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A COMPARATIVE PSYCHO-SOCIOLINGUISTIC OVERVIEW OF THE PHONEMIC REALIZATIONS OF THE LETTER <Ee> IN (NIGERIAN) ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) AND RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION (RP)

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Abstract

This paper examines the articulation of the letter <Ee> in Educated Nigerian English (ENE) against the psycho-sociolinguistic background of English as a Second Language (ESL), the concepts of interference and intraference. Examples were gathered from 2005 to 2013 through unstructured interviews, participant and non-participant observation, and the recording of spontaneous speech. Methods of data analysis are qualitative and quantitative. The ordinal data are presented in percentile and frequency tables and charts and the linguistic texts are described and explained. The study established that as a result of intraference, educated Nigerians mix up the various RP realizations of the letter <e>. As the articulations examined here are institutionalized in ENE and as they have both national and international intelligibility, it is proposed that they be treated as variations that typify ESL varieties.

Keywords: *psycho-sociolinguistic, interference, intraference, the letter <Ee>, phonemic realizations*

The paper presents the phonemic realizations of the letter <e> in Educated Nigerian English compared with RP and native English realizations from a psycho-sociolinguistic perspective. Nigerians in the continuum of National Diploma (ND) minimum to Ph.D./Professor are considered educated. In this continuum are National Certificate of Education (NCE), Higher National Diploma (HND), B.A, B.Sc., Postgraduate Diploma, M.A. M.Sc., and M.Phil. holders.

Psycho-sociolinguistics consists of psychology, sociology, and linguistics, three separate but related major domains of knowledge, which deals with mental processes, mindset, thinking and thoughts, nature of competence, the dynamics of human language acquisition device (LAD), and how human behavior and personality affect the learning, acquisition and use of language (Crystal, 2009, p. 396; Adegbite, 2009, p. 7).

Sociolinguistics deals with "the linguistic identity of groups, social attitudes to language, standard and non-standard forms of language, the patterns and needs of national language use, social varieties and levels of language, the social basis of multilingualism, and so on" (Crystal, 2009, p. 441). The paper, which is an expanded extract from a major nation-wide survey of intraference variants in ENE (Ekundayo, 2014), shows that the sociolinguistic dynamics of Nigeria, and other ESL communities, nonnative speakers' limited competences and linguistic features influence the phonemic realizations of the letter <e>. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) say that ESL variations emanate from interference. However, it is shown in this paper that ESL variations emanate not only from interference but also from intraference.

The paper examines the phonemic realizations of the letter <Ee> with a view to answering the following questions:

i. In which words do Nigerians' phonemic realizations of the letter <e> deviate from or conform to RP?
ii. What are the patterns of the phonemic realizations of the letter <e> in Educated Nigerian English?
iii. Are educated Nigerians' phonemic realizations of the letter <e> different from RP and native English speakers' realizations?
iv. Are the phonemic realizations the result of interference or intraference?
v. What factors constrain educated Nigerians' phonemic realizations of the letter <e> to deviate from RP?
vi. What are the implications of the phonemic realizations for pedagogy and the description of ESL?

The paper adopted the theories of interference and intraference to show how the underlying phonemic realizations of the letter <e> in RP 'intrafere' with (replace, reflect) one another in ESL. Interference is associated with the concepts of *Contrastive Analysis* (CA) and *Language Transfer*, which are based on the assumption that second language learners have the tendency of transferring the features of their native and/or first language to their second language utterances (James, 1980; Crystal, 2009). Another term for interference is *negative transfer*, which manifests at all the levels of linguistic organization, the most common in ESL being the phonological types in which nonnative speakers impose the fossilized phonological systems of their languages on their second language, as educated Nigerians do to the English language.

