# Rhythmic Tropes in Nigerian Corporate Radio Advertisements and their Implications for Nigerian Learners of English

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**Abstract**
English prosodies, especially rhythm, constitute great difficulty for many users and learners of English in a second language context, like Nigeria. Research efforts addressing this problem, using the ethnic/geo-tribal approach, have resulted in the description of the rhythm of educated Nigerian English as syllable-timed or inelastic-timed. However, little attention has been paid to other domains of language use, especially the advertising media. There is the need for ancillary models to aid learners and general users of English outside the classroom. Therefore, this paper is a rhythmic investigation of selected corporate advertisements aired on some Nigerian radio stations so as to ascertain their viability as an ancillary model for speakers of English in Nigeria. Metrical Phonology served as the theoretical framework. 20 corporate advertisements aired on radios in Ibadan, Nigeria, were purposively selected and carefully listened to in a noise-controlled environment. The analysis reveals that the duration of feet of utterances in the advertisements tended to be proportionate. The advertisement samples are more of stress-timed rhythm than syllable-timed. The feet of the advertisements are proportionately isochronous, a quality which is also characteristic of Standard British English. Generally, the advertisements follow the patterns of Received Pronunciation. The paper concludes that Nigerian corporate radio advertisements can be put forward as an ancillary model for the attainment of better mastery of the Standard British English rhythm by Nigerian learners of English.

**Keywords**: Rhythm, Nigerian English rhythm, corporate advertisements, ancillary model

## Introduction

Spoken words in Standard British English with two or more syllables usually differ in terms of lengths and stress patterns. Some syllables are longer and some are stressed more than the others. This is applicable to English phrases and sentences. Words with stronger stress are pronounced longer, while other words are shorter and weaker. This alternation of strong and weak syllables resulting from stress patterns is used in describing English rhythm (Cruttenden, 1986; Giegerich, 1992). Rhythm has been identified as one of the prosodic triad; the other two components are stress and intonation. The rhythm of a language refers to the pattern realized by the sequence of stressed and unstressed syllables in the language. It can also be described as the recurrence of prominent elements of speech at what are perceived to be regular intervals of time (Crystal, 2008). Rhythm is also connected with timing. This is why the notion of timing has been used to explain the rhythm of languages. Thus, two major kinds of rhythm have been identified as peculiar to every human language, namely syllable-timed rhythm and stress-timed rhythm. However, there is also full vowel timing (Cruttenden, 1986).

Central to the discussion of rhythm is the notion of isochrony, which presumes equal intervals of time between stressed syllables or syllables generally. In stress-timed languages, such as German and English, the prominent element that determines rhythm is stress, whereas in syllable-timed language, it is the syllable. In English, it is assumed that an equal measure of time is taken between stressed syllables (technically regarded as feet) irrespective of the quantity of unstressed syllables among the stressed syllables. This is achieved through vowel reduction, vowel weakening, and elision, especially in connected speech (Cruttenden, 1986; Giegerich, 1992; Ilolo 2013; Akinjobi, 20014; Akindele, 2016).

Many phonologists, particularly Pike (1945) and Abercrombie (1967) and later Gimson (1980), Cruttenden (1986), Roach (1991) as well as Giegerich (1992), have discussed English rhythm. Since, there are different varieties of English, it is pertinent to describe empirically the way English rhythm manifests in settings in which English interacts with indigenous languages that are syllable-timed. The stress-isochronic nature of English has posed a lot of difficulties for learners in a second language setting. In fact, Banjo (1979) has described suprasegmentals (stress, intonation and rhythm) as a hurdle many Nigerians are yet to cross. Eka (1993), as quoted in Akinjobi (2002), views NE as "inelastic timed" instead of syllable-timed. This is attributed to the preponderance of more prominent syllables in NE unlike what exists in Received Pronunciation (RP).

In the view of Udofot (2000), the rhythm of Educated NE is like "the pulsation of an African drum" which hardly varies in tempo. She proposes Full Vowel Timing for NE instead of Syllable Timing. Akinjobi (2005) also observes that Educated Yoruba English (EYE) features strong vowels in unstressed syllables where such vowels are expected to be rendered in their weak forms. This is largely due to mother tongue interference. With the status of English as a global language (Graddol, 1997), the remarkable difference in the rhythm of educated Nigerian English variety and Standard British English may have adverse effect on international intelligibility of Nigerian English.

