Nigerian English and Schneider's Dynamic Model: Further Considerations

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Two important subjects feature in the title of this paper: Nigerian English, and Schneider's Dynamic Model. We shall consider each of them separately, before doing so jointly as the title implies that we should. We first consider the Dynamic Model.

1. Schneider's Dynamic Model

The Dynamic Model is the invention of Professor Edgar Schneider of the University of Regensburg, and it has been developed by him in several publications, most notably in his 2007 book *Postcolonial Englishes*. More is said below about the meaning of the book's title; for now, it is important to point out that Schneider's set of postcolonial Englishes includes, but certainly does not coincide with, the set of what since about 1980 have been referred to as the New Englishes (Nordquist 2020), of which Nigerian English is one. New Englishes appear under other names in other models. The most influential of these has been Braj Kachru's concentric-circles model (1985) comprising 'inner-circle', 'outer-circle', and 'expanding-circle' countries, which correspond respectively to the ENL (English as a Native Language), ESL (English as a Second Language), and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) countries of the earlier but still useful Peter Strevens (1977) model. 'New Englishes' is thus equivalent to 'outer-circle' or 'ESL Englishes'. The two older models have increasingly been criticized, and with good reason: thus in Nigeria, and in other outer-circle'/ESL countries, there is an increasing number of people for whom English is the first language they learn and the language they know best (Udofot 2010); such Nigerians can therefore be regarded as native speakers of English, who can also be said to 'own' the language (Ugwuanyi 2021). The two models are static or synchronic, in that they view varieties of English around the world as they are today; in contrast, Schneider calls his model 'dynamic' and it is also diachronic, because it describes and analyses the historical and still-continuing evolution of such varieties (Schneider 2014).

Schneider defines 'postcolonial Englishes' as varieties of English that have developed in parts of the world to which English was transplanted in the past as a result of the enterprise of a colonizing power or its citizens, this power in most cases being Britain. Jowitt (2022) makes the rather obvious point that the 'postcolonial' Englishes of the model were already developing during the colonial era. New varieties of English thus began to develop in 'contact' situations, and in discussing their inception Schneider draws on the work that has been done in this area by Thomason (2001) and Mufwene (e.g. 2001). Colonization was of different types: 'trade', 'plantation, 'settlement', and 'exploitation', and while the first two led to the development of English-lexified pidgins and creoles, the development of new varieties of Standard English is associated with the latter two. This is because native speakers took up more-or-less permanent residence in the colonized regions concerned. An idea central to the model is the distinction between two 'strands', that of the settlers (the 'STL strand'), and that of the indigenes (the 'IDG strand'); together, and interacting, they make up a 'postcolonial English'. Schneider insists that this expression refers both to the 'ENL' of a country such as Australia

and to the 'ESL' English of a country such as India or Singapore or Nigeria, and that his model provides a unified account of all the worldwide varieties of English: all, that is, except that of Britain itself, or England itself.

Schneider's unified approach has become a point of considerable controversy. Jowitt (2019, 2022) questions the applicability of the model to Nigeria on the grounds that Nigeria, unlike other African countries such as Kenya, was never an area of white settlement. The same point is made by Deterding (2008) in his review of Schneider's book. Denis and Darcy (2018), finding Schneider's title too broad in its reference, likewise insist on the radical difference between 'settler colonial Englishes' (e.g. Australian, Canadian) and 'postcolonial Englishes' in a narrower sense (e.g. Nigerian, Indian). The former is the English of a country where the settlers took over the land and whose descendants now constitute the majority of the population, the latter that of a country where settlers did not take over the land, or not permanently, and the population is today made up mostly of indigenes. Arguably, even the English of England itself is 'post-colonial' in Schneider's sense, sharing features with the 'settler colonial Englishes' we identify today: for in the fifth and sixth centuries AD the Anglo-Saxons brought their language from north-west Germany to the land they later called 'England', and eliminated or expelled or assimilated the Celtic inhabitants but borrowed some Celtic words into English (Baugh and Cable 1993). Likewise, American English is 'postcolonial', and Schneider devotes a chapter to showing, convincingly, how his model applies to it.