According to Ekundayo (2006, p. 15), the theories and methods of CA and language transfer "failed to examine critically how the rules and dynamics of the second language itself make learners produce coinages and variations, an issue which linguists in the turn of the nineteen sixties (1960s) took up vigorously" and started making a strong case for 'intralingual interference' (Richards & Sampson, 1984), and 'the overgeneralization of linguistic features' (Selinker, 1971, 1984). Ekundayo's (2006) intraference is a lexicalization of the concepts of 'interlingual interference', 'the overgeneralization of linguistic features', and Labovian (1994) 'internal principles of linguistic change.' William Croft (2000, 2003) says that "different elements of the same language can interfere with each other if they share enough linguistic substance" and when language items are affected by different dialects, sociolinguistic variants or other structures of the same language 'intraference' occurs (Croft, 2000, pp. 111-165). Intraference features emanate from two major groups of factors that affect the competence and performance of (second) language users: 'the psycho-sociolinguistic' and 'the linguistic' (See Ekundayo, 2014).

Intraference features emanate from the reassignment and redeployment of language items and rules that nonnative speakers/writers have in their competences from well-known areas to hitherto new words and contexts where they do not operate in RP and some native English varieties. This include overgeneralization, influence of Americanisms, the transfer of rules and items from one level of language organization to another, e.g. from orthography to phonology and vice versa. The phonological types manifest in the redeployment of phonemes and supragmental features from areas in which they operate in the language to areas in which they are not used in RP or a native English variety. Nigerian English is replete with such features of phonological intraference.

The varieties of English used in Nigeria are usually assessed against the features of Standard British English (SBE) or Standard American English (SAE). Region, formal education and (psycho) sociolinguistic parameters are used to classify Nigerian English varieties (Jowitt, 2008; Surakat, 2010). Many regions and different regional varieties of Nigerian English (abbreviated NE or NigE) exist: *Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Efik, Urhobo*, *Izon*, *Ebira*, etc. Phonological variations mainly distinguish regional varieties.

Several classifications have been made with formal education, linguistic and sociolinguistic parameters, the most prominent being Banjo's (1970, 1996) varieties I, II, III and IV. *Variety I* is the lowest, which reflects vulgar errors of grammar and broken structures often used by primary school pupils and those with half-baked formal education. *Variety II*, which is an improvement on *Variety I*, is used by secondary school students, school certificate holders and a majority of Nigerians. *Variety III* is spoken by highly educated people, graduates, teachers, lecturers, professors, writers, broadcasters, etc. Banjo proposes this model for Nigerian English. His *Variety III* is often referred to as Standard Nigerian English (SNE) or Educated Nigerian English (ENE). Lastly, *Variety IV* of Banjo is like native English standard spoken by few Nigerians who were born in native English-speaking countries or have a parent of English origin and consequently acquired English as their first language (Banjo, 1996). But this variety is considered too foreign and affected in Nigeria. Nevertheless, these classifications are not clear-cut, for there are overlaps. 'There can, in truth, never be any firm dividing lines' (Banjo, 1996, p. 79). Upton's (2015, p. 252) observation about British English best reflects the Nigerian English situation as well:

> There is a multiplicity of regionally and still more locally espoused pronunciations which are used by the majority of people all or most of the time. And most speakers roam, with greater or less ease, between accents at or approaching RP and accents which are very readily-identified non-RP, these sometimes regional to a very marked degree.

The trends examined in this paper manifest in all the varieties. However, this paper concentrates on the cases in ENE.

Upton (2015) says that RP is not just a straightforward concept as it appears to be. He advises that one hearing a Briton or an English voice should not 'assume that they are hearing an RP accent' (p. 253). Elsewhere, Upton (2012) asserts that RP is not British but a classless English accent (within England), 'which is not to be regionally located' (p. 64). RP is the varying accent, not uniform in all facets of articulation, of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). While RP is native English, RP is not a uniform (or the only) accent of native speakers. Only a small percentage of native English speakers use it. However, RP is a popular accent vested with socio-educational prestige and the model to which most ESL and EFL countries aspire, e.g. Nigeria. In RP, <e> and its combinations such as <ae>, <ea>, <ie>, <ei> and <eo> are mainly phonemically realized as follows:

/e/-------*e*gg, r*e*d, d*ea*d, w*ea*lth, J*eo*pardize

/eɪ/-----d*e*bacle, attach*é*

<ee, ea, ei, ie, eo, e>   /ɪ/-------*e*njoy, r*e*gain, proph*e*t,

/i:/-------eff*e*te, w*ea*k, p*eo*ple, rec*ei*ve, bel*ie*ve

/ɪə/------b*ee*r, f*ea*r, e*ra*, *se*rious, h*e*ro

/eə/------b*ea*r, w*ea*r

silent letter <e>: rop*e*, dom*e*, som*e*, dam*e*, rap*e*, etc (Ekundayo, 2014, p. 109).

