

Correlations between Popular Nigerian English Morphosyntactic Expressions and the Ethnicity of Senior Secondary School Students in Jos Metropolis

Gideon Olushola Dada

Department of English, Federal University of Education, Pankshin

Abstract

The paper studies the morphosyntax of Popular Nigerian English (PNE) among senior secondary school (SSS) students in Jos city with the objectives of classifying and correlating PNE morphosyntactic expressions used by the students with their ethnic groups. 100 students from the five ethnic groups of Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Berom and Afizere – twenty students per ethnic group – were randomly sampled from two SSS in Jos city to write essays on given topics. PNE morphosyntactic usages identified in their essays were classified by using Jowitt's categories of morphosyntactic variations (Classification, Inflection, Selection, Copying, Ordering and Restriction). Adapting Schneider's Dynamic Model, two linguist native speakers of each of the five languages were used as resource persons to identify expressions that showed transfer from or were direct translations of the languages. The study found 50 Igbo PNE morphosyntactic expressions, 46 Berom PNE morphosyntactic expressions, 39 Hausa PNE morphosyntactic expressions, 32 Yoruba PNE morphosyntactic expressions and 28 Afizere PNE morphosyntactic expressions. Thus, the ethnic groups contribute to the morphosyntax of PNE in the following descending order: Igbo, Berom, Hausa, Yoruba and Afizere. With this correlation between the usages and the students' ethnic groups, the study submitted that Nigerian English may have reached Phase 5 of Schneider's Dynamic Model and thus concluded that no meaningful language study can be achieved without due consideration for the learners' ethnic backgrounds.

Keywords: Nigerian English, Popular Nigerian English, Morphosyntactic Expression, Ethnicity, Schneider's Dynamic Model, Correlation

Introduction

Nigerian English refers to 'the phonological, grammatical, and lexical properties that distinguish the English used by Nigerians from varieties of English elsewhere' (Jowitt, 2019, p. 1). It is the variety of English that is marked by Nigerian local 'colorations' or 'flavours'. It is a variety of English, spoken or written, that reflects the Nigerian culture or that expresses Nigeria's cultural peculiarities. Additionally, this is a variety of English that has been adapted to suit the Nigerian sociocultural environment. This adaptation of English in Nigeria is Hunjo's notion of 'pragmatic nativization' (2002, pp. 61-62). Nigerian English is, therefore, a 'nativized', 'domesticated', 'indigenized', 'localized' or 'Nigerianized' variety of English because 'the English language has become the property of the entire world' (Banjo, 1996, p. 69). Thus, expressions in Nigerian English are termed 'Nigerianisms'. Different scholars have studied Nigerian English. In doing this, they have described it and identified its sub-varieties. One of such sub-varieties is 'Popular Nigerian English'.

Popular Nigerian English (PNE) was proposed by Jowitt because, according to him, every category of English usage by Nigerians, representing 'graduates, WASC (now 'WASSC' for 'West African Senior School Certificate') holders and Primary VI certificate holders', contains non-

Standard English forms i.e. errors and variants, in varying degrees (Jowitt, 1991, p. 47). Both the errors and variants are the ‘indexical features’ of PNE, and a combination of these features with the ‘common-core features’, which are found in Standard English, produces Nigerian English (Jowitt, 1991, p. 48). Jowitt, therefore, defines Popular Nigerian English as ‘the set of all non-SE forms, both errors and variants, that ... are idiomatic and regularly occurring forms’ (1991, 46-47). PNE is, therefore, a set of unacceptable deviations (errors) and acceptable deviations (variants) in Nigerians’ use of English. It refers to ‘distinctive Nigerian usage’ (Jowitt, 2019, p. 25) in English or ‘Distinctively Nigerian Forms’ i.e. ‘DNFs’ (Jowitt, 2023, p. 3) in English. Both these terms refer to English expressions that characterize Nigerians and it is in this sense that PNE is synonymous with Nigerian English.

