Nigerian English and the Question of Codification

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Abstract
This paper addresses issues of Nigerian English and the question of codification of its standard forms. The authors observe that some scholars still doubt Nigerian English despite its ontological existence, high status and the major roles that it plays in the nation. There is also disagreement on the presence of Standard Nigerian English because of the absence of its codification. Using existing literature on the sociolinguistics and sociology of English language in Nigeria and data from mainly secondary sources in the field, the authors argue that English is a Nigerian language, that there is a standard form in existence and that the codification of the standard has started and needs to be intesified. The authors describe the status of English in Nigeria, the phases of studies on Nigerian English and the conditions, methodology and potentials of codification. In order to affirm its national identity, Nigeria needs to have a standard codified, moving beyond the non-prestigious appelation of 'Popular Nigerian English'. Scholars should take the advantage of the liberal window to also project its image.

Keywords: Nigerian English, standardisation, codification, New Englishes

1. Introduction

The topic 'Nigerian English and the question of codification' is very relevant to current research on English language usage, learning, teaching and uses in Nigeria. Many questions have been raised that are yet unanswered. Some of these include: Is English a Nigerian language? What does Nigerian English mean? What does codification of Nigerian English mean? How can this be done? Nigerian scholars of English are by no means unanimous on these issues, which is the reason why some are not convinced enough to pursue the process of codification. The aim of this paper is to describe the status of Nigerian English and support the codification of Nigerian English as a matter of urgency to enable the efficient usage of the language and enhance its effectiveness for, especially, formal communication. The specific objectives are inherent in the four questions asked above, to which answers would be provided.

2. Is English a Nigerian Language?

This may seem to be a simple question requiring a straightforward answer, but it is not. For example, when Ngugi (2023) was asked if Kenyan English or Nigerian English were now local languages, he responds that it is like the enslaved being happy that theirs is a local version of enslavement. He argues that English is not an African language and that Kenyan or Nigerian English is nonsense. It is an example of normalised abnormality, the colonised trying to claim the coloniser's language is a sign of the success of enslavement.

This is an ideological perspective to the answer, an extreme perspective, you might say, which some Nigerian scholars may also share, especially radical scholars and political activists.

However, given the reality of the multilingual situation in Nigeria and the major roles that English plays in Nigeria, mainstream scholars of the language have always classified and described it as a Nigerian language (Ubahakwe 1979, Bamgbose, Banjo and Thomas 1995, Graddol 1997 and Adegbite 2020). In reality, English is tied to Nigeria's identity and one can say to some extent that, barring English, efficient communication is in jeopardy nationwide. The conception of English as a Nigerian language provides the bases for sustained scholarship on it, particularly in the study of its character, sub-varieties of usage, uses, learning and teaching.

3. What is Nigerian English?

Nigerian English is a valid expression of politico-geographical linguistic identity, which compares on similar grounds of identity with native varieties such as British English, American English and Australian English, on the one hand, and non-native varieties such as Malaysian English, Indian English, Singaporean English, Ghanaian English and Kenyan English, on the other hand. Apart from the source variety, British English, all of the other varieties listed above, among many others, claim autonomous existence based on the 'constitutive' principles of sociocultural reality, nationalism, liberalism, indigenisation and peculiar innovations. The recognition of English as a Nigerian language explains the concept of Nigerian English (NigE). The language is not indigenous to Nigeria. Instead, it has developed from the status of a foreign language, albeit British colonial, into an official language used for education, formal communication in administration, governance, law, sophisticated commerce and religion, intra-national and international communication. English is a second language in Nigeria and have characteristics identified with 'New Englishes', a sub-group of 'World Englishes'.

To begin with, we shall present three relevant models proposed by scholars (Kachru 1992, Moag 1992 and Schneider 2007) for describing the development of 'New Englishes', to which Nigerian English belongs. Kachru (1992) proposes three phases through which 'non-native institutionalised varieties of English seem to pass. First is the 'non-recognition'phase, when speakers of the local variety are prejudiced against it and believe that some imported native speaker variety is superior and should be the model for language learning in schools. Second is the 'co-existence of local and imported varieties', when the local and imported variety exist side by side and the local variety is now used in a wide number of situations and for a wide range of purposes but is still considered inferior to the imported model. Third is the 'recognition' phase, when the local variety becomes recognised as the norm and becomes socially accepted. The local variety becomes the model for language learning in schools. In places where people have accepted the local variety, those who continue to speak the imported variety can be seen as outsiders or as behaving unnaturally in some way.