Most appearances of the letter <e> at the end position of a word after the consonants /p/, /b/, /r/, /z/, /m/, /n/, /l/, /v/, /s/, /ʒ/, etc. are silent, as in *pipe* /paɪp/, *syndrome* /sɪndrəum/, *gale* /geɪl/. But there are some exemptions, which educated Nigerian speakers ignore or articulate as the general, regular-rule types. Educated Nigerians often redeploy these major phonemic realizations of the letter <e> and impose them where they do not apply in RP and native English accents, an intraference habit which gives ENE its typical close-to-RP and different-from-RP accent.

METHOD

The paper is a qualitative and quantitative nation-wide survey of intraference carried out in Nigeria from May 2005 to May 2013. The population of study was educated Nigerians who were between 19 and 70 years in ten government-owned universities and other schools tested in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria: the South-West, the multilingual South-South, the South-East, the multilingual North Central, North-East and North West. The universities and institutions are Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Bayero University, Kano (North); University of Lagos, Lagos; Federal University of Technology, Akure (West); University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (East); University of Ilorin, Ilorin; University of Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (North Central); University of Benin, Benin City; Edo State, and the University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt (South-South); five federal government owned polytechnics: Federal Polytechnic, Auchi (South-South); Federal Polytechnic, Ede (West); Federal Polytechnic Offa (North Central); Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna (North West); and Federal Polytechnic, Oko (South West).

Methods of data collection used were speech recording, interviews, observation, and questionnaire. The spontaneous speech of many educated Nigerians were observed and recorded. The interviews and observations were mainly unstructured and conducted in both formal and informal settings such as university classes and lecture theatres, staff rooms, lecturers' offices, churches, social gatherings, etc., where the researchers and his research assistants either participated in or observed live linguistic events. The words used were written in charts and banners for respondents to pronounce or on papers for individual respondent to articulate. In addition, some cases were elicited from the newscast of ten trained Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) newscasters and ten trained newscasters with State-owned television stations and five with three private television stations: African Independent Television (AIT), Independent Television (ITV), and Silver Bird Television (STV).

The paper applied the qualitative and quantitative methods for analysis and presentation of data. The qualitative method was used to describe, explain, and discuss the linguistic texts in the paper and the quantitative method facilitated the presentation of ordinal data in simple percentile, frequency tables, and charts. It was assumed that the phonemic realizations of letter <e> 'intrafere' with (substitute) one another in the spoken English of educated Nigerians. Focus was on ubiquity of the variants and educational status of the population as defined above; not necessarily on age, sex and individual ranks of the educated people surveyed. On the whole, 50,000 educated Nigerians were surveyed where 0-29 of the respondents used a variant, it is tagged *isolated*, 30 to 44% is *emerging variant*, 45-49% is *free variants*, 51-59% is *common,* 60-79% *widespread,* and 80-100% *entrenched* or *institutionalized.*

The articulations recorded were compared with *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (New 8th edition) audio pronunciation of the words. Specifically, Daniel Jones' phonetic symbols in *Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary* (2006, inside front page), also in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2007, inside front page), and Awonusi (2009, p. 10, column B) were used for the RP/native English transcriptions of the examples in the paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Examples gleaned from various sources are presented and annotated in several patterns. First, fifty words used for the interviews, questionnaire, and recording are presented in table one and with annotation below it. A second group of fifty words, not in a table, is presented and a third group in a data table of ten words.

Intraference of the Phonemic Forms of Letter <Ee >

Fifty words were tested for the interference and intraference of the pronunciation of the letter <e>. The patterns and percentages are presented in Table 1 below. ENEA stands for Educated Nigerian English Accent.