Like all language varieties, Popular Nigerian English can be described in terms of the formal levels of linguistic study, which are phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. The present study deals with the morphosyntax of PNE. ‘Morphosyntax’ is a blend of ‘morphology’ and ‘syntax’ and, according to Quirk et al. (1972, p. 8) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 4, 26), the study of grammar entails morphology and syntax. Thus, ‘morphosyntax’ can be said to be synonymous with ‘grammar’. Morphology studies the structure of words while syntax studies the structure of sentences. Every sentence is made up of phrases and clauses which are in turn made up of words. Thus, syntax is the study of combination of words to make acceptable sentences.

As suggested by the above explanation, there is a symbiotic relationship between morphology and syntax. While the former deals with the formation of words, the latter deals with the combination of words. Words have syntactic properties as suggested by collocation, and these properties must be considered for correct formation and combination of words in sentences. This is the notion of morphosyntax which is the crux of this study. When there is non-Standard formation or combination of words, therefore, there is a morphosyntactic deviation or error which is defined as ‘the breaking of rules for forming or combining whole classes or categories or words, and are not justified on semantic grounds’ (Jowitt, 1991, p. 63). Among others, morphosyntactic properties include the grammatical categories of number, tense, mood, voice and person (Crystal, 2015, p. 315).

Alo and Mesthrie (2008, p. 338), and Jowitt (2019, p. 74) have pointed out that none of the few published works on the morphosyntax of Nigerian English relates the subject to ethnicity. Yet, language and culture (ethnicity) are intricately related and Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country with over 250 ethnic groups and over 500 indigenous languages (Adegbite et al. 2016, p. 2). Also, perhaps, the most recent theory for the study of New Englishes is Schneider’s Dynamic Model. However, various linguists, including Ugorji (2015), Jowitt (2023) and Ugwuanyi (2022) have expressed divergent views about the applicability of the theory to Nigerian English. It is for these reasons that this research seeks to apply the Phase 5 of the theory to Nigerian English morphosyntactic usages in an attempt to correlate the usages with ethnicity and simultaneously ascertain the current phase in the development of Nigerian English.

Consequently, the objectives of the study were to: identify PNE morphosyntactic expressions used by the senior secondary school students in Jos in essays, classify the expressions, and correlate them with the students’ ethnic groups.

Conceptual Review

Popular Nigerian English (PNE)

The concept of 'Popular Nigerian English' cannot be discussed in isolation from 'Nigerian English'. According to Jowitt, Nigerian English is 'English which has become 'nativized', 'domesticated', 'indigenized', and so on; it has taken on distinctively Nigerian qualities' (2019, p. 26). Every language is a reflection of the culture of its speakers and, like British English and American English, Nigerian English is no exception to this reality. By being 'nativized' or 'domesticated', Nigerian English is used to express Nigeria's sociocultural nuances. The unique way in which English is used by Nigerians has given it 'distinctively Nigerian qualities'. The language has, therefore, become the property of Nigerians and can be characterized as 'Nigerians' English'. According to Banjo, Nigerian English refers to 'the totality of varieties of English spoken and written by Nigerians' (1996, p. 92). Over the years, linguists have proposed different 'varieties of English spoken and written by Nigerians', one of which is 'Popular Nigerian English'.

The concept of 'Popular Nigerian English' (PNE) was introduced into the literature on Nigerian English by David Jowitt to capture the various sub-varieties of English used by Nigerians. According to him, PNE refers to all non-Standard forms i.e. both errors and variants that occur regularly in the English usage of Nigerians (Jowitt 1991, p. 46-47). In other words, PNE is a hybrid of deviant forms and variant forms in the English of Nigerians, and it is in this sense that PNE is synonymous with 'Nigerianisms' (2007, p. 15). PNE is said to be 'popular' because it occurs in the English usage of every Nigerian across the basilectal, mesolectal and acrolectal continuum (which correspond to primary school certificate holders, senior secondary school certificate holders and graduates of higher institutions) in varying degrees. Because senior secondary school students are in the middle of the continuum (mesolect), their English is more typical of PNE than any other group of learners, and this is why they are the target of this study.

