pattern in *madam* lays credence to the prominence of the first syllable in the word.

4. Methodology

The data for the study were obtained through a text-based research instrument designed to test the stress production of some English words by purposively selected teachers. They were drawn from Kano, Oyo and Imo states, representing the three major ethno-linguistic groups in Nigeria. From each of the three states, 108 teachers who were indigenes were selected from primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education making 324 in all. The test instrument used comprised a questionnaire which was divided into three sections (see Appendices). Section A contained items for eliciting some demographic information about the respondents. Section B contained prepared passages made up of 50 items read in context and in isolation. The selected items covered bi-syllabic, tri-syllabic, polysyllabic and compound words. The test items contained words that are commonly used in every day discourse of the subjects. The respondents' readings of these items were recorded. An auditory analysis was carried out to ascertain the differences in the performance of

the respondents on word stress in context and in isolation. The study employed SPSS to quantify and test for significance where independent variables occurred. The emerging variant patterns were described using the Metrical Theory and Grids tenets.

5. Findings

The analysis revealed that in all the 50 test items, the subjects manifested variant stress patterns in 26 of the items where progressive and regressive stress shifts occurred. It also discovered that the subjects, irrespective of their sociolinguistic characteristics, produced the VIII (Sophisticated Variant of stress) pattern which shares some features with that of BE in the rest 24 items. In these words, the syllables that receive the primary stress did not manifest stress shifts. Our observation is discussed under words without stress shifts and those with stress shifts.

5.1 Words without Stress Shift

This phenomenon of no stress shift became apparent in these bisyllabic words in items 3 *TOTAL*, 4 *STATION*, 7 *SISTER*, 8 *MARY*, 10 *OPENS*, 11 *LOVELY*, 12 *MONEY*, 14 *AMPLE*, 23 *NARROW* and 50 *MARKET*, etc where

the respondents' overall performance stood at 96.6%, 2.8% and 0.5% for VIII, VII and VI patterns respectively (see Table 1 below). The higher percentage score recorded for the VIII, sophisticated variant, marked it as the dominant pattern in those items. Specifically, in item 3 *total*, out of the total obtainable score of 324, the subjects

recorded 322 (99.9%) for VIII *Total*, 2 (0.6%) for VII *toTAL* and 0% for the VI. This same scenario was noticed in other items listed above. In all of them, the subjects manifested predominantly the strong-weak (SW) stress pattern by placing the primary stress on the first syllable (see Table 1 below):

Table 1: Words with Dominant VIII Pattern

Items	Isolated						Passage					
	V3		V2		V1		V3		V2		V1	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
3 Total	322	99.4	02	0.6	-	-	322	99.4	02	0.6	-	-
4 Station	317	97.8	07	2.2	-	-	322	99.4	02	0.6	-	-
5 Beside	310	95.7	09	2.8	05	1.5	322	99.4	02	0.6	-	-
7 Sister	323	97.7	-	-	01	0.3	322	99.4	02	0.6	-	-
8 Mary	309	95.4	10	3.1	05	1.5	306	94.7	14	4.3	04	0.9
9 Arrives	309	95.4	10	3.1	05	1.5	284	87.7	35	108	05	1.5
10 Opens	324	100	-	-	-	-	322	99.4	02	0.6	-	-
11 Lovely	324	100	-	-	-	-	321	99.1	02	0.6	01	0.3
12 Money	320	98.8	04	1.2	-	-	324	100	-	-	-	-
14 Ample	320	98.8	04	1.2	-	-	324	100	-	-	-	-
15 Opportunity	311	96	09	2.8	04	1.2	324	100	-	-	-	-
21 Capital	320	98.8	02	0.6	02	0.6	320	98.8	03	0.9	01	0.3
23 Narrow	321	99.4	03	0.6	-	-	324	100	-	-	-	-
25 Perfect(adj)	314	96.4	10	3.1	-	-	323	92.6	01	0.3	-	-
26 Present (adj)	273	84.3	40	12.3	11	3.4	299	92.3	11	3.4	14	4.3
29 Understand	319	98.5	03	0.9	02	0.6	322	99.4	-	-	02	0.6
33 Education	318	98.1	05	1.5	01	0.3	323	99.7	01	0.3	-	-
35 Investment	321	99.1	01	0.3	02	0.6	323	99.7	01	0.3	-	-
37 Justification	286	88.3	38	11.7	-	-	324	100	-	-	-	-
38 University	321	99.1	02	0.6	01	0.3	324	100	-	-	-	-