Table 1. *A Table of the Intraference of the Phonemic Forms of the Letter <Ee>*

SN	Words	RP	Percentage of RP over 50,000	ENEA	Percentage of ENEA over 50,000	Patterns (r.by) means 'replaced by'	Comment
1	acad<u>e</u>mia	/'ækədi:mɪə	6,000/12%	/ækedemɪæ	44,000/88%	/i:/ r.by /e/	entrenched
2	<u>a</u>meliorate	/ə'mɪ:lɪəreɪt	4,000/8%	/æ'melɪɔret/	46,000/92%	/ɪ:/r.by /e/	entrenched
3	b<u>ea</u>r	/ 'beə/	11,000/22%	/ 'bɪe/, /bɪə/	39,000/78%	/eə/ r.by ə/	widespread
4	B<u>e</u>neficial	/ 'benɪfiʃəl/	10,000/20%	/'benefɪʃæl/	40,000/80%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
5	blas<u>phe</u>me	/ 'blæsfi:m/	10,000/20%	/ 'blæsfem/	40,000/80%	/i:/ r.by /e/	entrenched
6	Cal<u>e</u>ndar	/kæ'lɪndə/	3,000/6%	/ 'kælendæ/ /kæ'lendæ/	30,000/60% 17,000/34%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	widespread variant
7	C<u>e</u>ment	/'sɪment/	26,000/53%	/se'ment/	24,000/48%	/ ɪ/ r.by /e/	common variant
8	Com<u>e</u>dian	/kə'mi:dɪən/	5,000/30%	/kɔ'medɪæn/	35,000/70%	/ɪ:/r.by/e/	widespread

9	Cotyledon	/ kɔtɪ'li:dən/	4,000/8%	/kɔ'tɪledɔn/	46,000/92%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
10	debacle	/deɪ'ba:kl/	6,000/12%	/ 'dɪbækul/	44,000/82%	/eɪ/ r.by /ɪ/	entrenched
11	Deity	/ 'di:tɪ/ also 'deɪətɪ/	10,000/20%	/ 'deɪtɪ/	40,000/80%	/i:/ r.by /eɪ/	widespread
12	deliberate	/dɪ'lɪbreɪt/	2,500/5%	/'delɪbret/	47,500/95%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
13	delude	/dɪ'lu:d/	3,000/6%	/de'lu:d /	47,000/94%	/ɪ/r.by /e/	entrenched
14	Demon	/'di:mən/	10,000/20%	/'demən/ / 'di:mən/	18,000/36% 22,000/44%	/ ɪ:/ r.by /e/	common variant
15	develop	/dɪ'veləp/	19,000/38%	/'develop/ /'dɪvelop/	20,000/40% 11,000/22%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	variant
16	Edith	/'i:d ɪθ/	9,000/19%	/e'dɪ:θ/ /'edɪθ/	20,000/40% 21,000/41%	/i:/ r.by /e/ /ɪ/ r.by /e/	variants
17	emerge/nce	/ɪ'mɜ:dʒəns/	9,000/18%	/emɜ:dʒens/ /ema:dʒens/	24,000/48% 17,000/34%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	variants
18	Enclose	/ 'ɪnkləuz/	16,000/32%	/enkloz/	44,000/68%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	widespread
19	Encode	/ɪn'kəud/	13,000/26%	/en'kod/	37,000/84%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
20	Encomium	/ɪn'kəumɪəm/	11,000/22%	/en'komɪɔm/	39,0000/78%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	widespread
21	Encounter	/ɪn'kauntə/	15,000/30%	/en'kauntæ/	35,000/70%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	widespread
22	Encourage	/ɪn'k^rɪdʒ/	6,000/12%	/en'kɔredʒ /	44,000/88%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
23	Encroach	/ɪn'krəutʃ/	9,000/18%	/en'krotʃ/	41,000/82%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
24	Encyclopaedia	/ɪnsaɪklə'pi:dɪə	5,000/10%	/en'saɪklo'pɪ:dɪæ	45,000/90%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
25	Endanger	/ɪn'deɪndʒə/	8,000/16%	/en'dendʒæ/	42,000/92%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
26	Estate	/ɪ'steɪt/	50/.1%	/ 'esteɪt/	49,950/99%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
27	eternal	/ɪ'tɜ:n əl/	10,000/20%	/e'tænæl/	40,000/80%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
28	Evolve	/ɪ'vɔlv/	10,000/20%	/ e'vɔlv/	40,000/80%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
29	Felix	/'fɪlɪks/	12,000/24%	/'felɪks/ /fe'lɪs/	20,000/40% 18,000/36%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	variants
30	intervene	/ ɪntə'vi:n/	10,000/20%	/ɪntæ'veɪn/	40,000/80%	/i:/ r.by /eɪ/	entrenched
31	Jeopardize	/'dʒepədaɪz/	11,000/22%	/dʒɪo'pædaɪz	39,000/78%	/e/ r.by /ɪo/	widespread