According to Jowitt, Popular Nigerian English can be given both a wide and a narrow definition. The wide definition conceives of PNE as containing only indexical features (errors and variants) of English usage among Nigerians while the narrow definition views PNE as containing both indexical features and common-core features i.e. Standard English expressions which are found in all varieties of English (Jowitt, 1996, p. 48). However, this researcher thinks that the application of the words 'wide' and 'narrow' to the definitions by Jowitt should have been reversed. This is because 'wide' presupposes 'general' or 'extended' while 'narrow' means 'restricted' or 'limited'. Thus, limiting the scope of PNE to only the indexical features is 'narrowing' it but extending it to cover both the indexical features and the common-core features is 'widening' it, not the other way round. Therefore, this study adopts the researcher's modified narrow view of PNE and so sees it in the light of indexical features or markers (variants and errors) of Nigerian English. These features are identified from students' essays and analysed.

Morphosyntactic Variations in Nigerian English

'Morphosyntactic' is the adjective form of 'morphosyntax', which is in turn a blend of 'morphology' and 'syntax'. While 'morphology' studies the formation of words, 'syntax' studies the combination of words to produce acceptable phrases, clauses and sentences. Morphosyntax, therefore, is the study of the formation and combination of words. Morphosyntax is synonymous with 'grammar', and the linguistic principles that guide the formation and combination of words

are morphosyntactic or grammatical rules. When any of these rules is broken, a morphosyntactic variation results. 'Variation' in this context refers to 'error' or 'variant'.

Thus, a morphosyntactic variation is 'the breaking of rules for forming or combining whole classes or categories or words' (Jowitt, 1996, p. 63; 2019, p. 75). Most Nigerian educationists regard morphosyntactic deviations in English as unacceptable or as erroneous because they are unacceptable in Standard British English (Jowitt, 2019, p. 74, 77). Hence, while they consider phonological, lexical, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic differences between Standard English and Nigerian English as acceptable deviations, they view morphosyntactic irregularities as unacceptable deviations. (Adegbite, 2016, p. 37). Dada (2025) has empirically established that not all morphosyntactic variations in Nigerian English are errors and he has, therefore, proposed some of them as variants for standardization. However, in view of the relationship between language and culture, to what extent are such morphosyntactic usages influenced by ethnicity? This is the main concern of this study.

Empirical Review

Awobi and Amodu (2018) investigated the extent of the cognitive understanding of 'morphosyntactic inconsistencies in the written English of final year undergraduates of English in selected Nigerian Universities'. To do this, an objective test was administered to 200 respondents in five universities across three geopolitical zones of Nigeria and simple percentage was used to analyse the data. They found that the extent of the students' understanding of inconsistencies in English morphosyntactic rules was average (52.5%), with many of the students exhibiting ignorance and overgeneralization in the inflection of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. They, therefore, recommended that undergraduate students of English in Nigeria should be given adequate classroom drills in the inflection of the major or open word classes so as to expose them to the morphological operations that take place in such words.

Ekundayo (2013) studied '*Morpho-syntactic "intraference" in Educated Nigerian English*' (ENE). Using a multiple-choice questionnaire containing various syntactic structures, he gathered data from 15,000 university students and lecturers of English in ten federal universities across five geo-linguistic zones of Nigeria. The data was analysed using simple percentage while his theoretical basis was a combination of Labov's 'Variationist Sociolinguistics', Selinker's 'Interlanguage Hypothesis' and Richards' 'Intralingual Interference'. Ekundayo found that educated Nigerians produced syntactic intraference structures in the use of noun phrases, prepositional phrases, multiple verbs, non-finite verbs, subordinate clauses, collocation and the repetition of structures. He, therefore, concluded that these structures differentiate ENE from Standard British English and that such intraference features should not be seen as errors but variants because they are engendered by psycho-sociolinguistic factors.

It could be seen, among other things, that neither of the empirical studies above, like many others as far as this researcher knows, involved a correlation of morphosyntactic usages with the subjects' ethnic groups, thus necessitating the present study.