39 Leadership	320	98.8	04	1.2	-	-	324	100	-	-	-	-
44 Download	296	91.4	28	8.6	-	-	315	97.2	09	2.8	-	-
46 Downgrade	296	91.4	28	8.6	-	-	315	97.2	09	2.8	-	-
50 Market	324	100	-	-	-	-	324	100	-	-	-	-
Total	7516	96.6	219	2.8	41	0.5	7652	98.4	94	1.2	30	0.4

Similarly, in other bi-syllabic words like *beSIDE*, *aRRIVE* and compound words like *down LOAD (V)* and *down GRADE (V)*, the subjects replicated the weak-strong (WS) stress pattern in BE. This is in consonance with Atoye’s (1989) view that English words that are not stressed on the initial syllable are usually stressed correctly in NE.

Furthermore, stress shift did not occur in some English tri-syllabic words in items 21 *CApital* and 39 *LEAdership* where the subjects produced the dominant ‘strong-weak-weak’ (SWW) pattern. Equally, the VIII patterns of SWSW, WSW and WSWSW were replicated in their enunciation of items 33 *eduCAtion*, 35 *inVESTment* and 37 *justifiCAtion* respectively. The subjects’ performance in these words underscored the fact that words with endings like *-tion* and *-ment* pose no difficulty to NE speakers. The VIII was the dominant stress pattern

noticed in their spoken English. This means that there is no inter- and intra-variety variation in the productions of these words in NE.

5.2 Words with Stress Shift

In the other 26 items, it was apparent that the VII standard stress pattern which differs significantly from the BE/VIII of NE was dominant. This VII pattern is marked by the progressive and regressive stress shifts. It is a variant stress pattern which shows some major differences from that of VIII. Out of the total obtainable score of 8424, the subjects scored 2896 (34.4%), 5002 (59.4%) and 526 (6.2%) for VIII, VII and VI patterns in isolation and 2981 (35.4%), 4668 (55.4%) and 775 (9.2%) for VIII, VII and VI respectively in sentences. Though other variant forms occurred in these items, but the VII pattern was dominant in them (see Table 2 below):