32	meadow**	/'medəu/	5,000/10%	/'mɪ:dəu/	45,000/90%	/e/ r.by //i:/	entrenched
33	Mediocre	/mɪ:di'əukə/	15,000/30%	/medɪ'oukæ/	35,000/70%	/ɪ:/r.by e/	widespread
34	peasant	/'pezənt/	2,500/5%	/'pɪ:sænt/	47,500/95%	/e/ r.by //i:/	entrenched
35	Penal	/ 'pɪ:nəl/	11,000/22%	/ "penæl/	39,000/78%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	widespread
36	Penis	/ 'pɪ:nɪs/	7,000/14%	/pe'nɪs/	43,000/86%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
37	Precedent	/'presɪdənt/	2,000/4%	/'prɪsɪdent/	48,000/96%	/e/ r.by //ɪ/	entrenched
38	Preclude	/pri'klu:d/	11,000/22%	/pre'klu:d/		/ɪ:/r.by /e/	entrenched
39	predator	/ 'predətə/	5,000/10%	/prɪ'deɪtə/	45,000/90%	/e/ r.by //ɪ/	entrenched
40	Preparation	/prepə'reiʃn/	13,000/26%	/pre'pæreʃn/	37,000/76%	/e/ r.by /ɪ/	widespread
41	prevalent	/'prevələnt/	4,500/9%	/'prɪvælent/	45,500/91%	/e/ r.by /ɪ/	entrenched
42	Prophet	/'prɔfɪt/	0/0%	/'prɔfet/ /'profet/	35,000/70% 15,000/30%	/i:/r.by /e/	widespread
43	Rebekah	/rɪ'bekə/	1,000/2%	/re'bekæ/	49,000/98%	/e/ r.by /ɪ/	entrenched
44	Regime	/'rɪʒɪ:m/ reɪ'ʒɪ:m/	7,500/15%	/re'dʒɪ:m/	42,500/85%	/ɪ / r.by e/	entrenched
45	rhesus factor	/'rɪ:səs fæktə/	4,000/8%	/ 'resɔs 'fæktə/	46,000/92%	/ɪ/ r.by /e/	entrenched
46	Senate	/ 'senət/	6,000/12%	/'sɪneɪt/	44,000/88%	/e/ r.by /ɪ/	entrenched
47	senator	/ 'senətə/	6,000/12%	/ 'sɪneɪtə/	44,000/88%	/e/ r.by /ɪ/	entrenched
48	tear	/ 'teə/	11,000/22%	/ 'tɪe/	39,000/78%	/eə/ r.by/ɪə/	widespread
49	W.B. Yeats	/ 'jeɪts/	0/0%	/ 'j:ts/	50,000/100%	/eɪ/r.by/i:/	entrenched
50	zebra	/ 'zɪ:brə/	10,000/20%	/ 'zebræ/	40,000/80%	/i:/r.by /e/	entrenched

** There is an eatery in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria called "Blue Meadows Fast Foods." It is generally pronounced, even by English lecturers and students, as /blu mi:dəus/, not RP /blu: medəuz/. Out of the fifty cases in Table 1 above, 26 are entrenched, 6, 7 and 14 to 17 are variants and 18 are widespread.