Theoretical Framework

Jowitt's Categories of Morphosyntactic Variations in Nigerian English

- a) **Classification:** This involves nonstandard classification such as class or category shift; countable and uncountable nouns in which uncountable nouns in SE are treated as countable nouns in PNE and vice versa; state verbs and event verbs in which case stative verbs in SE are made dynamic in PNE; object patterns where a verb that does not require an object (an intransitive verb) in SE is assigned one (made transitive) in PNE and vice versa; prepositional and non-prepositional verbs.
- b) **Inflexion:** This, according to Jowitt (1991, p. 116), means 'syntactically motivated changes in the shape of words'. This may take the form of wrongly inflecting a noun with the 's' suffix, inflecting a verb with the 'ed' suffix', or various other inflectional forms. Other examples include: double marking i.e. use of double past tenses e.g. 'didn't came', addition of 'ed' to irregular verbs e.g. 'grinded', addition of 's' to irregular nouns e.g. 'wifes', addition of 's' to zero plurals e.g. 'sheeps', dropping of 's' from pluralia tantum. e.g. 'trouser', etc.
- c) **Selection:** Here, a learner wrongly chooses a word as a realization of a syntactic category. This is common in the use of prepositions where, for instance, 'at' is used in PNE for names of big towns, cities, etc. instead of the SE 'in'. It is also found in tenses whereby the past perfect marker 'had' is used in PNE in place of the present perfect marker 'have'. Others are the use of sequence of tenses, the awkward use of 'might have' in present tenses, etc.
- d) **Copying:** This refers to 'syntactically redundant use of words' (Jowitt, 1996, p. 121). Examples include subject copying as in 'my sister she', 'the man who his', 'the money which it', etc. Others are: 'should in case', 'still yet', 'although ... but', 'return back', 'no any', 'must have to', 'more taller', etc.
- e) **Ordering:** This is syntactic distortion in that it concerns moving words from their rightful syntactic positions in Standard English. It involves wrong sequencing of determiners such as demonstrative + possessive + noun as in 'this your house' instead of the SE 'this house of yours'. To this, we can add the mentioning of the speaker first in an event involving him and others as in 'I and Peter will travel' instead of 'Peter and I will travel'.
- f) **Restriction:** This concerns the avoidance of syntactic forms found in Standard English. The learner is, therefore, said to restrict or limit himself to certain structures or forms. Restriction occurs with: reflexive tags and echo questions whereby learners in PNE use 'isn't it?' as a tag after all statements; tenses and auxiliaries in which learners avoid using future perfect tenses, perfect progressive tenses and the auxiliaries 'ought to', 'needn't', 'dare' and 'be to'. Others are avoidance of passives, ordinals, contractions, the curative 'have', etc.

Schneider's Dynamic Model

The theory explains the evolution, development and transplantation of postcolonial or New Englishes with the five phases of: Foundation, Exonormative Stabilisation, Nativization, Endonormative Stabilisation and Differentiation.