Existing studies on the rhythm of Nigerian English, such as Eka, (1993), Udofot (2000), Akinjobi (2004), Sunday (2010) and Ilolo (2013), have shown that there is often interference of the rhythm of the mother tongue with English among Nigerians, though at various levels. Such studies have affirmed that the Nigerian variety of English is syllable-timed, unlike Standard British English, which is said to be stress-timed. It is pertinent to state that such studies are largely geo-tribal in their approach, while there is a dearth of research in Nigerian English phonology that use other language domains such as advertisements, film, etc. This study, however, argues that such other domains of language use, especially corporate advertisements, are capable of revealing a different result from the early description of Nigerian English rhythm.

Ibadan, a major commercial centre in Nigeria (Falola, 2023), has more than 30 FM radio stations, both public (only two) and private (World Radio Map, 2024). Besides entertaining listeners through musical beats and other socio-cultural and political programmes, these FM stations run commercials sponsored by individuals and corporate bodies, including manufacturers and service-providing companies (Ayinde, 2014). What is unique about these advertisements on the FM radio stations, especially Premier 98.5 and Splash 105.5 selected for this study, is that they are run by professionals who are skilled in international spoken English. These advertisers deploy phonological nuances, especially rhythmic patterns, which run

through their renditions. The fact remains that these advertisers are Nigerians, yet features of Standard British English, especially at the rhythmic level, manifest in such adverts. An empirical exploration of such features has a potential to give more elaboration towards the codification of Nigerian English and its pedagogy, especially in phonology. However, studies in Nigerian English phonology has been silent on this unique feature. This paper examines the following specific questions: What constitute the rhythmic patterns of the selected Nigerian corporate advertisements? What are the acoustic features that distinguish the rhythm of such advertisements from earlier descriptions of Nigerian English? What implication does this description have on future research on spoken Nigerian English?

**English Rhythm**

According to Lloyd (1940), the difference in rhythm, either syllable-timing or stress-timing, is accountable for the difference in the prosody of languages across the world. He refers to syllable-timed languages, like Italian and Spanish, as *machine-gun* rhythm; and the stress-timed ones, like Dutch and English, as *Morse-code* rhythm. According to him, the recurrence of different elements at regular intervals results in a temporal organisation: the first group containing the syllable and stresses in the other group. Furthermore, Pike (1945) discusses syllable-timing and stress-timing isochrony, noting that the rhythm of a language is determined by the recurrence of chest pulses and their mode of succession and coordination. The combination of chest pulses and stress pulses results in two major classifications of rhythm, which are syllable-timed and stress-timed. The syllables producing the chest pulses, in syllable-timed rhythm, supply the periodic recurrence of movement; then syllables recur at regular time intervals. Whereas in stress-timed rhythm, it is the stress pulses that supply the periodic recurrence of movement, leading to the isochrony of the stressed syllables.

Jassem (1952) discusses rhythm and isochrony from what can be called ordering or organisational perspective, claiming that the rhythmic organisation of English is based on two units. The Narrow Rhythm Unit (NRU) which is the first one consists of one stressed syllable and a number of following unstressed syllables within the same word. The second one, Anacrusis (ANA), comprises other unstressed syllables which are not in the NRU. Abercrombie (1967) recognises the two types of rhythm proposed by Pike. He avers that every language has only one kind of rhythm which can either be stress-timed or syllable-timed. In syllable-timed rhythm, the syllables recur at regular intervals of time, that is, isochronous; while in stress-timed language, the stressed syllables also recur at equal intervals of time. Considerable variation in syllable length is noticed in a stress-timed language; whereas in a language spoken with a syllable-timed rhythm, the syllables are equal in length. While Pike considers stress-timing and syllable timing as phonemically contrastive features within the same language, Abercrombie sees them as differentiating languages.

Based on the contrast in the classification of languages into stress-timed and syllable-timed rhythms, researchers, such as Cruttenden (1986) and Roach (1991), have suggested that English speech tends to be more of isochrony of stressed syllables; hence, it is said to be stress-timed rhythms. According to Roach (1991), English speech has a rhythmic quality that allows it to be divided into equal feet, that is, more or less equal intervals of time. Cruttenden (1986), Giegerich (1992) and Ladefoged and Johnson (2011) argue that, in a stress-timed language, an

equal amount of time is used between each stressed syllable. A rhythm unit is regarded as and realised as a rhythm word and technically referred to as a *foot* or a rhythm word which comprises the first stressed syllable in the group to the last unstressed syllable before another stressed syllable. Thus, each rhythm word in a sentence is expected to be rendered in equal timing, regardless of the length of each rhythm group.