Table 2: Showing Subjects' Articulation of Items with Dominant VII Pattern

Items	Isolated						Passage					
	VIII		VII		VI		VIII		VII		VI	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1 Madam	221	68.2	92	28.4	11	3.4	16	4.6	12	3.7	296	91.6
2 Petrol	170	52.6	152	47.1	2	0.3	118	36.5	204	63.2	02	0.3
6 Hospital	224	68.1	100	30.9	-	-	137	42.4	185	57.3	02	0.3
13 Purchase (N)	79	24.4	245	75.6	-	-	152	48.9	172	53.1	-	-
16 Vegetable	137	47.3	151	46.9	36	11.5	134	41.7	148	45.6	42	13.1
17 Identify	66	20.4	257	79.3	01	0.3	48	15	274	84.3	02	0.6
18 Criticism	65	19.8	243	75.3	16	5	54	16.3	225	69.7	45	14.1
19 Broadcast	150	46.3	169	52.2	05	1.5	108	33.3	215	66.4	01	0.3
20 Telephone	102	31.5	222	68.5	-	-	133	41	187	57.7	04	1.2
22 Rebel(N)	86	26.5	94	30.2	144	44.4	96	29.6	92	28.4	136	41.9
24 Present(V)	112	34.6	203	62.6	09	2.8	311	96	11	3.4	02	0.6
27 Rebel (V)	109	33.6	54	16.7	161	49.7	205	63.3	44	13.5	75	23.1
28 Perfect (V)	66	20.5	256	78.9	02	0.6	208	64.2	116	35.8	-	-
30 Character	165	50.9	158	48.8	01	0.3	144	44.4	180	55.6	-	-
31 Bachelor	201	62	120	37	03	0.9	196	61.5	124	38.3	04	1.2
32 Educated	58	17.9	257	79.3	09	2.8	71	21.9	232	71.6	21	6.5
34 Justify	58	17.9	263	81.2	03	0.9	63	19.4	260	80.2	01	0.3
36 Civilized	37	11.4	285	88	02	0.6	62	19.1	235	72.5	28	8.6
40 Identified	45	13.9	271	83.6	08	2.5	49	15.2	275	84.8	-	-
41vice president	50	15.4	269	83.1	05	1.5	40	12.3	277	85.5	07	2.2
42 Desk top	101	31.2	232	68.8	-	-	121	37.5	203	65.5	-	-
43 Laptop	106	32.7	218	67.3	-	-	117	36.2	207	63.8	-	-
45 Football	200	61.7	124	38.3	-	-	160	49.4	164	50.6	-	-
47 Favourite	122	27.7	199	61.4	03	0.9	80	25.4	243	74.3	01	0.3
49 Category	57	17.6	254	78.4	13	4	70	21.4	230	71.4	24	7.4
Total	2896	34.4	5002	59.4	526	6.2	2981	35.4	4668	55.4	775	9.2

We also discovered that Regressive Stress Shift (RSS) occurred in very limited items tested in the study. Its manifestation was noticed in the compound word item 41 (vice president), which according to Standard BE has its primary stress on

the second node *PREsident*. This makes the word sound as ‘vice *PREsident* thereby manifesting the metrical stress pattern of WSWW. But it was discovered that out of the total obtainable score of 324, 50 (15.4%) respondents realized it as

vice PRESident (WSWW), 269 (83.1%) realized it as VII (*VICE president*) thereby changing the metrical pattern of WSWW to SWWW. However, 5(1.5%) of the respondents exhibited the VI pattern of *VICE PRESident* (SSWW). The RSS was also exhibited in the subjects' production of some verbs with contrastive stress such as *reBEL* (V) and *perfect* (V). For example in item 22 *rebel* (V), 86 (26.5%) of them realized the VIII pattern (*reBEL*), 94(30.2%) realized its VII pattern *REbel* while 144(44.4) respondents realized its VI pattern [ribili]. This VI is characterized by creation of extra syllable through the insertion of the epenthetic -i. Ditto in item 28 *Perfect* (V), 66(20.5%) realized its VIII pattern *perFECT*, 256(78.9%) realized its VII pattern *PERfect* while 2(0.6%) realized its VI pattern [*perfekiti*] thereby manifesting the SW and SWWW patterns instead of WS. This stress shift in these two words often leads to meaning impairment.

However, progressive stress shift (PSS) appeared very productive in the data analysed. This PSS is the avoidance of primary stress on early syllables in words. It manifested in 23 out of the 50 test items used for this research. The effect of this is evident in the shifting of the primary stress on early syllables in BE/NE VIII to late ones in NE. The PSS occurred in some bi-syllabic, tri-