Moag (1992) identifies five processes, four of which are undergone by all varieties, and a fifth, which may only be experienced by some. 'Transportation' refers to when English arrives in a place where it has not been spoken before and remains to stay. 'Indigenisation' is when the new variety of English starts to reflect the local culture and becomes different from the transported variety. The 'expansion in use' process refers to when the new variety is used in an increasing

number of situations and for more and more purposes and is marked by an increase in variation and sub-varieties. 'Institutionalisation' is marked by the use of the local variety as a language-learning model in school. Lastly, 'decline in use' refers to when concern about the language has decreased and this might lead to the eventual death of English in the countries. Schneider (2007) proposes a 'dynamic model' which explains that postcolonial Englishes arise out of the interactions of two 'strands' in communicative interactions, that of the settlers and that of the indigenes. The growth passes through five stages or phases: the foundation, exonormative stabilisation, nativisation, endonormative stabilisation and differentiation. Kirkpatrick (2007:3) summarises the three models above thus:

Scholar   **Phases**
Kachru   1 non-recognition 2 co-existence of local and imported varieties 3 recognition
Moag   1 transportation 2 indigenisation 3 expansion in use 4 institutionalisation
         5 (decline)
Schneider 1 foundation 2 exonormative stabilisation 3 nativisation 4 endonormative
         stabilisation 5 differentiation

Following the phases presented above, the status of Nigerian English at present can be located in Kachru's Phase 2, Moag's Phase 3 and between Schneider's Phases 3 and 4. For the variety to achieve recognition and prestige among World Englishes, it must reach Kachru's Phase 3 and Moag's and Schneider's Phase 5.

4. Phases of Research on NigE
Different from the phases of development of New Englishes above, scholars of English in Nigeria have identified phases of research on the language as follows: historical or developmental, contrastive and error analyses, variety differentiation, nativisation, codification and elaboration and re-inventing (Akere 2009, Adegbite 2010). These phases will provide the framework for describing Nigerian English in this paper.

Awonusi (1994) presents a linear view of the development of English in Nigeria in three stages. The first stage (1400-1842) includes the beginning of portuguese influence that metamorphosed into pidgin and the now extinct Negro Portuguese. The second stage (1843-1914) marks the active roles of missionary institutions in the planting of schools and churches. The noticeable feature of this period is the predominance of English and de-emphasis of the Nigerian mother tongues as the medium of instruction in schools. The third stage can be sub-divided into two parts. The first part (1914-1970) is the transition from the missionary to colonial administration of schools and the perpetuation of English in schools, while the second part (1970-2023) marks the efforts by educationists to boost the status of Nigeria's mother tongues in schools. Meanwhile, the dominance of English is still maintained until this moment, though there is a decline in the standard of English use and a counter-practice of increase in advocacy for accommodation of indigenous languages in the educational system (Adegbite 2022).

Contrastive and Error Analyses

The focus of description in this phase is on errors and the influence of mother tongues on English at various linguistic levels of phonology, grammar and semantics (cf. Tomori 1967, Afolayan 1968, Banjo 1969 and Adesanoye 1973). The frameworks utilised are mostly those of contrastive and error analyses. The procedure is either a contrast of elicited data in British English (BrE) and NigE and identification of deviations from the British norm as errors that must be avoided or minimised or identification of errors from spoken or written data in English by Nigerian users. A lot of description of features has been undertaken by scholars in this respect (cf. Jowitt and Nnamonu 1985, Ayoola 1988, Adesanoye 1994, Fakoya 2004) and even up till this moment (Alo and Mesthrie 2008, Gut 2008).

Nigerian English (NigE) and Its Sub-varieties

NigE is a variety of English defined primarily by national geographical criterion but characterised by sub-varieties along dialectal/ethnic, register, sociolectal and socio-psychological lines (Banjo 1971, Ubahakwe 1979, Jibril 1982, Odumuh 1984, Bamgbose, et al. 1995 and Adegbite 2020). Ethnic varieties are identified along the lines of ethnic grouping such as Edo English, Efik English, Hausa English, Igbo English, Kanuri English, Yoruba English, etc. Varieties along register lines are identified along occupation lines or fields such as literature, conversation, mass and social media, law, religion and fishing. Sociolectal varieties are perceived in terms of basilect, mesolect and acrolect, which are classified broadly along the lines of educated and non-educated usage. Lastly, socio-psychological varieties exist as English as Mother Tongue/ Native English (EMT/ENL), English as Second Language (ESL) and English as Foreign Language (EFL) (Adegbite 2020).