The theory of stress-timing, that is isochrony, has generated controversy among linguists. Cruttenden (1986) asserts that efforts to prove such timing instrumentally have been unsuccessful and the results are often far from isochronous. His argument is premised on the fact that the number of syllables in a rhythm group will definitely determine its isochrony: a rhythm word with two syllables, for instance, would be shorter than the group with three or more syllables. Similarly, Giegerich (1992, p. 259) argues against isochrony of English rhythm: "… in the long history of experimental measurements of foot durations in English, it has not been unequivocally shown that foot isochrony exists. On the production side of speech rather, the question remains highly controversial." Couper-Kuhlen (1993, p. 48) also opines that there is no total isochrony in the rhythm of English. In other words, English speech is not evenly isochronous over extended periods of time. In sum, English is not isochronous, especially when it is viewed from the 'macro-perspective' of the internal extent of a spoken text; whereas when it is viewed from the 'micro-perspective', it is isochronous.

**Nigerian English (NE) Rhythm**

As noted earlier, Eka (1993) describes the rhythm of the educated variety of spoken NE as "inelastic-timed". This description is informed by the tendency of NE to have more strong syllables. According to Eka, the inability of NE speakers to "squeeze-in" or "stretch-out" the syllables as a native speaker would, especially in connected speech, results in the inelastic-timed rhythm.

Since vowel reduction is fundamental to the investigation of rhythm, scholars have paid attention to the realisation of the reduced vowels, especially schwa, in the speech of NE speakers. Simo Bobda (1995, p. 255) asserts that speakers of NE do not reduce vowels in unstressed syllable positions. Likewise, Akinjobi (2004) claims that the realization of vowels including syllables occurring in unstressed positions by Nigerian speakers of English constitutes a major deviation from Standard English usage. Thus, schwa, the most frequently used vowel in Standard English connected speech in unstressed syllables both in grammatical and content words, has been found to be rare in NE. Gut (2001) observes that the absence of vowel reduction in Nigerian English underscores the fact that all syllables are realised with equal weight and length. Akinjobi (2012) argues that, if a Nigerian speaker approximates to consonant and vowel qualities but uses syllable-timing on English, there is every tendency that there will be loss of mutual intelligibility, especially on the part of any listener who is a native speaker of English.

The rh**y**thm of NE has been described as syllable-timed as a result of the influence of the rhythm of Nigerian languages (Adetugbo, 1977; Jowitt, 1991). However, this view has been challenged by some scholars. Jibril (1982) in his argument over the description of Nigerian English as syllable-timed asserts that English tends to redistribute accents based on the length

of the utterances as two accents may not occur successively. According to him, this significant difference is not fairly captured in the stress-timing versus syllable-timing classifications.

Thus, early researchers in NE such as Udofot, Eka, Simo Bobda, Akinjobi, Gut, Adetugbo, and others are of the convergent view that the description of NE is one largely influenced by the rhythm of the first language of the Nigerian speaker. Although the majority of these scholars see the rhythm of Nigerian English as syllable-timed or elastic timed, this study argue that corporate advertisements aired on the Nigerian radio exhibit a kind of rhythm very close to that of SBE rhythm. Hence, there is a need to look beyond the geo-tribal research approach in the description of NE rhythm, as other domains of language use advertising, film media and others, can serve as areas to explore towards the codification of Nigerian English as a distinct variety of English.

**Institutional/Corporate Advertising**

Hayes (1988:7) views corporate advertising as "advertising efforts by corporation and industry associations to inform, educate and persuade the general public and special constituent groups about business's views, images and activities". According to him, the major "aim of contemporary advertisement is associated with providing purposeful direction about something in order to avoid misconception". The common objective of advertising in general is to sell a product, whereas corporate advertising may include many company objectives.