syllabic, polysyllabic and compound words hereunder described. It was evident in the subjects' pronunciation of only 5 bi-syllabic items: 1 (*madam*), 2 (*petrol*), 22 (*rebel* N), 45 (*football*) and 19 (*broadcast*) thereby manifesting WS for the VII instead of SW of the BE/VIII pattern. For example, in item 1 (*madam*), out of the obtainable score of 324, 221(68.2%) realized it as *MADam* thereby manifesting the VIII variant pattern of SW. 92 (28.4%) of them realized its VII pattern as *maDAM* (WS) while 11 (3.4%) of them realized it as *MADAM* thereby manifesting the VI strong-strong (SS) pattern. This strong-strong (SS) pattern is referred to as stress clash in metrical phonology. The observance of this phenomenon in the VI pattern manifests the syllable-timed rhythm often noticed in the spoken English of some categories of Nigerians. Ditto in item 2 (*petrol*), 170 (52.6%) realized as it VIII (*PETrol*), 152 (47.1%) as VII (*peTROL*) and 2 (0.3%) as VI (*peTIrol*) patterns respectively.

PSS was equally observed in eight tri-syllabic words in which the subjects manifested the progressive stress shift in the data analysed. These are analysed under the following subdivisions:

- a. Shift from Initial to Medial Syllable: The shift of the primary stress from the initial syllables to the medial syllables in '*HOSpital*',

'VEGEtable', 'CHARacter' and 'CATEgory' to produce *hosPital*, *vegeTABLE*, *character* and *caTEgory*. This shift has created a variant stress pattern WSW that differs from that of BE/VIII.

b. Shift from Initial to Final Syllables: though some of the subjects produced SWW pattern in *TELePhone*, *JUStify*, *CIVILized* and *FAVourite*, we observed that over 200 (61%) out of the 324 respondents manifested this type of shift thereby producing the metrical pattern of WWS as the dominant pattern. The VII pattern was also dominant in the subjects' articulation of some polysyllabic items like 'educated', 'favourite' and 'criticism'. For example, in item 18 'criticism', 65 (19.8) subjects placed the primary stress correctly on the first syllable to produce the VIII variant pattern of CRITicism. Also, 243(75.3%) of the respondents shifted the primary stress to the second syllable thereby producing its VII pattern of 'criTicism' while 16 (5%) of the respondents produced the VI pattern by shifting the primary stress to the penultimate syllable. In *favourite* and *educated*, the respondents shifted the primary stress on the first syllable *FAVourite* and *EDucated* [SWSW] to the final and pre-penultimate syllables to produce *favouRITE* (WWS) and *eDUCated* respectively to create WSWW. The VII pattern in the

analysed data showed that in words ending in *-ism*, the primary stress is shifted from the initial syllables to the pre-penultimate syllables. In *identify* and *identified*, it was observed that the subjects manifested two variant patterns with the VII strand being dominant. Though, the VIII strands of these words are realized as *iDENTify* and *iDENTified* but 257 (79.3%) and 271(83%) subjects produced the VII strand as *identiFY* and *identiFIED*' by shifting the primary stress from the pre-penultimate syllables to the final syllables.

5.3 Discussion of Results

Reasons can be adduced for the absence of stress shifts in some of the bisyllabic words earlier identified in the study. The initial syllables in *total* /'təʊtl/, *station* /'steɪʃn/, *market* /'mɑ:kɪt/, *teacher* /'ti:tʃə/, *money* /'mʌni/, *narrow* /'nærəʊ/ contain nuclei elements with longer vowel duration than the second syllables with weak syllables containing either syllabic consonants or short vowels like /ə/, /ɪ/ or a closing diphthong /əʊ/ (Roach, 2000). Consequently, the syllable weight becomes a factor in NE stress placement. Additionally, these words represent the relatively common ones used in everyday conversations by the subjects.