The evolution of a new variety is said by Schneider to have four aspects or 'parameters': history and politics; identity construction; the sociolinguistics of contact; and linguistic developments. Of these, the last is obviously the most important from a purely linguistic point of view, while the first is self-explanatory. 'Identity construction' mainly concerns the way in which the settlers and the indigenes view themselves: thus the settlers initially feel that they still belong to the nation they came from (usually Britain), but later they are conscious that they form, or with the indigenes help to form, a new nation. As an example of the sociolinguistics of contact, bilingualism (in English and an indigenous language) spreads among the indigenes, less often among the settlers. Linguistic developments include borrowing into the evolving new variety from indigenous languages, and the appearance of new linguistic forms.

The evolution of each variety also passes through five historical stages or phases. In Phase 1, 'Foundation', the settlers arrive and, since they come from different parts of the home country (i.e. Britain), contact among them produces a blending of their different dialects, thus marking the beginning of a new variety. Contact between them and indigenes is limited and utilitarian. In Phase 2, 'Exonormative stabilization', the English of the settlers, which is now learned by some indigenes, remains fundamentally tied to an external norm (i.e. Standard British English), but it incorporates numerous lexical items borrowed from indigenous languages, especially names of flora and fauna and of cultural objects. In Phase 3, 'Nativization', which Schneider rightly terms 'the most interesting and important, the most vibrant' phase, ties between the settlers and the mother country weaken, knowledge of English becomes widespread among the indigenes, and the local English is marked by intensive lexical borrowing from indigenous languages and also by variant phonological and morphosyntactic forms, all representing the adaptation of English to the new environment, its 'nativization', 'domestication', etc. In Phase 4, 'Endornormative stabilization', the one-time colony has

become an independent state but English is retained, and retains, sometimes exclusively, the status it naturally had in the colonial era as the official language and principal lingua franca of its educated citizens. They, whether of settler or indigenous origin, regard the new variety of English that they speak as 'legitimate', and it possesses a 'new local norm', which will be 'accepted as adequate in formal usage', Schneider here quoting Newbrook (1997). Literary creativity in English also develops, and dictionaries of the new variety are produced. The main feature of Phase 5, 'Differentiation', is that the new variety is now so stable that sub-varieties of it emerge, correlating with social and regional differences.

Schneider recognizes that, while he has created a model that has general application and validity in the English-speaking world, its local manifestations vary considerably. One such manifestation is that in ESL countries English is associated with a power-wielding elite, so that aspiring to membership of this elite encourages the learning of English and the effort to attain mastery of it; in contrast, there is the pull of 'solidarity' with the masses, which requires familiarity with a language that symbolizes their poverty and powerlessness. This may be a purely indigenous language, or Creole in the Caribbean, or Pidgin in West Africa. Schneider's point here is one example of the considerable applicability of his model to Nigeria. However, this 'ESL' motivation to learn and master English has its parallel in ENL countries such as Britain, where, in the past at least, to belong to the ruling elite required the speaking of Standard English (with Received Pronunciation), and speaking a regional dialect of English was a major handicap to joining the elite.

2. Nigerian English

Later in this paper Schneider's model will be more explicitly related to Nigerian English; but it is desirable first, and partly because of certain persistent misconceptions, to form, or re-form an idea of what Nigerian English is, what constitutes it. To begin with definitions, Nigerian English is fundamentally something entirely different from Nigerian Pidgin English; it is, as Nigerian scholars have been saying over a period of several decades, Standard English that has become 'nativized', 'domesticated', etc. through English as used in Nigeria having come to reflect Nigerian cultural realities and the needs and assumptions of Nigerian learners; therefore it contains many distinctively Nigerian forms (henceforth DNFs), although some of these are also found in other ESL varieties.