Some writers, as noted by Burton (1999, p. 101), have defined institutional/corporate advertising as "all advertising that attempts to sell the company instead of its product or service". The definition seems to satisfy advertising people, but in recent years, it appears to be too narrow. In the Nigerian context, corporate advertisement is any advertising attempt to sell both the company and its product. In fact, more emphasis is laid on the product than the company. The idea of corporate advertising as conceived among many Nigerian broadcasters is to make a difference between commercials sponsored by individuals and others sponsored by corporate bodies, manufacturers and service-providing companies. Such adverts usually come directly in compact disks (CDs) as copyright from the sponsors (manufacturers, service providers, and many others). Therefore, this paper views corporate advertisements with its extended meaning, as conceived by Nigerian broadcasters.

**Theoretical Framework: Metrical Phonology**

Metrical Phonology, as developed by Liberman and Prince (1977), was adopted for this study. It is preferred here due to its entailment of stress representation. The theory has also been discovered to serve as a tool for rhythmic analysis. Udofot (2003) observes that the theory is based on the view of rhythm proposed by Liberman (1975). It presents syllables as being strong (S) or weak (W). Two major tools are deployed in metrical analysis, namely metrical tree and metrical grid. In a metrical tree, both strong (S) and weak (W) syllables are sister nodes from the root, which divide binarily on a tree structure. Liberman and Prince (1977) notes that the label S is stronger than the label W, and W is also weaker than S. Also, two major rules are involved in assigning strong and weak nodes: Lexical Category Prominence Rule (LCPR) and Nuclear Stress Rule (NSR). The former operates on simple and compound words, while the latter covers phrases and sentences. Liberman and Prince (1977) explain the rules as follows:

LCPR: if [N1 N2]L where L is a lexical category, then N2 is strong if (iff) N2 branches.
NSR: if [N1 N2]P where P is a phrasal category, then N2 is strong.

The tree can be mapped into a grid. It is technically referred to as metrical grid. Here, all the syllables are first assigned numbers starting from the first, which is numbered 1, to the last syllable, taking the last number, which is usually the total number of the syllables in the sentence. At the second level, only the stressed syllables are numbered. The tonic syllable, which is the last stressed syllable, is assigned the highest number at the third level, as in the following:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 3 | | | | | | | 13 | |
| Level 2 | 9 | | 10 | | 11 | | 12 | |
| Level 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| | John | ny | va | lues | e | du | ca | tion |

The symbol "x" can also be used instead of numbers, as in the following:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 3 | | | | | | | x | |
| Level 2 | x | | x | | x | | x | |
| Level 1 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| | John | ny | va | lues | e | du | ca | tion |

Level 1 is regarded as the syllable level, level 2 as the foot level, and level 3 as the word level (Clark, Yallop and Fletcher, 2007, p. 419).

Metrical grid was adopted for this study considering its hierarchical representation of syllables in terms of weak and strong syllables, such that the syllable with the highest frequency is easily noticed and understood to be the tonic syllable. Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007, p. 419) posit that metrical grid provides "an alternative visual display, with the greatest degree of stress represented by the column having the greatest number of entries'. Metrical grids space out stress thus maintaining stress timing in English as stress clash is avoided by applying the Iambic Reversal Rule (Udofot, 2003).

**Methodology**

Corporate radio advertisements, rather than television adverts, constituted the data for this study since the concern was for the sound segments, especially the aspect of rhythm, and not the visual discourse. The data were gathered from three different FM radio stations in Ibadan: Radio Nigeria, 93.5 FM; Splash, 105.5 FM; and Oluyole, 98.5 FM, considering the fact that Nigerian corporate radio advertisements (NICORADs) are common, and the same jingle used for a product on a particular radio station is usually used in other stations in the country. Twenty advertisements regularly aired on the radio stations in Ibadan were purposively selected and the cut across various manufacturing and service-providing companies.

The advertisements recorded in CDs were copied into a computer and carefully listened to in a noise-controlled environment. The theoretical analysis was done through Metrical Phonology. Praat, a computer-based software package developed by Paul Boersma and David Weenik at the University Amsterdam, was used for the acoustic aspect of the analysis.

**Metrical analysis of selected NICORADs**

Five out of the twenty advertisements used for this study were selected for metrical analysis.