- a) **Foundation:** British settlers bring English to a new land for military, trade or immigration reasons. While the locals see themselves as landlords, the settlers see themselves as representing their homeland, Britain. There are dialect contacts between the immigrants (from different countries) on the one hand and the locals (working on plantations from different ethnic backgrounds) on the other hand. Pidginization and borrowing emerge, leading to 'koincization' (Schneider, 2007, p. 35).
- b) **Exonormative Stabilization:** Immigrants stabilize and begin to exert their dominance. Thus, churches and schools are built and English begins to be used as an official language. Meanwhile, the settlers still feel that they belong to Britain and their foreign identity is in a foreign land. There are cross-marriages between the settlers and the locals and children of mixed nationalities are born. Bilingual locals begin to emerge with increased interaction between the two groups and learners begin to develop an interlanguage enriched by local vocabulary. There is cross-linguistic borrowing and the spoken English of the natives is characterized as 'broken'.
- c) **Nativization:** This phase is at the heart of the birth of a new English i.e. Postcolonial English. It is the beginning of the struggle for political and linguistic independence from Britain. The elites are polarized politically (nationalists vs conservatives) and linguistically (rejecters vs accepters). The pressure on the locals to accommodate the settlers results in language shift, attrition, death and 'complaints' about poor English and poor education. There are loanwords, 'changes in morphology and syntax, modification of lexico-grammatical constraints, phrasal nouns and phrasal verbs' (Ugorji, 2015, p. 29), pragmatic changes, bilingualism, codeswitching, etc.
- d) **Endonormative Stabilisation:** The settlers perceive themselves as members of a new nation with the indigenes and ethnolinguistic differences are thus de-emphasised. The new national status and individual identity produces 'locally rooted linguistic self-confidence' (Schneider, 2007, p. 49). The 'complaints' among the conservatives reduce and the language's status moves from 'English in X' (e.g. English in Nigeria) to 'X English' (e.g. Nigerian English). There is linguistic and literary creativity and the codification of the local variety of English begins.
- e) **Differentiation:** Social categories evolve with the existence of a young nation which is a composite of sub-groups. There is internal heterogeneity marked by 'collective identity' (Schneider, *Postcolonial English* 53). There are social networks of sub-groups within which individuals operate and interact. Varieties of the new English emerge with 'regional and social dialects, linguistic markers (accents), lexical expressions, and structural patterns which carry a diagnostic function only within the new country' (Schneider, 2007, p. 54).

Methodology

The study adopts a mixed research design as both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used. The population consisted of all the senior secondary schools in Jos city but only two schools (one

public and one private) were randomly sampled for use. The two schools are: Government Secondary School, Township and Baptist Science Grammar School, Jos. One hundred students were selected from five tribes (twenty students from each tribe) in each school. The tribes are Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Berom and Afizere. Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba were selected because they are the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria and they have large populations of speakers in Jos. Berom and Afizere, on the other hand, are the two major indigenous ethnic groups in Jos. The students were made to write an essay each and from their essays, PNE morphosyntactic usages were identified and analysed. The usages were classified using Jowitt's categories of morphosyntactic deviations while their correlation with ethnicity was based on Schneider's Dynamic Model.

To correlate the usages with ethnicity, the PNE morphosyntactic usages extracted from the students' essays were given to two native speakers of each of the languages/ethnicities (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Berom and Afizere) with an instruction to identify morphosyntactic expressions that showed transfer from or are direct translations of the languages in question. The native speakers of the languages were lecturers in the aforementioned languages in the College of Languages of the Federal University of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State, Nigeria. Thereafter, a table and frequency count was used in the analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of 195 PNE morphosyntactic expressions were identified in the students' essays. In the analysis, the PNE morphosyntactic expressions are emboldened and grouped into the categories of morphosyntactic usages under their respective ethnic groups.

Hausa Popular Nigerian English Morphosyntactic Expressions Classification

1. We **discussed about** the issue on phone ...
2. ... **off** the fire ...
3. ... we started having classes and I **was understanding** and we did well ...
4. ... I was very happy ... the day she **born** a new baby ...
5. ... my mum won't **suffer herself** too much ...
6. ... because this is the first time they **are seeing** you in the village.
7. Students now send threatening messages to **themselves** ...

Inflection

1. WAEC **use to know** that some students go to the internet ...
2. The day my **twins brother** called I was very happy ...
3. She has grown to be a **matured** young woman.
4. ... we are also expecting more **staffs** and *corpors for the school.
5. ... there was a boy **name** Obinna.

Selection

1. ... my uncle **at** Abuja ...
2. We went to Lagos, landed **in** Murtala Mohammed Airport ...
3. The new yam festival **at** Enugu State is an annual event ...