Nigerian English has undoubtedly been taking shape in the 180 years that have elapsed since 1842, when the first Christian missionaries set foot in the country and began to establish schools providing Western education. In this enterprise the teaching of English inevitably played an increasingly important role, as employees were required for work in the various agencies, governmental or otherwise, that came into existence after the inception of colonial rule. This began with the British annexation of Lagos in 1861 and culminated in the proclamation of the 'Protectorates' of Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria in 1900. In Nigeria, as in other ESL countries, English has been learned chiefly through the education system, and mission schools in particular were probably, and for various reasons, a major locale for the development of Nigerian English. On the other hand, teaching of the pronunciation counterpart to Standard English grammar, i.e. Received Pronunciation, was vigorously pursued in the prestigious Government schools, especially in the North.

Relevant records especially for the first 100 years and even more of the period concerned either do not exist or have not yet been investigated, and major research in the area is waiting to be done. Chapter 5 in Jowitt (2019) is a gesture in this direction; while a more recent important example is the publication of a historical corpus of Nigerian English (Unuabonah et al. 2022), made up of samples of Nigerian writing drawn from the post-independence era. The hope must be that a corpus for the pre-independence decades will be created as well.

As time went on, and Nigerian English developed, DNFs appeared one after another in all the language areas (phonology, morpho-syntax, lexis, graphology), and they represent various linguistic strategies: borrowing, coinage, calquing, and semantic extension (in lexis), mother-tongue 'interference' (especially in morpho-syntax and phonology), generalization (in morpho-syntax and spelling), and spelling pronunciation (in phonology). One DNF in the area of punctuation is that 'etc' is commonly written 'e.t.c.'. DNFs are a feature of common usage, although the incidence of them varies from one user to another, a fact which has much bearing on the question of sub-varieties of Nigerian English, as explained below. Variety-specific forms moreover constitute a tiny part of the totality of forms making up any Standard variety of English, a reflection of the fact that, despite all our understandable contemporary interest in variation, Standard varieties differ relatively little from one another in their morpho-syntax, vocabulary, and spelling. For this reason it is a simple matter to locate a text that, though produced by a Nigerian, might have been produced by an exponent of the Standard form of any other variety. For example:

> School in America was easy, assignments sent in by e-mail, classrooms air-conditioned, professors willing to give make-up tests. But she was uncomfortable with what the professors called "participation", and did not see why it should be part of the final grade; it merely made students talk and talk, class time wasted on obvious words, hollow words, sometimes meaningless words.

This comes from page 134 of *Americanah*, the third novel of the now world-famous Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, published in 2013. In it there is no DNF to suggest that it was written by a Nigerian. As a written text it could also help to confirm that the distinctiveness we are looking for is found more in the spoken usage of educated Nigerians than in their written usage. This fact should compel us to exercise caution in looking for examples of DNFs in Nigerian literature in English: as Jowitt (2022) points out,

> Although Nigerian novels written in English supply examples of Nigerian English, along with indigenous-language and Pidgin expressions, the examples usually occur in the characters' dialogue, not in the narrator's discourse.

In contrast to the Adichie passage, the following is a sample of academic writing, produced recently by a doctoral student in Nigeria:

> Cooperative principle as propounded by Herbert Paul Grice is an aspect of communicative principle which together with intention, cooperation and relevance

> are all responsible for communication action in a concrete context. For communication to be felicitous, interlocutors in discourse must share a set of mental states which are broadly, emotional and cognitive in nature.

The non-use of the definite article before the words 'Cooperative' and 'communicative' suggests that the text was written by someone from an ESL country; generally and undeniably, however, the grammar and choice of words are 'felicitous', and typical of academic writing. Here it has to be said, though it seems to have become unfashionable to say it, that the set of DNFs contains both 'errors' and (legitimate) 'variants' (Jowitt 1991). This issue is related in turn to the question whether we should speak of a monolithic Nigerian English (always of course to be distinguished from Pidgin), or whether we can identify sub-varieties (often confusingly called 'varieties') of Nigerian English.