Additional cases gathered from recorded speech and broadcast media news by trained broadcasters and highly educated Nigerians in the electronic media are given below. Although these cases were not tested as in the examples in table one, the researcher has tagged them accordingly as entrenched, widespread, etc., based on his observation and experience as a teacher of ESL and ENE for over two decades: **entrenched**: endeavour /en'devə/, endorse /en'dɔ:s/, endow /en'dau/, endur(ance) /en'djɔræns/, endure /en'djə/, enfold /en'fold/, enforce /en'fɔ:s/, engage /en'geɪdʒ/, enjoy /en'dʒɔɪ/, enlighten /en'laɪtɪn/, enrich /en'rɪtʃ/, enroll /en'rol/, enslave /en'sleɪv/, en masse /enmæs/, epoch /epɔk/, ensue /en'sjʊ:/, ensure /en'ʃɔ:/, entail /en'teɪl/, enthuse /en'θju:z/, entourage /en'tɔrædʒ/, entrapment /en'træpment/, entreat /en'trɪ:t/, entrench /en'trentʃ/, entrepreneur /entæ'prenɪə/, entrust /en'trɔst/, entwine /en'twaɪn/, enumerate /e'nʊmɪreɪt/, enunciate /e'nɔ:nʃiet/, envelop /en'velop/, environment /en'væronment/, equatorial /ɪkwe'toriæl/, equip /e'kwɪp/, equivalent /ekwɪ'vælent/, era

/'eræ/, escape /es'keɪp/, eschew /es'tʃʊ:/, escort /'eskɔ:t/, essential /e'senʃæl/, esteem /e'stɪ:m/, eternal /e'tɜ:næl/, elope /elop/; **widespread**: enough /e'nɔf/, enquiry /en'kwæjærɪ/, evelyn /'evlɪn/, evaluate /e'vælʊeɪt/, evangelist /e'vændʒelɪst/, evaporate /evæ'pɔreɪt/, evict /e'vɪkt/, excreta / 'eskrɪ:tæ/, etc.

Articulation of Silent Letter <e> in Word End Position

Ten words with silent letter <e> were used for 20,000 educated Nigerians. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *A Table of the Articulation of Silent Letter <e> in Word End Position*

S/N	Words	RP	Percentage of SBE over 20,000	ENEA	Percentage of SBE over 20,000	Influence of Intraference in the language	Comment
1	epitome	/'ɪpɪtəmɪ/	2,000/10%	/'epɪtɔm/	18,000/90%	as in words like *syndrome, dome, home,* etc.	entrenched
2	bonafide	/bəʊnə'faɪdɪ/	1,000/5%	/bəʊnæ'faɪd /	19,000/95%	as in *confide, abide*	entrenched
3	fiancé	/fɪ'a:nseɪ/	7,000/35%	/ 'fɪa:ns/	13,000/65%	silent <e> as in *finance, fence, dance,* etc.	widespread
4	forte	/fɔ:'teɪ/	2,000/10%	/'fɔ:t/	18,000/90%	as in *vote, dote, pope,* etc.	entrenched
5	furore	/fjʊ'rɔ:rɪ:/	2,500/12.5	/'fjʊrɔ:/	17,500/87.5	as in *before, pinafore,* etc.	entrenched
6	genre	/'ʒɑ:nrə	8,000/40%	/ 'dʒɑ:n/ 'dʒɔ:n/	12,000/60%	silent <r> in words like *metre, centre,*	widespread
7	grand finale	/grændfɪ'nɑ:lɪ	4,000/20%	/'grændfɪnɑ:l/	16,000/80%	/a:/ as in *morale, royale* etc.	entrenched
8	hyperbole	/'haɪpəblɪ	1,000/5%	/haɪ'pæbol/	19,000/95%	/eu/ in *borehole, pole,*	entrenched
9	subjudice	/sʌb 'dʒʊ:dɪsɪ/	3,500/17.5	/sɔbdʒudɪs/ , /sɔb'dʒʊdaɪ	9,000/45% 7,500/37.5%	as in *dice, nice,* etc.	variants

			s/			
10	synecdoche	/sɪˈnekdəkɪ/	2,000/10%	/ˈsɪnedɔk	18,000/90%	as in words given above	entrenched

Table 3 below shows the frequencies of the various levels of spread examined.