Copying

1. ... we **can be able** to answer them correctly.
2. ... one of my school mates **which her name is** ...
3. It was the **most happiest** day ...
4. **Although** I did it **but** my mother didn't beat me ...
5. ... *writting his second semester examination when **us we** are at home ...
6. So I **went to go** and tell my school mother ...
7. Their **mom she** was shocked to see ...
8. She met Mr John **on her way going** to school.
9. He is so rich but **still yet** he is not contented.
10. Agatha's mother **returned back** from where she *went to ...
11. There is **no any** food in the house ...
12. ... he took us to so many **places that I have never been there** ...
13. The internet has made a lot of things easier **like for example** ...
14. **Though** that was not my first time winning a competition **but** ...
15. She gave me a reason **of which I know it was not true**.
16. ... we are **going** to my *sister house **to go** and greet her.
17. **On my way coming back** I saw my mother.

Ordering

1. ... asked me **what was I doing?**
2. ... and they have to **pass for me drips** ...
3. ... they began to yell at me **that where is the food** ...
4. ... **he bought for me** clothes and shoes ...
5. ... so I ask my sibling **does he feel the way I am feeling**.

Restriction

1. **They gave birth to me** ...
2. **She delivered** a bouncing baby boy.

Igbo Popular Nigerian English Morphosyntactic Expressions

Classification

1. ... by giving them **advices** ...
2. Mummy gave the money to you and **I**.
3. We **discussed about** the issue on phone ...
4. I was very happy the day she **born** a new baby ...
5. My mum won't **suffer herself** too much ...
6. ... **off** the fire...
7. ... we started having classes and I **was understanding** and we did well ...
8. It has also **reached to** the stage that students now use the internet ...
9. ... almost all the women **requested for** the fruit of the womb.
10. ... people will **mock at** them ...

11. I was directed to the campus with my **luggages** ...
12. I was shocked because the things are too **much**.
13. I felt like **to commit** suicide that day ...
14. ... because **me** and my sisters love travelling.

Inflection

1. ... we **suppose** to *write our BECE examination ...
2. My school **use to do** inter-house competition ...
3. ... put it inside your **siever** ...
4. They **binded** him hand and foot ...
5. ... she **have** nothing to offer to her kids ...
6. I count myself **opportuned** to be his grandson.
7. How **is** your studies?
8. ... pour in your **grounded** ogbono and ...

Selection

1. Students are **too lazy that** ...
2. ... my uncle **at** Abuja ...
3. My teachers are good **in** teaching ...
4. She was **so weak to** even walk.
5. ... and it will pay off **on** the long run.
6. Although our parents had informed us days **ago** ...
7. He was arrested and charged **for** forgery.
8. Soak your beans in the water for **like** five minutes ...
9. Before I **round up**, I *will like to advise the youths ...

Copying

1. **My mum and dad** we went shopping together.
2. ... and I was **among of** the females ...
3. He had told us **since in** January ...
4. **On our way going** there I saw people ...
5. I wore my best clothes **in which I was looking good in**.
6. ... and my father *buy me a new shoe **which I wear it on the day**.
7. ... when I am broke He **restores me back** to life.
8. **The day I will never forget it** was a day that was not good ...
9. I have seen a lot of **things that I haven't seen them** before.
10. So **me and my mother** we met my dad ...
11. **That senior she** punished me.
12. We **entered inside** Command around 12:00 p.m.

Ordering

1. ... their uncle bought a **sport new** car.
2. How is **that your *girl friend** Khadija?

3. ... **he bought for me** clothes and shoes ...

Restriction

1. **They gave birth to me** ...
2. ... and *at the **35 minute**, Argentina scored a goal by Lionel Messi .
3. **She delivered** a bouncing baby boy.
4. My **sister who is older than me** ...

Yoruba Popular Nigerian English Morphosyntactic Expressions

Classification

1. I first **on** my fire ...
2. ... the kidnappers **demanded for** the ransom of 50 million naira.
3. We **discussed about** the issue on phone ...
4. ... **off** the fire ...
5. ... we started having classes and I **was understanding** and we did well ...
6. ... I cut my hand **with knife** ...
7. ... know that I **am hearing** everything ...
8. ... I just kept receiving **one bad news** after another ...
9. My dad ordered my sister and **I** to just calm down ...
10. I was very happy ... the day she **born** a new baby ...
11. ... may God **safe** my life.
12. I **got gift** from my parents for the first time.
13. ... because this is the first time they **are seeing** you in the village.
14. I **was feeling** like joining her but I was afraid to go out.
15. In our tradition we **belief** that ...