Schemas of varieties have been proposed during the past sixty years or more, and a major criticism of them is that generally their particular linguistic forms have not been specified and no procedure has been established for assigning a particular form to one variety or another. For example, we have no way of deciding, apart from instant judgment, whether the expression 'meet one's absence' (Igboanusi 2002), long established in Nigerian usage, belongs to Variety 1 or Variety 2 or Variety 3. Doubt, at least, must therefore arise as to whether the sub-varieties have a real foundation. However, unless we are to regard Nigerian English as monolithic, we must at least contrast 'more educated' with 'less educated' usage (which can be correlated with a 'Standard vs. non-Standard' or an 'acrolectal vs. non-acrolectal' distinction).

Jowitt (2022) speaks of 'educational' and 'ethnic' parameters that might differentiate sub-varieties, and the schemas referred to above have all been based essentially on the educational parameter. The ethnic parameter has been little employed, except in the area of phonology (where Jibril 1982 remains a monumental but isolated work), so that it remains unclear whether DNFs in the areas of lexis and morpho-syntax are used by all Nigerians, or whether usage in these areas differs according to ethnicity. This remains another area of Nigerian English requiring more research.

The issue of errors vs. variants is also related to the question whether there exists, or might exist, something we would like to call 'Standard Nigerian English' that is not, or would not be, identical to Standard British English. The great problem is that what we may call 'divided usage', a neutral expression, is found in the English of educated Nigerians (or, we might want to say, the Nigerian English acrolect, or Variety 3). A few scattered but rather obvious examples are: (1), *can be able* vs. *is/are able*; (2), a low front monophthong, [a], vs. a diphthong as the vowel of the first syllable of *capable, Cambridge*, etc.; (3), *few* (not *a few*) meaning 'a small number'; (4) *severally* meaning 'several times' or meaning 'one by one'. At present, controversies over these and numerous other DNFs are resolved ultimately by recourse to general dictionaries and grammars. These have usually been published outside Nigeria. *Severally*, however, with the first meaning, is one of nearly thirty Nigerian English words recently added to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

This sketch-so-far of Nigerian English has laid emphasis on DNFs, i.e. separate, individual linguistic forms that are produced by Nigerians in their speaking and writing. Identifying and listing them and publishing them has engaged the attention of several scholars

over the years, especially the writers of dictionaries or glossaries (Kujore 1985; Odumuh 1987; Jowitt 1991; Igboanusi 2002; Blench 2005; Okoro 2011; Adegbite et al. 2014). A comprehensive account, however, would by no means be confined to specifying the distinctive forms of Nigerian English. Other issues that have been investigated or require further investigation include formality vs. informality, the popularity of certain registers such as that of religion, pragmatic strategies such as politeness, and code-switching and –mixing. There is also the issue of the comparatively restricted use of certain forms (again a fact which we are today perhaps somewhat reluctant to discuss, because we find ourselves compelled to use negative-sounding words such as 'deficit'). In the area of vocabulary, for example, it seems likely to prove true that a large number of monosyllabic English words occurring in registers concerned with practical matters of everyday life are hardly used or are not known. Thus when four young people were asked recently to give the meaning of 50 such words (a few examples being *fray, pare, rove, chuck, rut*), the highest score of the three graduates tested was 21; it was the one undergraduate who scored 26. This does not necessarily mean that the English of the four young people could be described as 'impoverished'. They probably all 'count' as 'native speakers of English', and generally all display a high degree of fluency and accuracy in their speech, a judgment not altered by the fact that one of them said "I must go to the kitchen – I have something on fire". This necessarily positive assessment of course also applies to the slightly flawed second of the written texts discussed above.