Two dominant issues in the study of varieties of NigE are (a) whether there is Standard Nigerian English (SNigE) or not; and (b) if there is no standard, what model of English should be adopted for standardisation? As a variety of World Englishes with sub-varieties or a language in Nigeria with varieties, a standard variety is required for formal communication and, especially, for education in schools. In view of the fact that standardisation is the goal of codification, a central topic of this lecture, we need to dwell a bit on these issues below

Standardising NigE and the Model for Adoption

Standardisation is a 'regulatory' principle of wider intelligibility and acceptability of varieties of a language. Maurichi (2014) observes that although there is a general desire towards an international standard by scholars and users of English, there is no consensus on the path to this goal by users from different 'worlds'. On whether there is Standard Nigerian English (SNigE) or not, Jowitt (2008) describes the diversity of positions among scholars in Nigeria in terms of 'left', 'right' and 'centre' in respect of the attitude of scholars to tolerance of learners' errors. Scholars on the left position, towing the line of Kachru (1982), is represented by all those (cf. Adetugbo 1979a and b; Odumuh 1987), who would generally assert that a standard NigE exists and has a right to exist, that it is used by educated people, that it has begun to find expression in creative writing and that it can be an expression of national identity. The scholars towing the right, in the line of Prator (1968), maintain the position that the distinctive usage identified in

NigE cannot be regarded as standard because the standard form of a language is one that is generally both accepted and used by the educated section of the community. The lack of standard is evident in the numerous errors observed in the usage and the lack of institutionalisation, in the absence of any dictionary embodying its usage (cf. Salami 1968, Adesanoye 1973). The scholars at the centre have a consensus that a standard form exists in the ontological sense in the usage of educated Nigerians, though the features are yet to be codified (Grieve 1966, Banjo 1971, Bamgbose 1982, Jibril 1986, Adegbija 2004).

To standardise English, the criteria of grammaticality, appropriateness, intelligibilty and acceptability are essential (Afolayan 1977, Lakoff 1977, Adejare 2005, Adegbite 2007) Grammaticality is required for expression to reach the widest possible audience, although it is not a sufficient condition for determining standard. An expression can be grammatical without it being appropriate in some circumstances. For an expression to pass the standard test, it has not only to be grammatical, but must also be appropriate and intelligible in the context which it is uttered. Of the four concepts mentioned above, acceptability of an expression is determined by its intelligibilty, which may be limited to a situation or ethnic group (local), or extended to a national (nation) or international audience. However, scholars generally rate expressions with situation or ethnic specific intelligibility low for formal and educational purposes (Bamgbose 2004), which implies that an expression has to be intelligible at the national or international level to be accepted as standard.

Another prominent debate in Nigerian English studies is on the model for Standard Nigerian English (SNigE), which centres on whether an indigenous model, NigE', or 'external' (foreign) model such as BrE should be the target for English language teaching in schools. Bolton (2005) argues, in support of Kirkpatrick (2004), that it is the regional variety of English, not an external model that needs to be promoted because it is the former that people in the region will want to use. According to him, a vast majority of Asians, Africans and Europeans learn English to use it as a lingua franca. They do not learn it with the intention to communicate with other non-native speakers. However, McArthur (2001) says that while it is difficult to predict the shape of international English in the 21st C., it seems that less standardisation will result. We may in due course all need to be in need of two standard Englishes – the one which gives us our national local identity and the other which puts us in touch with the rest of the human race. In effect, we may need to be bilingual in English (Crystal 1988). In any case, the remark by Peters (1995), cited by McArthur2001), is clear that

> All these dimensions of local (intranational) and national English has to be codified and linked up with what we know about international English if we are to communicate effectively overseas (p.4).

Many scholars (cf. Udofot 2003) would concur, for nationalistic and realistic reasons, with the endonormative model suggested by Banjo (1971) as a follow up to Brosnahan's (1958) earlier classification. In Banjo's four-variety typology of English language usage in Nigeria, Variety III , the variety of the 'educated elite', suggested by him, is associated with university education

in recent times and has been supported by many scholars in Nigeria (cf. Odumuh 1984, Adeniran 1979 and Banjo 1996). He (Banjo 1971) describes it as a variety that is close to Standard British English in syntax and semantics, similar in phonology, but different in phonetic features as well as with regard to certain lexical peculiarities. Although some scholars have observed the lack of uniformity in competence and performance among educated Nigerians, there is ample evidence to show that a combination of education, exposure to considerable data and considerable experience of usage correlates with competence in English (Jowitt 2008, Adegbite and Gut 2010).

However, despite this seeming agreement among scholars, there appears to be a setback that, forty years after Banjo's suggestion, the BrE still serves as the model for school examinations in the country because of lack of codification of NigE and, consequently, lack of uniform resource materials on the indigenous model. Abubakar (2012) comments on the paradox that NigE is actively being used for virtually all activities, formal and informal, by the vast majority of 'educated' Nigerian speakers of English; yet it has not been given the official recognition that will finally release it from the shackles of being a sub-standard variety. A few speakers with the English accent known as Queen's English or BBC English and some others who somehow feel nostalgic about the Queen's English still cling to it despite the bold writings on the wall. Globally, the fate of the RP as a prestigious accent of English has been sealed; most non-native speakers of English the world over have stopped aspiring to speak like the native speakers. This is largely due to the overwhelming influence of the different environments English has found itself in different parts of the world; and NigE is one of the recognised, environment-influenced varieties of English that is distinct in many ways.