Inflection

1. ... she **have** nothing to offer to the kids ...
2. ... that is one thing I **would** never forget.

Selection

1. ... my father *but a house for us **in** Rayfield.
2. My teachers are good **in** teaching ...
3. ... my uncle **at** Abuja ...
4. ... when daddy was driving ... little me was **at** the back *sit ...
5. **In** the plane there *sited the king ...
6. I was so happy as if I **have** seen Jesus.
7. ... we have been here **since** two days.
8. He was arrested and charged **for** forgery.

Copying

1. He is so rich but **still yet** he is not contended.

2. We find out that **now presently** porn is global ...
3. This is not so interesting because **me myself I** do not really know ...

Ordering

1. **This our house** is still new.

Restriction

1. **She delivered** a bouncing baby boy.
2. I am going to **cut my hair**.
3. ... the day that **they gave birth to me**

Berom Popular Nigerian English Morphosyntactic Expressions

Classification

1. ... by giving them **advices** ...
2. ... put it in **a clean water** ...
3. ... anyone looking at it would see it as **a small land**.
4. I was very happy ... the day she **born** a new baby ...
5. ... my mum won't **suffer herself** too much ...
6. ... because this is the first time they **are seeing** you in the village.
7. **I was feeling** like joining her but I was afraid to go out.
8. **Me** and my dad went out ...
9. ... which cause an individual to engage **his** or herself in ...
10. I never paid attention to the little arguments **I was hearing** ...
11. ... and always help people in their **works** ...
12. ... she told me to *knee down and **raise up** my hands ...

Inflection

1. ... we **suppose** to *write our BECE examination ...
2. ... but I **didn't took** the money.
4. I **didn't ever knew** my mother *will died ...
5. People **use to** exchange ...
6. The people of the village **goes** back home ...

Selection

1. ... and **at** the process ...
2. ... my uncle **at** Abuja ...
3. ... and it will pay off **on** the long run.
4. *At my arrival **to** the venue ...
5. ... fetch water **in** the well ...

Copying

1. ... one of my school mates **which her name is** ...
2. **My mum and dad we** went shopping together ...

3. ... 500 years ago there *where beings **we called them Rulers** ...
4. It was the **most happiest** day ...
5. ... *writing his second semester examination when **us we** are at home ...
6. So I **went to go** and tell my school mother ...
7. **Their mom she** was shocked to see ...
8. We find out that **now presently** porn is global.
9. He is so rich but **still yet** he is not contented.
10. Agatha's mother **returned back** from where she *went to ...
11. There is **no any** food in the house ...
12. She boasted that her necklace was **more superior than** mine.
13. ... but also it affects **young youth** of our days.
14. ... they put back the roof making it **more stronger** ...
15. ... he took us to so many **places that I have never been there** ...
16. ... we **sang songs** and worshipped God.
17. The internet has made a lot of things easier **like for example** ...
18. She gave me a reason **of which I know it was not true**.

Ordering

1. ... and they have to **pass for me drips** ...
2. ... they began to yell at me **that where is the food** ...
3. ... asked me **what was I doing?**
4. ... **he bought for me** clothes and shoes ...

Restriction

1. **They gave birth to me** ...

Afizere Popular Nigerian English Morphosyntactic Expressions

Classification

1. I **was feeling** like joining her but I was afraid to go out.
2. **Me** and my dad went out ...
3. I never paid attention to the little arguments I **was hearing** ...
4. ... she told me to *knee down and **raise up** my hands ...
5. **Me**, my sister, my aunt and my dad, *we set out ... to the village.
6. I received **one of the greatest news** of my life ...
7. ... because **me** and my sisters love travelling.
8. ... we **were always hearing** noises of pain ...
9. Students now send threatening messages to **themselves** ...