The PSS and RSS patterns (Atoye, 1989 and Simo Bobda, 2010) observed in the data are visually illustrated with metrical grids. For

example, the word ‘*vice president*’, which in BE/NE VIII has its primary stress on the second node *president*. It is normally realized in BE as *vice PRESident*. This is metrically represented as *WSWW*. The metrical

grids representation of VII and VI patterns in the data are presented to show the prominent heights of the variant stress patterns in the word described above:

VIII		VII		VI	
	x		x	x	x
	3		3	3	3
x	x	x	x	x	x
1	2	2	1	1	2
vice	PRESident	VICE	president	VICE	PRESident

The first syllable of the second node ‘*president*’ in ‘*vice president*’ is more prominent than the first node ‘*vice*’ in BE/VIII pattern of NE as shown with the prominent height 3. However, NE’s VII presents the opposite version of what obtains in its MD representation with its prominent height reversed to the first node *vice*. The prominent height shifts from the second node in VIII to the first node in VII. The regressive shift is however modified in VI where very few subjects realized it with the assignment of equal prominence to the two nodes. With this equivalence of prominence to the two nodes, the metrical pattern becomes *SSWW*. That is, two strong syllables are now adjacent to each other. This phenomenon is referred to in Metrical phonology as stress

clash. Speakers of BE do not permit two strong sister nodes in their articulation but this is occurring in NE.

Also, the metrical grid representation of stress patterns in some bi-syllabic, tri-syllabic, polysyllabic and compound words are hereunder described. In disyllabic words, the subjects’ pronunciation manifested the progressive stress shift in only 5 items: 1 *madam*, 2 *petrol*, 22 *rebel* (N), 45 *football* and 19 *broadcast*. For example, in *petrol*, the progressive stress shift strategy was used by the subjects for the realization of the VII pattern. The primary stress moved from the initial syllable, *PETrol* /'petrəl/ to the final syllable to produce *petROL*

VIII		VII				VI	
						x	
						7	
x			x			x	
3			3	5		6	
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
1	2	1	2	1	2	3	4
PET	rol	pet	ROL	pe	ti	RO	lu

This shift comes with some modifications to the realization of the vowel in the final syllable. With the shift of the primary stress to the final syllable, the schwa /ə/ is realized as [o] in NE. The hitherto weak syllable *W* is now realized as a strong syllable *S*, hence the realization of *petROL* as *WS*. The VI, which is the non-standard variant, was produced with the addition of two extra syllables thereby increasing the number of syllables from two to four through vowel insertion to break the consonant clusters in the word. The primary

stress was shifted to the third syllable [petiROlu] thereby producing a *WWSW* pattern.

Similarly in tri-syllabic words like *HOSPital*, *VEGEtable*, *CHARacter* and *CATEgory*, the primary stress was shifted from the initial syllables in BE/VIII (*SWW*) to the medial syllables in *hosPItal*, *vegeTABLE*, *chaRACter* and *caTEGory* in the VII pattern thereby producing *WSW* pattern. The patterns in their realization of ‘hospital’ are shown below on the MDs

VIII			VII		
x			x		
6			6		
x	x		x	x	
4	5		4	5	
x	x	x	x	x	x
1	2	3	1	2	3
HOS	pi	tal	hos	PI	tal

In the VIII, the initial syllable is the most prominent (6) while the medial and the final syllables are the least prominent. But the picture changes in VII where both the initial and the final syllables are less prominent while the medial syllable becomes the more prominent as shown with the height (6) of the grids. The MD

representations of the VI patterns of the subjects' articulation of *vegetable* /'vedʒtəbl/ and *category* /'kætɪgəri/ are shown below:

VI				VI			
		x				x	
		7				7	
x		x		x	x		
5		6		5	6		
x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Veg	i	TA	ble	ca	TE	go	ry

Like all VI patterns, the patterns in these words [veg'teɪbl] and [kæ'tɪgəri] are characterized by the creation of extra syllables through vowel insertion to break cluster of consonants and the realization of weak syllables as strong ones. In the subjects' pronunciations, it was observed that the tonal representations for *vegetable* and *category* were *MMHL* and *LHML* respectively. Hence the metrical patterns of *WWSW* and *WSWW* were used by some of the subjects in pronouncing them. The metrical grids above showed the syllables with the most prominent heights in the two words. The third syllable *ta* in *vegetable* and the second syllable *te* in *category* were the most prominent syllables in the two words as attested to by their prominent heights 7 in the two metrical grids.