The above facts, notwithstanding, many Nigerian scholars still contest NigE as something that has come to stay (Abubakar 2012). This seems to be the view that is expressed by, especially, the octogenarians and some members of the elite class. Some still ask which of the ethnic varieties that will be codified, as if the varieties are completely different from one another. However, the younger generations seem to hold the view that they do not so much care one way or the other. They do not aspire to speak with the RP-like accent as they do to speak the southern accent. This may mean that one day a single accent, which may be closer to the southern accent, may likely emerge for the spoken NigE. Abubakar (2012) writes thus:

> Socially motivated linguistic changes and their subsequent spread brought about by social interaction or 'contact' within the linguistic scenario of Nigeria may eventually as it were do the impossible. In other words, Nigerian English may one day have a single and acceptable' accent (p.145).

Nativisation of English in Nigeria
The fourth phase of research becomes inevitable when drawing the line between errors and non-errors in language usage becomes very difficult and there are areas of controversy, especially on culturally related items that differentiate the native and non-native varieties. The concept of 'nativisation', interchangeable with other terms such as 'indigenisation',

'domestication', 'acculturation', 'Nigerianisation' and 'Nigerianisms', implies that English has become Nigeria's property and has been adapted for home use and made applicable to our numerous conveniences, experiences, nuances and sensibilities. Adegbija (2004) describes nativisation as a natural response to yawning linguistic and socio-cultural needs. Its occurrence can be attributed to several factors, which are, according to scholars:

- the day to day contact of English with many indigenous languages; formal character of English taught in Nigeria (Adegbija (1989: 2004);
- a natural and inevitable by-product of Nigerians teaching English in a Nigerian environment (Ogu 1992);
- a language coming to a new ethnolinguistic environment, making contact with local languages and speech habits and being used to project local customs and traditions (Adekunle 1979);
- obedience of the principle of least effort and economy of expression;
- indomitable, pervasive and omnipresent media influence, either in bringing entirely new words into existence or in establishing and confirming them; and
- standardisation of idiosyncracies and errors, in cases in which a striking or erroneous usage subsequently gains legitimacy, national attention and admiration either because of the social status of the speaker or topicality of the expression in the context of usage (Bamiro 1991).

Bamgbose (1995) observes that the nativisation of NigE consists of three aspects: linguistic, pragmatic and creative. Linguistic nativisation includes substitution of Nigerian language vowels and consonants for English ones, replacement of stress by tone, pluralisation of some non-count nouns, the use of culture-specific vocabulary items, back formation, semantic shift, different verb-preposition combinations and some L1-induced structures. Pragmatic nativisation involves modifying the rules of language use in native situations under pressure from the cultural practices of the Nigerian environment. Creative nativisation manifests in either coining expressions to reflect the Nigerian experience or world view or translating an authentic Nigerian native idiom into English in such a way as to reflect the mood of the situation or character.

Although the three aspects above have been investigated in the literature, the linguistic aspect has been focused on more than others. However, Bamgbose (1998:5) predicts that pragmatic innovations will be standardised before structural ones as there is a greater tolerance for them. With regard to standardising the linguistic features, the condition of acceptability mentioned above must be met. Standard NigE, that is, the acrolectal variety of NigE, should be made up of features of Standard BrE and AmE (as representations of International/World Englishes) and some 'popular' features of Nigerianism. By 'popular' here, we refer to those Nigerianisms that have a high frequency of usage among Nigerians as a test of their wide acceptability. Barring standardisation, Jowitt (1991, 2019) refers to popular Nigerianisms as 'Popular Nigerian English'.

Let us take a short exercise from the following expressions taken from Kujore (1985).

  a. Which expressions (in italics) would you regard as errors and which are innovations in the context provided?
  b. What replacement would you have for the errors?
  c. What types of nativisation can you identify therein?

 i. *first year anniversary*   ii. *followership*
iii. *retirees*   iv. Old friends were happy to meet *themselves*
v. *dined and wined,* vi. *on the high table*   vii. *prostrated before the elders*
viii. He's *out of job* ix. *in company of*   x. his *senior sister* xi. put down my *fork and knife*
xii. *requested for hot drinks*   xiii. go and *condole* a friend
xiv. *junior brother*   xv *ghastly motor accident in which many people died*
xvi. attend a meeting which *will hold between 3 to 4pm*
xvii. I *congratulated him for his brilliant* performance
xviii. *on the stage*   xix. completely *hands off* the matter
xx No problem, I *would*   xxi. I *will* like to go now
xxii *at all cost* xxiii. *beyond all doubts.*