Inflection

1. My school **use to do** inter-house competition ...
2. ... we are also expecting more **staffs** and *corpers for the school.

Selection

1. After I **finished** weeding, I received about ten to thirteen strokes ...
2. ... my uncle **at** Abuja ...
3. She told me that I **have** been unconscious for three days.

Copying

1. **On my way coming back** I saw my mother ...
2. **On my way going there** I saw people ...
3. **Me, my sister, my aunt and my dad, we** set out ... to the village.
4. This is not so interesting because **me myself I** do not really know ...
5. My mother *buy me a new clothe **for me to wear it** on that day ...
6. ... and my father *buy me a new shoe **which I wear it** on the day.
7. **The day I will never forget it** was a day that was not good ...
8. ... **my father and my other we** went for a trip ...
9. ... **my uncle he** did not pay my school fees.
10. **On my way reaching home,** I kept thinking ...

Ordering

1. ... and they have to **pass for me drips** ...
2. ... **he bought for me** clothes and shoes ...
3. How is **that your *girl friend** Khadija?

Restriction

1. My **sister who is older than me** ...

Results and Discussion

SN	Morphosyntactic Category	Ethnic Group					Total
		Hausa	Igbo	Yoruba	Berom	Afizere	
1	Classification	7	14	15	12	9	57
2	Inflection	5	8	2	6	2	23
3	Selection	3	9	8	5	3	28
4	Copying	17	12	3	18	10	60
5	Ordering	5	3	1	4	3	16
6	Restriction	2	4	3	1	1	11
	Total	39	50	32	46	28	195

Table 1: Frequency Count of Students' Morphosyntactic Expressions and their Ethnic Groups

The above table shows that 195 PNE morphosyntactic usages were gathered from the students' essays. Out of this figure, 57 have to do with Classification, 23 concern Inflection, 28 concern Selection, 60 are categorized as Copying, 16 have to do with Ordering and 11 concern Restriction. Moreover, the expressions variously relate to the students' ethnic groups, with 39 expressions relating to Hausa, 50 relating to Igbo, 32 relating to Yoruba, 46 relating to Berom and 28 relating to Afizere. Thus, we may say that Igbo, with a frequency of 50 usages, contributes the most while Afizere, with a frequency of 28 usages contributes the least to the morphosyntax of PNE. In a descending order, therefore, the ethnic groups contribute to the morphosyntax of PNE thus: Igbo, Berom, Hausa, Yoruba, Afizere.

Besides, the fact that the nonstandard usages have their equivalents in the students' native languages shows the relationship between morphosyntactic expressions and ethnicity. This thus answers the question of scholars such as Ugorji (2015), Ugwuanyi (2022) and Jowitt (2023) about the applicability of Schneider's theory to Nigerian English. Specifically, the study provides empirical evidence that Nigerian English may have reached its Phase 5 of the theory. Thus, not only has Nigerian English become nativized as Phase 3 of the theory suggests, it has also become endonormatively stabilized with the new nomenclature 'Nigerian English' (as opposed to 'English in Nigeria') as Phase 4 implies. Now in its Phase 5, morphosyntactically speaking, Nigerian English has become differentiated into regional or ethnic-based sub-varieties such as Hausa PNE morphosyntactic expressions, Igbo PNE morphosyntactic expressions, Yoruba PNE morphosyntactic expressions, etc.

Conclusion

Language and culture are intricately interwoven and this fact has been proved again with the study of the morphosyntax of PNE among senior secondary school students in Jos city. The correlation showed that the ethnic groups contribute to the morphosyntax of PNE in various degrees and that, contrary to the view of some scholars, Nigerian English may have reached Phase 5 (Differentiation) of Schneider's evolution of postcolonial Englishes, although more empirical evidence may be needed to establish this. The fact that the morphosyntactic deviations show transfer from or are direct translations of the students' mother tongues, corroborates the popular view that Nigerian English is a reflection of the culture of the Nigerian people. This also implies that no meaningful language study can be divorced from the culture of the people.

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