**NICORAD 1**: *Hollandia yoghurt, anytime is break time.*

**Metrical grid for NICORAD 1**

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 | | | | | | | | | | 17 | |
| Level 2 | | 12 | | 13 | | 14 | | | 15 | 16 | |
| Level 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| | | Ho | llan | dia | Yo | ghurt, | a | ny | time | is | break time |

**NICORAD 2:** *Open a Diamond kiddies account today.*

**Metrical grid for NICORAD 2**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | 18 |
| Level 2 | 13 | | | 14 | | | 15 | | | 16 | | 17 |
| Level 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| | O | pen | a | Di | a | mond | kid | dies | ac | count | to | day |

**NICORAD 3:** *Skye Bank, expanding your world*

**Metrical grid for NICORAD 3**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 | | | | | 11 | | |
| Level 2 | | 8 | | 9 | | 10 | |
| Level 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| | Skye | Bank, | ex | pand | ing | your | world |

**NICORAD 11:** *If symptom persists after three days…*

**Metrical grid for NICORAD 11**

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 | | | | | | | | 13 | |
| Level 2 | | 10 | | | 11 | | | 12 | |
| Level 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| | If | symp | tom | per | sists | af | ter | three | days |

**NICORAD 14:** *Fast and effective relief from hyperacidity attack.*

**Metrical grid for NICORAD 14**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 23 |
| Level 2 | | 17 | | | | 18 | | | 19 | | 20 | | | 21 | | 22 |
| Level 3 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| | | Fast | and | ef | fec | tive | re | lief | from | hy | per | a | ci | di | ty | a | ttack |

In the metrical grids above, it is noticed that nuclear stress rule (NSR), which applies at the phrasal and sentence levels, is observed in all the NICORADs. The last stressed syllable, which receives the nuclear stress, is the one with the highest figure, and is easily identified on the metrical grid. However, in NICORAD 3, a variation is observed: there is placement of stress on "your, which is a grammatical word, which ordinarily should be rendered in its weak form. That would have caused a clash since the following lexical item is monosyllabic and a lexical word. The clash is resolved here by the application of the Iambic Reversal Rule. The rule often applies by moving the first stress to the left. Thus, "your" is strengthened while "world" is weakened. The grammatical word is stressed in the advert for emphatic/contrastive reasons. The implication, therefore, is that the advertising agents are probably trained or rather knowledgeable in the rhythmic pattern of English.

The rhythmic pattern of all the twenty advertisements is presented in the following table