5. Codification of NigE

The task of codification is the one in current contention among scholars of NigE. The requirement here is the description of a structure or behavioural norm in reference books such as dictionaries, grammars or usage guides or their inclusion in the specified target of language instruction in schools. Maurichi (2014) observes that although there is a general desire towards an international standard by some scholars and users of English, there is no consensus on the path to this goal by users from different 'worlds'. She suggests that a variety of new Englishes has to be considered on the basis of (a) the status of its norms – innovative uses; (b) the extent of acceptance despite the difference from the native model norms; (c) the status of innovations; and (d) the acceptance of innovations. Bamgbose (1998) suggests five measurements of the degree of standardisation of linguistic innovations (under which he subsumes linguistic structures such as lexical items, syntactic structures or the pronunciation of words as well as pragmatic and social aspects of language use):

• demographic: number of speakers who use a particular linguistic innovation;
• authoritative: type of speakers who use a particular linguistic innovation;
• geographical: regional spread of the innovation;
• codification: description of the innovation as a norm, and
• acceptability.

Of these, Bamgbose (1998: 4) claims, codification and acceptability are the most important, but he considers acceptability the "ultimate test of admission of an innovation". The supporting criterion for acceptability is intelligibility, which, in turn, is based on appropriateness and

grammaticality (Afolayan 1977, Adejare 1995). Bamgbose (1998: 5) predicts that pragmatic innovations will be standardised before structural ones as there is a greater tolerance for them. With regard to standardising the linguistic features, the condition of acceptability mentioned above must be met. Standard NigE, that is, the acrolectal variety of NigE, should be made up of features of Standard BrE and AmE (as representations of International/World Englishes) and some 'popular' features of Nigerianism. By 'popular' here, we refer to those Nigerianisms that have a high frequency of usage among Nigerians as a test of their wide acceptability.

The Conditions for Codification

Afolayan (1991) writes that three conditions are necessary for the codification of an ESL variety. The first and only external condition is that of a fairly long period of time over which the natural evolution, emergence and acceptance of the standard form will take place within the speech-community. The two further conditions internal to the development of the language itself are the development and the corresponding acceptance of standards of grammaticality and acceptability. A language takes a long time to mature. Evidence of the maturity of a natural language would be the emergence of its standard form that is signalled by its conventional acceptance as such by the entire speech-community. What this conventional acceptance means is that without any coercion or any perceptible force of law, speakers of other dialects adopt this 'standard' dialectal form as their own form of speech whenever they discuss across their dialectal boundaries. The standard dialect is the form that is used in a formal educational system and is usually presented as the learning target or model. It is the form that is used if and when foreigners choose to learn the language formally (that is, within their formal educational system). It is the form that is used, not only by the organised central government or administration, as the language of the court or centre of government, but, also, by foreign trade and diplomacy, as emergence of the standard variety. The dialect is the official medium of international interaction.

Meanwhile, it has been difficult for a standard 'endonormative' ESL variety to emerge or be recognised, analysed and codified because of some factors. First is the slow and uncertain (fluid) emergence of an ESL speech-community. In a bilingual- bicultural setting, only a very small elitist percentage of the total membership of the socio-cultural community will, at first, learn the language. What is more, not all who attempt to learn will master the second language to the extent of graduating into being regarded as its speakers. Even those who eventually so graduate will not necessarily do so at the same time, though all of them will progressively acquire the status of speakers of the language. Second is the existence within the ESL environment of an 'exo-normative' standard variety of English. The initial and abiding presence of a standard monolingual variety as an exo-normative model wrongly appears to make it unnecessary to ask for any other local standard since there would be no need to demand the duplication of an apparently appropriate model that already exists. The conceptual validity of a local bilingual variety (in contra-distinction to a monolingual variety) represents such advanced thinking that it was unimaginable and, therefore, could not possibly be found early in the history of the ESL environment. Even today, such a concept is novel and is hardly understood, let alone accepted. In the third place, learning/teaching factors of English in the

ESL environment were and still are not as efficient and effective as to promote the emergence of a local standard.

In consideration of all the above, the conditions that will produce certain corresponding goals of ESL are demanded. A major requirement is a high quality of leadership commitment to formal education and its component ESL discipline. The programme must be totally democratised for full grassroots support and acceptance. There must be total national commitment and a resolute national political will in respect of a consistent and persistent ESL orientation. Lastly, an optimum qualitative content must be in place for the formal educational programme. The failure to codify NigE has meant the failure for a standard ESL variety to emerge and a close examination of issues relating to the standardisation of the ESL discipline has clearly shown that unless certain conditions for establishing the ESL discipline are met, the desirable transformation will not take place.