5.4 Social Variables Affecting the Variant Stress Patterns

Towards ascertaining some of the factors responsible for the identified

variant stress patterns in the spoken English of Nigerian teachers, the study measured the relationship between the variable and the subjects' placement of stress on words in NE using the T-Test and ANOVA statistical tools. The study measured the effects of social variables of sex, academic discipline, age, ethnic group, academic qualification and educational level of teaching of the subjects on the placement of stress on English words see Appendix for Tables. While t-test is used for the difference in between two variables on the placement of stress on English words, ANOVA is used for variables that are more than two. The analysis revealed that sex ($t= 168, p>0.05$) and academic discipline ($F=2.330, p>0.05$) were insignificant. This study has shown that the variant stress patterns in the respondents' English pronunciations have no gender or academic discipline colourations. The discovery on gender is in contrast to earlier

findings by Trudgill (1974) and Atoye (1985) that women adhere to the norms associated with the Standard English pronunciation. This was not the case in word stress in NE.

However, the social variables of age, ethnic group, academic qualification and teaching level were significant in determining the variant word stress patterns in NE. These variables: age ($F= 4.001$, $p< 0.05$), academic qualification ($F=9.114$, $p< 0.05$), ethnic group ($F= 11.139$, $p< 0.05$), teaching level ($F=11.065$, $p<0.05$) significantly affect the variant stress patterns in NE (see Appendix).

6. Conclusion

The data analysis revealed that heterogeneity of word stress patterns exists in the English pronunciation of the subjects studied. The three

variant stress patterns identified in this study are the VIII (sophisticated), VII (standard) and VI (non-standard). They are significantly affected by the social variables of age, ethnic group, academic qualification and educational level. Finally, it concludes that the variant stress patterns in NE are not 'errors' going by the systematic manner of their occurrence and pervasiveness among the various cadres of Nigerians. This thinking is in consonance with Jibril's (1982:17) observation that "an isolated second language learner can commit errors but a whole country cannot be considered to be in error". This implies that variant stress patterns in NE are analyzable and describable.

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Appendices

Read these passages

Passage A

Regularly, Madam Benson buys some petrol at the Total filling station beside Sister Mary's hospital. Whenever she arrives, she opens her lovely bag to pay certain amount of money to the petrol attendant after the purchase. The big market near the station gives her the ample opportunity to buy some biscuits and vegetables from different categories of sellers. Some of these traders sell by the road side to make quick sales. These sellers are already averse to criticism from regular radio broadcast against such acts.

Passage B

After receiving a signal through the telephone, the rebels ran over the capital city by coming in through the narrow path. They decided to present to the city a perfect Christmas present. But the people were able to rebel against them before they could perfect their plans. Later on, attempts were made to identify those behind the attack on the city.

Passage C

Many people nowadays find it difficult to understand the character often shown by some bachelors who are educated though, have little or nothing to show for their education. They lack the ability to justify the huge societal investment on them. They pretend to be civilized but there are no traces of civilization in them. There is no justification for having gone through the university at all. At times, we wonder at the type of leadership they will give to the nation.

Passage D

The vice president of the association was unable to use either the desktop or the laptop computer when he was about to download some information relating to the current status of football in Nigeria from the internet. To him, the selection of third class players by the coaches due to favouritism will downgrade the Super Eagles’ ratings in the soccer world. However, one fact was identified by him ‘Nigeria, any day, is a favourite in the game’.