Table 3. *Frequency Table for the Variants Examined*

S/N	Range	Degree of Spread	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
1	80-100%	entrenched	73	66.3%	1.5
2	60-79%	widespread	30	25.4%	3.66
3	50-59%	common	04	3.6%	27.5
4	40-49%	variant	03	2.7%	36.6
	Total		110	100%	69.26

Figure 1 graphically shows that most of the examples documented in this paper are entrenched and widespread.
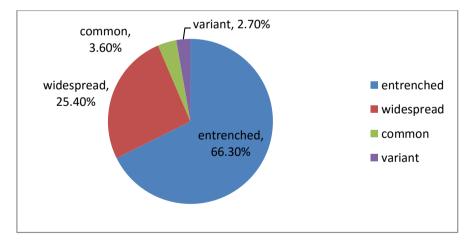
Figure 1. *Pie Chart Showing the Degrees/Percentages of Spread*

Question One: *In which words do educated Nigerians' phonemic realizations of the letter <e> deviate from or conform to RP?*

As the tables and the chart show, intraference of the phonemic realizations of letter <e> is entrenched in ENE. The result clearly answers the first research question. Many letters <e>, as shown in 110 variants above, and many others not accounted for her, particularly the letter <e> at initial position, which are realized phonemically as /ɪ/ or /i:/ in RP are generally pronounced as RP /e/ in ENEA because many instances of letter <e> in RP are also pronounced as /e/.

Question Two: *What are the patterns of the phonemic realizations of the letter <e> in Educated Nigerian English?*

The patterns of articulation and changes established are depicted below:

Letter <e> RP--------------------------	-----<e> ENEA
/i:/, /ɪ/ in some words becomes	/e/, as in *e*quip. This is the pattern widespread in ENE. It accounted for about 70% of the 100 cases in this paper.
/e/ in some words becomes	/ɪ/, /i:/ as in s*e*nate. This is the next most popular pattern. It accounted for over 20% of the cases here.
/eɪ/ in some words becomes	/ɪ/, /i:/ or /e/, as in d*e*bacle, resum*e*, Y*ea*ts.
/e/ in some words becomes	/ɪo/, as in l*eo*pard, j*eo*pardise
/eə/ in some words becomes	/ɪə/, /ɪe/, /ɪæ/ as in b*ea*r, t*ea*r.

The study established five patterns illustrated above in the phonemic realizations of <e> in ENEA.

Question Three: *Are educated Nigerians' phonemic realizations of the letter <e> different from RP and native English speakers' realizations?*

The result as shown in Table 1, 2, 3, Figures 1, and in the pattern above demonstrate that there are differences between the realizations of <e> in Nigerian English and RP. In ENEA, underlying RP and native English realizations are indiscriminately redeployed such that where RP uses /i:/ or /ɪ/ for <e>, ENE uses /e/, RP /eɪ/ for <e> is /e/ in ENE, etc.

Question Four: *Are the phonemic realizations the result of interference or intraference?*

The phonemic realizations of the letter <e> in ENE emanate from linguistic intraference mainly, and also from interference. The intraference of phonemes is widespread and entrenched in the cases presented here because the Nigerians studied have been exposed to close-to/RP spoken English in both formal and informal settings. So, they do make conscious efforts as educated Nigerians and scholars to articulate phonemes correctly based on their competence and learning. Unfortunately, however, the inconsistent dynamics of the language often constrain them to redeploy phonological rules and items to other similar contexts. In this instance, the two most popular RP realizations of letter <e> as either /e/ or /ɪ/ intrafere in the mind of nonnative speakers and manifest in their performance.

The role of interference in these cases is minimal. Interference may be discernible in letter <e> articulated as /ə/ or /eɪ/ in RP because Nigerians find these vowels /ə/ and /eɪ/ difficult to articulate, because they are not in most Nigerian languages. Depending on the context, they tend to replace them with a close vowel such as /æ/, /e/ or /ɔ/ in both English and Nigerian languages. However, the argument can go both ways, either interference or intraference. For instance, educated Nigerians who articulate 'blackberry,' as /blækberɪ/ may have been influenced by spelling pronunciation and the well-known /e/ for letter <e>, just as it is pronounced in American English. Sometimes, in a speech event, one hears the same speaker say /blækberɪ/ now and shortly after /blækbrɪ/. So, one cannot now finger interference but spelling pronunciation and the intrafernce of /e/ for the letter <e>. However, interference occurs clearly when educated Nigerians attempt to articulate the diphthong /eɪ/ for the letter <e>. Nigerians often under differentiate it, articulating only the first part of the diphthong. They do not glide the tongue clearly from the region of vowel number three /e/ to the region of vowel numbers two /ɪ/. Hence most instances of the letter <e> pronounced as /eɪ/ in RP are realized in ENEA as /e/, or /ɪ/.