A lot of work has been done preparing the ground in terms of defining terms and concepts than carrying out the real task of lexicography and grammatical description. Extensive data abound for codification in the description of English usage of educated and non-educated users and in intelligibility tests of acceptability tests based on intuition, behaviour and attitudes of speakers. The ICE (International Corpus of English) Nigeria project coordinated by Prof. Ulrike Gut (Wunder, Voormann and Gut 2010) provides a handy database to facilitate the codification of NigE. A few attempts at codification of English can also be mentioned.

First is the notable work of Kujore (1985) which presents a long list of expressions in English usage in all the areas of language: phonology, grammar and lexis. Another presentation of a glossary of forms in NigE covers an extensive section of Jowitt's (1991) publication. The latter work bears similarity with the former, but it goes further by providing information about the context of use. There is also a draft of a dictionary by Blench (2005) on the Internet. Igboanusi's (2002, revised 2010) compilation of distinctive NigE expressions is what Jowitt (2008) considers as perhaps the longest inventory so far, but still tentative because the judgements are provisional. Lastly, Adegbite, Udofot and Ayoola's (2014) *A Dictionary of Nigerian English Usage* presents roughly 2000 words, including acronyms, that are peculiar to NigE and that distinguish the variety from other varieties of English in the world. However, the dictionary excludes loan words from Nigerian languages because they are infinite and remain automatically untranslatable. The above efforts require expansion in the search for a comprehensive dictionary. The need for collaboration among scholars, groups and support of agencies and government is canvassed by scholars (Jowitt 2008, Gut 2012), Jowitt (2008:29) asserts that

> The task of differentiating variants from errors – of deciding which usage
> should be lifted out of the category of (merely) 'popular' expressions and
> exalted to the status of Standard, and so prescribed expressions – is thus an
> interesting one. It is invidious for an individual, however, even if that
> individual is a Professor of English, to start making solo pronouncements.

The task is one of delicacy and needs to be carried out by a team of experts, not by an individual.

The codification of a widely accepted and used form of NigE, in essence, needs to rely on facts about how wide-spread the usage of particular forms is among the users of the variety.

Some Notes on Methodology for Codification
The methodology for codification of NigE usage can be examined under four major subheadings, viz. human resources, data sources, feature peculiarities, metadata and sample entries.

Human Resources
Normally, lexicography or dictionary-making, beyond mere listing of items is not a one-person business. For credibility, it usually involves a team of scholars led by one or more experts in the subject area of English language or English linguistics. It is a major asset if the scholars represent different ethnic groups of Nigeria. On English language, associations or groups such as the English Scholars' Association of Nigeria (ESAN), English Language Teachers'Association of Nigeria (ELTAN), National Association of Teachers and Researchers in English as a Second Language (NATRESL) and, more respectedly, Natioal Academy of Letters (NAL) are well placed to initiate, plan and execute such a project. Alternatively, a government ministry such as the Ministry of Education or parastatals such as the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) or National Language Centre (NLC) or, even, the National Assembly can commission experts in the field to perform the task as a national assignment. The fact of the matter is that a major work of codification of NigE would require sponsorship from a body, group, organisation or an agency of government. It could even be undertaken by a renowned publisher with very remarkable scholarly insights. The resource persons for the project would include one or more coordinators, consultants, field assistants to collect data, editor(s) and a publisher. Upon publication, there would be need for advocacy for adoption of the dictionary (ies) by policymakers and stakeholders.

Data Sources
A dictionary of Nigerian English usage can be general, i.e. covering all levels of description such as phonology, grammar and vocabulary or may decide to focus on specific levels. Otherwise, both kinds can exist side by side. Next, Standard NigE is a variety of educated usage for use in education and formal situations. The data for description should thus, for validity, come from educational and formal situations, just as the data for description of English grammar by Quirk (1972) were sourced from the education domain. Preferred data sources will thus include formal media programmes, academic conferences, meetings in public administration, convocation ceremonies of tertiary institutions, classroom lecture notes, social interactions, movies and literary works by educated scholars. Examples of such data are already in existence and can be tested for acceptability and intelligibility.

Features to be codified are scattered in journal articles, conference proceedings and books that are available in the literature. Acceptability and intelligibility tests have been conducted on

data and attitudes (Obanya, Dada and Oderinde, 1979; Ekong, 1980; Fatimayin, 2012) to confirm the suitability of 'educated' Nigerian English data (cf. Banjo, 1995). Existing data can be complemented with corpus data generated from other formal domains of English usage. Existing reputable dictionaries in the Nigerian market that are useful to ESL learners (cf. Adeniran 2005), e.g. the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD), *Longman Contemporary Dictionary of English* (LCDE) and *Merriam Webster's Dictionary*. Compilers can pick out words with peculiar acceptable NigE pronunciation, grammar, meaning and usage from such dictionaries and describe them at the various levels. Nativised lexical items missing in those dictionaries are to be identified and included in the codified document. Of great interest is a recent observation that the word 'fanimorous' is in the Oxford English Dictionary. How long will it be for 'japa' (a coinage for socio-economically induced relocation abroad for supposedly greener pastures) to follow suit.