3. Nigerian English and the Dynamic Model

Nigerian English can now be explicitly related to Schneider's Dynamic Model, and vice versa. One of the first things worth noting concerns the Model's 'STL strand' and the extent to which it is discernible in Nigerian English. It has already been said that Nigeria was never an area of white settlement, so that in Nigeria there were no settlers to provide an STL strand. However, it seems that Schneider himself, for the sake of preserving the unity and applicability of his model, is ready to extend the meaning of 'settlers' and 'STL strand'. Thus in Nigeria, 'settlers' can be taken to mean the white, mainly British personnel who were present in the country for shorter or longer periods of time, especially during the colonial era, and (since this belonged to the pre-television, pre-Internet era) must have been the principal exponents of the exonormative Standard which naturally held unchallenged sway, but into which, in their usage of it, Nigerians were probably at an early date introducing 'IDG' (indigenous) elements. Nevertheless, when we have Nigeria in mind, many of Schneider's references to the 'STL strand' read very strangely. Thus, where the 'identity construction' component of his model is concerned, settlers in a colony such as Australia began to identify Australia rather than Britain as 'home', and increasingly regarded the Australian English that was taking shape, rather than British English, as a variety they could be proud of and regard as 'theirs'. This did not happen in Nigeria, because the British personnel of the pre-1960 era did not regard Nigeria as 'home', mostly left the country at or soon after independence, and did not regard most elements of Nigerian English that were entering the Standard English used by Nigerians as acceptable.

Again owing to Schneider's desire to embrace in one model 'settler Englishes' (in ENL countries) and in the narrower sense 'postcolonial Englishes' (in ESL countries), his account of the five phases of a variety's evolution often reads strangely. Phase 1, 'Foundation',

naturally refers to both situations. Phase 2, however, 'Exonormative Stabilization', refers to Australia, New Zealand, Canada – and above all to the USA – but it is difficult to see how it applies to Nigeria. For in the model the English 'stabilized' in this phase was that of settlers (in what are now ENL countries) who originally spoke various English dialects. In Nigeria, however, an ESL country, Nigerians were only beginning to learn English, and the question of whether the variety of English they learned was a stable one or not is irrelevant. In contrast, Phase 3, 'Nativization', is obviously applicable to Nigeria, Ghana, India, and other ESL countries – while in contrast it seems inapplicable to the USA, Australia, Canada, etc., whose varieties have acquired local characteristics or incorporated some indigenous elements but have not been 'nativized' in the same way, or in the conspicuous way that English in Nigeria has been. Schneider believes that Nigeria has 'progressed deeply' into Phase 3, but does not say that the end of it has been reached. Phases 4 and 5, 'Endonormative Stabilization' and 'Differentiation' respectively, are applicable to ENL countries and are potentially applicable to ESL countries. Schneider's opinion is that there are 'signs' that Nigeria is moving into Phase 4, but 'somewhat shakily'; 'endormative stabilization has not yet been reached but it may be just around the corner'. Ugorji (2015) and Ugwuanyi (2022) take a different view. They maintain that Nigerian has already reached Phase 4, and Ugorji, by proposing that Phases 4 and 5 should be combined, in effect believes that it has also reached Phase 5. Ugwuanyi also usefully seeks to give dates for each of the five phases, suggesting that Phase 1 lasted from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century; Phase 2 began in 1914, with the merging of Northern and Southern Nigeria; Phase 3 began in the 1940s when the nationalist movement got into its stride; Phase 4 began with the coming of independence. He does not venture to give a date for the beginning of Phase 5. It must be said at this point that setting dates for the phases with any kind of precision is a hazardous undertaking.

To form an opinion on these important issues, it is important to take a closer look at the details of Phases 4 and 5. In Phase 4, according to Schneider, the citizens of a country are now fully conscious of themselves as a new nation, and ethnic attachments are less important to them. The new nation demonstrates literary creativity; the expression 'X English' is confidently used instead of 'English in X'; the new variety is homogenized, i.e. it is understood to be a single, unified variety; and, above all, the new variety is codified, with the publication of dictionaries. Schneider does not say, though the specifications of this phase imply it, that it is in Phase 4 that the Standard or norm for the variety is taken to be found not outside, but inside the country, is endonormative. The principal development of Phase 5, the details of which are otherwise not very clear, is the differentiation of dialects within the variety. Let us discuss these developments and their applicability to Nigeria in turn, as follows: (a) the use of 'X English', (b) literary creativity, (c) homogenization, (d) codification, (e) differentiation of dialects.