Source: All the passages were composed by the researcher

Words in Citation

Read the following words

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Madam | 14. Ample | 27. Rebel (V) | 40. Identified |
| 2. Petrol | 15. Opportunity | 28. Perfect (V) | 41. Vice-president |
| 3. Total | 16. Vegetable | 29. Understand | 42. Desktop |
| 4. Station | 17. Identify | 30. Character | 43. Laptop |
| 5. Beside | 18. Criticism | 31. Bachelors | 44. Download |
| 6. Hospital | 19. Broadcast | 32. Educated | 45. Football |
| 7. Sister | 20. Telephone | 33. Education | 46. Downgrade |
| 8. Mary | 21. Capital | 34. Justify | 47. Favourite |
| 9. Arrives | 22. Rebel (N) | 35. Investment | 48. Favouritism |
| 10. Opens | 23. Narrow | 36. Civilized | 49. Category |
| 11. Lovely | 24. Present (V) | 37. Justification | 50. Market |
| 12. Money | 25. Perfect (Adj.) | 38. University | |
| 13. Purchase | 26. Present (Adj.) | 39. Leadership | |

Table 3: The Subjects’ Performance by Sex

Variable	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Dev	T-Val.	P-Val.
Isolated	Male	149	78.06	6.281	168	0.867
	Female	175	77.95	5.152		
Passage	Male	149	77.95	6.135	926	0.355
	Female	175	77.35	5.371		

Table 4: Subjects' Performance by Age

	Age range	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	F-val.	P-value
Isolated	20-30	68	76.57	5.011	4.001	0.06
	31-40	140	77.57	5.576		
	41-50	73	78.35	6.144		
	51-60	40	80.02	5.673		
	Total	321	78.02	5.688		
Passage	20-30	68	76.59	6.124	6.011	0.01
	31-40	141	77.01	5.234		
	41-50	74	77.88	5.424		
	51-60	40	80.93	5.881		
	Total	323	77.61	5.431		

Table 5: Respondents' Performances in Word Stress by Academic Qualification

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	F-value	P-val.
SSCE/GII	4	74.00	2.944	9.114	0.000
NCE?ND	83	76.30	5.106		
BA/BED/BSC	134	77.97	5.569		
MA/MSc	67	78.33	5.383		
Ph.D	32	82.97	6.947		
Total	320	78.05	5.702		
SSCE/GII	4	71.50	4.509	17.537	0.000
NCE/ND	83	74.98	5.154		
BA/BED/BSC	133	78.22	5.467		
MA/MSc	67	77.31	4.726		
Ph.D	31	83.65	5.358		
Total	320	77.63	5.735		

Table 6: Analysis of Respondents by Academic Discipline

	Discipline	No	Mean	F-value	P-value
Isolated	Sciences	80	76.89	4.502	0.04
	Soc. Sciences	109	77.17		
	Arts	47	79.35		
	Languages	4	79.42		
	Total	36	78.00		
Passage	Language	80	77.45	2.330 0.078	0.74
	Soc. Sciences	110	76.74		
	Arts	47	77.60		
	Languages	83	78.92		
	Total	320	77.61		

Table 7: Summary of Descriptive ANOVA of Respondents by Ethnic Group

	Tribe	No	Mean	Std. Dev.	F-val.	P-value
Isolated	Yoruba	108	77.49	4.829	11.193	0.000
	Hausa	107	76.18	6.466		
	Igbo	106	80.29	4.863		
	others	02	83.50	3.536		
	Total	322	78.00	5.690		
Passage	Yoruba	108	77.28	5.114	19.497	0.000
	Hausa	107	75.09	5.933		
	Igbo	106	80.58	4.786		
	others	02	75.00	4.243		
	Total	38	77.63	5.733		

Table 8: Analysis of Subjects by Educational Level of Teaching

	Levels	N	Me an	Std. v	F- val	P-val.
Isolat ed	Primary	10 4	77. 38	5.2 88	11.0 65	0.000
	Second ary	11 1	76. 65	5.3 59		
	Tertiary	10 7	80. 01	5.8 90		
	Total	32 2	78. 00	5.6 90		
Passa ge	Primary	10 5	75. 99	5.7 02	17.4 54	0.000
	Second ary	11 2	76. 76	4.9 74		
	Tertiary	10 7	80. 14	5.7 04		
	Total	32 4	77. 63	5.7 33		

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