Feature Peculiarities

Scholars (Adegbija, 1989; Bamiro, 1994; Akindele and Adegbite, 1999) have classified innovations at the lexico-semantic level into categories such as loan words/ lexical transfer, analogy, acronyms, lexico-semantic contrast, extension or shift, coinages and neologisms. These categories, exemplified below, would provide the bases for the forms and meanings of words in the NigE dictionary:

- analogy: bukateria (canteen) by analogy with cafeteria;
- lexico-semantic contrast: masquerade – ancestral spirit worship;
- lexico-semantic extension: chief – a social title or designation; kinship terms such as father, mother, brother, sister, son and daughter extend beyond their native English meaning;
- lexico-semantic shift/transfer: bride price – dowry, co-wives/ rivals in a polygamous setting;
- coinages and neologisms: long leg – undue influence, go slow – traffic jam;
- lexical creation: well done – greeting at work; thank you for yesterday;
- acronymy: JAMB – Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board. (Acronyms form a large set of items and are, for coherence and clarity, presented separately at the end of the dictionary.)

As a principle, loan words, that is, words that would require inverted commas or italicisation in English orthography, can be excluded from the entries for three reasons: economy, consistency and acceptability. For example, a list of loan words from Nigerian indigenous languages in English can be ad infinitum and the possibility of bias in a reduced selection is very high. To what extent shall we be able to list the whole of loan words from different languages for food items such as 'eba', 'tuwo', kilishi and 'agidi' or titles such as 'obi' and 'obong' or market days such as 'eke' and 'afo' or clothes such as 'danshiki' and 'agbada' other than to gloss them in writing?

Some Features of the Nigerian English Dictionary

A dictionary or lexicon is a lexical document. But words have different meanings expressed at different levels of linguistic description. Thus, the meaning of each word in the dictionary is described in metadata such as

- a lexeme: the lexical item 'assignment' (n) is treated as a word with the plural inflection 'assignments', but 'assassinate' (v) is treated as a different word from the derivation 'assassination';
- phonemic transcription: the pronunciation of sound segments;
- tonal representation for pitch characteristics at three levels: high (H), mid (M) and low (L);
- part of speech or type of construction: e.g. word class such as noun (n.), verb (v.), adjective (adj.), or construction such as noun phrase (n.phr.), collocation (col.), idiom (id.) etc.;
- provenance: whether informal, colloquial, slang, etc.; and
- usage: expressions exemplifying usage of the word.

As already observed, the varieties of English in Nigeria include forms which conform with native speakers English such as BrE, AmE and others as well as other forms peculiar to the non-native speakers. Since the native speaker forms and meanings are understood, they are considered redundant for presentation in this dictionary and are excluded. In other words, the dictionary presents only the peculiar forms of English acceptable in educated usage in Nigeria, with the exclusion of non-standard forms. The lexicon of Nigerian English, however, will include features of English that are innovations or variants from both formal and informal sources, colloquialism, slang and idioms.

Sample Entries
abandoned/abandɔnd/LHHL/, adj., 1. _____ project (n.phr., project left undone or uncompleted despite payment having been made): The committee set up to review all ***abandoned projects*** has submitted its findings. 2. _____ property (n.phr., property left for some time due to unforeseen circumstances: The government housing estate has become an ***abandoned property*** because the civil servants cannot afford to buy the ouses. 3. _____ woman (id., a woman who has been jilted or has remained unmarried until she is advanced in age): Her childhood sweetheart has jilted her making her an ***abandoned woman***. Her brothers advised her to get married before she becomes an ***abandoned woman***.

The innovations in the example above are examples of extension of meaning (i.e. semantic extension) of the word 'abandoned' as an adjective modifying project in Usage 1. The 'Nigerianness' in the expression is a representation of the social reality of leaving projects uncompleted despite payment having been made. The peculiarity of Usage 2 pertains to the fact that abandonment of government property may be unusual in some countries, but it is a familiar occurrence in Nigeria. In another sense, the expression 'abandoned property' has a historical dimension to it. Igboanusi (2002:32) describes the circumstance as "a phrase frequently used

to refer to the property of the Igbo people seized in some states ... after the civil war". The Igbo left their states of abode for their home states before the civil war. After the civil war, many of them could not regain the property they left in those states, in spite of the 'no victors no vanquished slogan of the government. Usage 3 shows the phrase' 'abandoned woman' as an idiom in which additional meanings 'jilted' and 'unmarried' have are given to 'abandoned' beyond the denotation of 'neglect'.

again/agé:n/,/egé:n/LHL, adv., 1. left, left over, remaining: I have no money *again*. 2. else: Who *again* ? 3. repeat _____ (repeat): *Repeat* the   verse *again*.