**Table 1: Rhythmic Pattern of NICORADS Production and Control Production**

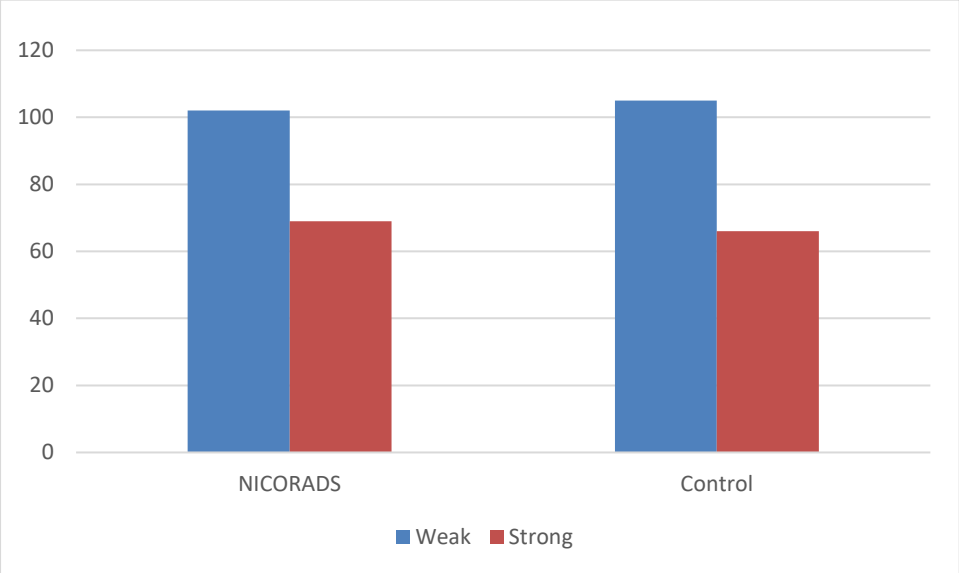
| | **NICORADS** | | | | | **Control (Target Production)** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | TNS | (S) | (W) | (S) % | (W)% | TNS | (S) | (W) | (S)% | (W)% |
| NICORAD 1 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 45.5 | 54.5 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 43 | 57 |
| NICORAD 2 | 12 | 5 | 7 | 41.7 | 58.3 | 12 | 5 | 7 | 41.7 | 58.3 |
| NICORAD 3 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 42.9 | 57.1 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 42.9 | 57.1 |
| NICORAD 4 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 37.5 | 62.5 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 37.5 | 62.5 |
| NICORAD 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 50 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 50 |
| NICORAD 6 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 42.9 | 57.1 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 42.9 | 57.1 |
| NICORAD 7 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 50 | 50 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 37.5 | 63.5 |
| NICORAD 8 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 42.9 | 57.1 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 42.9 | 57.1 |
| NICORAD 9 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 25 | 75 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 25 | 75 |
| NICORAD 10 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 50 | 50 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 25 | 75 |
| NICORAD 11 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 33.3 | 66.7 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 44.4 | 56.6 |
| NICORAD 12 | 16 | 5 | 11 | 31.3 | 68.7 | 16 | 5 | 11 | 31.3 | 68.7 |
| NICORAD 13 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 37.5 | 62.5 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 37.5 | 62.5 |
| NICORAD 14 | 15 | 6 | 9 | 40 | 60 | 15 | 6 | 9 | 40 | 60 |
| NICORAD 15 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 62.5 | 37.5 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 50 | 50 |
| NICORAD 16 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 40 | 60 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 40 | 60 |
| NICORAD 17 | 10 | 3 | 7 | 30 | 70 | 10 | 3 | 7 | 30 | 70 |
| NICORAD 18 | 11 | 5 | 6 | 45.5 | 54.5 | 11 | 5 | 6 | 45.5 | 54.5 |
| NICORAD 19 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 33.3 | 66.7 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 33.3 | 66.7 |
| NICORAD 20 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 40 | 60 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 40 | 60 |
| **TOT./AV.%** | **171** | **69** | **102** | **41.4** | **58.6** | **171** | **66** | **105** | **39** | **61** |

Key[1]:
[1] NICORAD =NIGERIAN CORPORATE RADIO ADVERT
TNS =TOTAL NUMBER OF SYLLABLES

S =STRONG SYLLABLE
W =WEAK SYLLABLE
S% =PERCENTAGE OF STRONG SYLLABLES
W% =PERCENTAGE OF WEAK SYLLABLES
TOT. =TOTAL OF SYLLABLE TOKENS
AV.% =AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OBTAINED

The table above shows that there are 171 syllables altogether in the advertisements. 41.4% of the syllables are strong, while 58.6% are weak. In the control baseline, 39% of the syllables are strong, while 61% are weak. The NICORADs show no significant difference from the control baseline in terms of rhythmic distribution into strong and weak constituents as corroborated by the bar chart below. There is preponderance of weak syllables in the actual production by the NICORAD subjects. This is similar to what obtains in previous rhythmic investigations by Udofot (1997; 2003) and Akinjobi (2004).

**Fig. 1: A Bar Chart Showing the Distribution of Strong and Weak Constituents in NICORADs and the Control Production**




As depicted in the bar chart above, this study shows that the corporate advertisements also feature more of weak syllables. This implies that the variety of English used in Nigerian corporate radio advertisements cannot be said to be syllable-timed; rather, its rhythm is more of stress-timed than syllable-timed. This claim is also supported by a general fact that the speech of the native speaker of English is not 100% stress-timed, especially when it involves scale analysis, as observed by Giegerich (1992). It is therefore necessary that a variety that will serve as a model for learning standard British English rhythm in a second language setting, like Nigeria, should share such features, to a certain degree. In essence, the perceptual analysis of

the NICORADs showed preponderance of weak syllables, a feature characteristic of Standard English rhythm.

**Acoustic Analysis**

Praat, a software suite for sound synthesis and analysis, was used for the acoustic analysis. The metrical analysis carried out on the advertisement showed preponderance of weak syllables compared to strong ones. The acoustic analysis was employed to substantiate, through foot duration, the exhibition of stress-timed rhythmic quality suggested in the metrical analysis.