With regard to (a), the expression 'Nigerian English' has come into widespread use in the post-independence era, although there are many Nigerians who continue to deprecate it and are sceptical about the existence of Nigerian English (or almost wilfully confuse it with Pidgin). With regard to (b), Nigeria has, chiefly in the post-independence era, produced a number of novelists, dramatists and poets writing in English and tending to reflect Nigerian social realities in their work, and some of them have achieved international renown. As pointed out above,

however, if DNFs appear in the work of the novelists it is usually in the narrator's discourse, not in the characters' dialogue. With regard to (c), it is difficult to see how the Nigerian variety of English can be said to have become homogenized in Phase 4. If it is homogenized, it was surely already homogenized in Phase 3, or earlier; if not, the lack of homogenization was probably there from the beginning. As stated earlier, however, there is a paucity of studies of possible ethnicity-based sub-varieties of Nigerian English, while the essentially education-based varieties have not been clearly defined. These facts serve to render (e) inapplicable to Nigeria.

Finally, with regard to (d), this seems to be the most important feature of Phase 4, since it is above all through the publication of a dictionary that a post-colonial English (in any sense) can be said to have achieved 'endornormative stabilization'. As mentioned above, Nigeria has since the 1980s witnessed the publication of several dictionaries or glossaries of its distinctive English forms, its DNFs. These are indeed dictionaries of DNFs, rather than of 'Standard Nigerian English', an expression which Okoro in the introduction to his work is explicitly reluctant to use; and as such they occur more in the spoken than in the written medium. Each of them has its limitations, Okoro's chiefly because it is only the first volume of a projected two-volume work. It is also difficult to say what the calls for 'standardization' or 'codification' so often heard today are really aiming it. Would codification lead to regarding the omission of the definite article in the extract above, for example, as acceptable and prescribable? Or would the kind of relative clause that features in the following example, taken from ICE-Nigeria, be so regarded?

> I am very sorry for delaying the reply to your letter of which I know you have forgiven me.

It seems justifiable then to maintain that, while many aspects of Schneider's Model are certainly applicable to Nigeria and to Nigerian English, on the crucial criterion of the linguistic forms that make up each phase, Nigerian English has not yet moved to Phases 4 and 5.

This paper has shown that Schneider's Dynamic Model is to a considerable extent applicable to Nigeria and to Nigerian English, especially where his specifications of Phase 3 are concerned. His general picture of the trajectory of the evolution of a new variety of English, and of Nigerian English in particular, is convincing. On the other hand, the paper has asserted that his Phase 2 is not really applicable to Nigeria and other ESL countries; and it has implied that Phases 1 and 2 could be combined. It differs from Ugorji (2015) and Ugwuanyi (2022) in maintaining that Nigerian English has not yet reached Phases 4 and 5.

Above all, the article reasserts the claim made by Jowitt (2019) and others, putting a question mark over the Model in general: that there is a radical difference between the new varieties of English that developed in what were originally colonies of settlement, such as the USA and Australia, and those that have developed in ESL countries such as Nigeria and India. India is in fact a case of special interest, deserving comparison with Nigeria. For although Indians have been learning English in a formal setting since the early years of the nineteenth century (earlier than Nigeria); although Indians began writing in English in the late eighteenth century (before Nigerians, if we exclude the work of Olaudah Equiano); and although India

attained independence before Nigeria, the evolution of Indian English in Schneider's view has still not gone beyond Phase 3.

This comparison provokes one final thought. To say that a variety has 'not reached' a phase, or 'has still not gone beyond' a phase, sounds negative; it may sound as if one is belittling or discrediting the variety. But it is only to be realistic. A positive simultaneous fact is that Nigerian English, in both senses of the expression, is and will remain alive and vigorous, with a great future ahead of it.

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