The word 'again' denotes 'one more time', 'in addition', repeat or 'in contrast' in conventional dictionaries. In Usage 3 above, the expression 'repeat again' is tautological; yet, it is common in the educated usage in Nigerian, perhaps for the purpose of emphasis. In Usage 1 and 2, the word has meanings that are entirely different for the conventional meaning.

bad/ba:d/HL, adj., 1. anger, annoyance, animosity, dislike: ___ belly (pidgin – bad bele): Sacking the workers is a demonstration of **bad belly** by the employers.2. id., criminal, lawless: _____ boy: There are *bad boys* in the area. 3. id., evil: _____ eye: The woman looked at me with *bad eye* but she cannot harm me. 4. id., disapproval: When I told my mother, she looked at me with *bad eye*. 5. id., wicked ___ heart: Someone with a *bad heart* cannot forgive easily. 6. id., abusive, rude, saucy: _____ mouth: The youths in the area have *bad mouth*. 7. id., misfortune _____ leg: I   was doing well before you rought your *bad leg* into this house. 8. Not ___ (gr., fine): *A*: How are you? *B*: *Not bad*.

The word 'bad' has so many connotations in Nigerian English usage and it occurs in many idiomatic expressions and greeting. The idioms express social and cultural meaning, some of them revealing the people's belief in the supernatural, for example, Usage 3 and 7.

6. Elaboration and Re-inventing of Nigerian English
Codification means institutionalising Standard NigE as model of education and formal education. Coming after codification is elaboration of the English language in its new garb. The elaboration of English, as Akere (2009:9) observes, involves a painstaking listing of all domains in which English functions in official and non-official capacities and then going on to identify and describe the usage structures that are attested in each domain in their standard NigE variety. In decribing uses of English in texts/discourses, scholars of English may need to go beyond focusing on linguistic theories or identifying linguistic features. A part of the elaboration process is the publication and wider dissemination of codified materials to learners and users through teaching, broadcast, advocacy and enlightenment. With respect to the phase of re-inventing English, it is expected that scholars would interrogate, assess and re-package English to meet the current requirements of modernity, development and globalisation.

In order to confront linguistic homogenisation and Englishisation of the world in the course of globalisation, some scholars have suggested the need to re-examine the status and functions of English vis-à-vis the existing languages in the community. The re-examining process follows two main courses. In the first course, scholars attempt to create an awareness of the positive and negative influence of English on some indigenous languages, in order to safeguard the latter against the cannibalistic incursion of the former (Bamgbose 1982, Banjo 1986, Ekundayo 1987, Ufomata 1991, Isola 1992, Essien 1995, Adegbite and Akinwale 2008). In the second course, scholars attempt to review existing language provisions, which tend to valorise the English language and overlook the indigenous languages, arguing that both should complement each other in the task of nation-building (Adegbite 2004a and 2008a, Afolayan 1994, Bamgbose 2006, Emenanjo 1998, Essien 2003, Jibril 2007, Lawal 2009, Schafer and Egbokhare 1999).

7. Conclusion

The reality indices have confirmed English as a Nigerian language. Thus, to affirm its national identity, Nigeria needs to have a standard codified, moving beyond the non-prestigious appelation of 'Popular Nigerian English'. Scholars should take the advantage of the liberal window to also project its image.

The English Proficiency Index (EPI, 2022) presents English in Nigeria on the High Proficiency Scale, second on a five point rating scale from Very High Proficiency to Very Low Proficiency. Nigeria is ranked 3rd English speaking nation in Africa, after South Africa (1st) and Kenya (2nd), and No 28 in the world. In the group of New Englishes, apart from Singapore that already has a codified Standard English (Standard Singaporean English) and South Africa where the Black South African English (BSAE) is recognised, Nigerian English (NigE) is the variety that has reached Schneider's (2007) phase of endonormative stabilisation. The achievement of codification in the countries above is determined by commitment of scholars reflected in the large amount of description of English in the countries.

Standard English is for educated speakers of the language and is primarily a written model for education and formal communication. The codification of the Nigerian variety has started and the available work remains to be expanded (Gut 2012). The BrE and AmE components need little or no attention as they are well codified in existing dictionaries. They are acceptable for usage, provided there is consistency in the usage. It is only the nativised forms that need to be tested, compiled and documented. Nigerian scholars should prepare to take the glory of accomplishing the task so that it does not become the case of "Mungo Park discovered the River Niger." The original inhabitants at the source of the River had to wait for Mungo Park to come and project it for the world.

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