Five utterances from five different advertisements were analysed in this section. The advertisements were NICORAD 1, NICORAD 2, NICORAD 3, NICORAD 11, and NICORAD 14, which were equally used for the metrical analysis. Utterance 1 used for acoustic analysis is same as NICORAD 1; Utterance 2 as NICORAD 2; Utterance 3 as NICORAD 3; Utterance 4 as NICORAD 11; and Utterance 5 as NICORAD 14.

The primary goal of the acoustic analysis was to investigate if indeed corporate Nigerian advertisements share the rhythmic quality of Standard British English as displayed through the preponderance of weak syllables in the metrical analysis of this work. The utterances were divided into their component feet, each starting with a stressed syllable (except for anacrusis, or unfooted syllable) to the last unstressed syllable before another stressed syllable. Attention was paid to the duration of each foot in relation to the duration of other feet in the utterance. The following is the duration table of the feet and the utterances:

**Table 2: Summary Table of Foot Duration**

| **Utterance 1** | |
|---|---|
| **Foot** | **Duration (in seconds)** |
| Foot 1 | 0.642761 |
| Foot 2 | 0.631782 |
| Foot 3 | 0.639558 |
| Foot 4 | 0.624840 |
| **Utterance 2** | |
| Foot 1 | 0.408514 |
| Foot 2 | 0.407927 |
| Foot 3 | 0.405734 |
| Foot 4 | 0.787343 |
| **Utterance 3** | |
| Foot 1 | 1.275235 |
| Foot 2 | 1.249467 |
| **Utterance 4** | |
| Foot 1 | 0.807151 |
| Foot 2 | 0.890299 |
| Foot 3 | 1.172211 |
| **Utterance 5** | |
| Foot 1 | 0.969568 |
| Foot 2 | 0.965848 |

As evident in Table 2 above, the feet of Utterance 1 are proportionate to one another in terms of duration. The same factor also occurs in Utterance 3 and Utterance 5. In Utterance 2 and Utterance 4, the feet are not completely proportionate; however, the noticeable duration pattern of the feet of the utterances cannot be disregarded. In such utterances (Utterance 2 and Utterance 4), there is an equivalence of the first two feet; only the last foot in each of the utterances shows variation. Thus, there is a tendency, based on the acoustic investigation of this research, for Nigerian corporate advertisements to be more of stress-timed rhythm than syllable-timed rhythm. And based on the findings of this paper, the implication this result has is that Nigerian corporate radio advertisements can be recommended as an ancillary model for English users in Nigeria, especially those who aspire to attain better mastery of the Standard British English rhythm.

**Findings and Conclusion**

This study set out to find out whether corporate advertisements aired on the radio in Nigeria could serve as an ancillary model of Standard English rhythm for English users in Nigeria. The utterances in the advertisements were analysed into strong (S) and weak (W) constituents, and metrical grid was constructed for each utterance. The metrical analysis showed that 58.6% of the syllables were weak, while 41.4 were strong, compared to the control baseline, in which 39% of the syllables were strong, while 61% were weak. Apart from the fact that there is preponderance of weak syllables in the advertisements, which is characteristic of Standard British English, the bar chart also shows no significant difference in the strong and weak constituents analysed.

Furthermore, since corporate Nigerian radio advertisements share rhythmic quality of Standard English, as seen in the preponderance of weak syllables in the metrical analysis, utterances in the advertisements were subjected to acoustic analysis, to determine if there was equal or proportionate duration of the feet. Thus, five of the twenty utterances of the advertisements were analysed. Each utterance was divided into its component feet. The amount of time taken to produce each utterance was automatically displayed in Praat. Based on the acoustic findings, the feet of corporate advertisements were proportionately isochronous, a quality which is also characteristic of Standard British English.

The variation noticeable in Foot 4 of Utterance 2 and Foot 3 of Utterance 4 from the timing pattern of the utterances may not be enough to state categorically that there is no proportionate timing in the rhythm of the utterances. Further research is needed in this area. Thus, based on the acoustic findings of this work, the duration of feet of utterances in Nigerian corporate advertisements tend to be proportionate. There is a tendency for corporate Nigerian advertisements to be more of stress-timed rhythm, a feature of Standard English, than syllable-timed rhythm, which is characteristic of the Nigerian variety of English. Therefore, this variety of English could serve as a model of acquiring Standard British English rhythm.

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