Question Five: *What factors constrain educated Nigerians' phonemic realizations of the letter <e> to deviate from RP?*

Keen participant observation and practice in the Nigerian English situation has shown that four major factors of sociolinguistic, formal and educational factors, psycholinguistic and purely linguistic features constrain educated Nigerians to produce these variations.

The sociolinguistic comprise the environment, its people and languages in contact. For instance, Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa with a population going 200 million people, or more, is leading English-as-a-second-language (ESL) community in the world at present, second only to India in terms of the population of ESL speakers. The 2006 National Census puts Nigeria's

population at 140,003,542 (http://www.nigeriamasterweb.com/Nigeria06CensusFigs.html). It is a heterogeneous and multilingual society where English more than 500 hundred indigenous languages and dialects which serve as the mother-tongues of speakers from diverse ethnic groups, in addition to English, the official language, and Nigerian Pidgin, the most widely used lingua franca. In addition, Nigeria is a nonnative English setting that is far away from native speakers from whom educated Nigerians can learn live spoken native English. This background influence the way Nigerians speak English.

The formal and educational factors are teaching patterns and contents, grammar textbooks, standard dictionaries and other languages in a second language setting, which influence the use and features of a second language, as English is Nigeria. Formal and educational factors also include strategies of teaching and learning, mode of acquisition, the competence of ESL teachers, how the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding phonemic realizations are taught and the institutionalization of deviations and variations, which learners and teachers acquire and spread. Educated Nigerians speak English according to the books and how they have been taught in schools.

The psycholinguistic factors consist of awareness of usage and competence, conscious efforts to achieve standard and correctness, mindset, reorganization of linguistic items in the mind, and the desire to keep strictly to the rules of English without considering that there are exemptions to the rules. The sociolinguistic, educational and psycholinguistic dynamics then influence the purely linguistic features: the availability of many phonemic realizations for one letter <e> in RP and the intrusion of the memory of similar articulations in the language, which unavoidably daze nonnative speakers. For example, in RP and other native accents, intraference has influenced the recent emergence of free variants. The word <economics> is either pronounced /ekə'nɔmiks/ or /i:kə'nɔmɪks, the word <either> is pronounced as /aiθə/ or /i:θə/, <ego> is either /egəʊ/ or /i:gəʊ/, etc. A combination of these factors forms the extenuating background in which ESL speakers produce variations in the articulation of the letter <e> and others.

Question six: *What is the implication of the realizations for the description, teaching and learning of ESL?*

The variants here have implications for the study and teaching of ESL. Teachers and grammarians of ENE often treat as errors most of the features of NigE that do not conform to RP, yet the local variety keep flourishing. Attention has been drawn to the emergence of nativised varieties which suffer from pedagogic confusion in which the RP is in principle desired and proposed but not targeted or well-taught because teachers cannot reach it and are not competent in it. So, no matter how hard they try, they find it difficult or impossible to achieve total native English mastery of the language dynamics and they keep spreading the entrenched nonnative patterns unconsciously. Meanwhile, the indigenized varieties have not also been codified and standardized for teachers and learner to authoritatively cite them. Ugorji describes the situation as 'pedagogic anarchy' (Ugorji, 2010, p. 26).

Against this backdrop, how should we view these variations? Should they be taught as correct pronunciation in ENE or as errors? It is the position of this paper that those that have become widespread, entrenched or institutionalized should be treated as veritable ENEA variations. This does not prevent those who prefer the RP variants from using them. All considered, intraference plays a huge role in differentiating BrE and AmE articulations of many words.

In teaching and learning, some teachers and linguists take the prescriptive, judgmental approach which may insist that these features are errors or 'bad pronunciation,' irrespective of whoever uses them, because they deviate from RP. But this position may sound pedantic and correcting the so-called 'bad English' may be difficult to attain. Quirk (1988) argues that "good" or "bad" are far less objective when applied to linguistic usage. "Good is what we like and bad is what we dislike and a good deal depends on just who 'we' are…the comment 'their English is bad' may be based on sharply different criteria according to the English that is being judged" (p. vi). Therefore, it is proposed here that these features be regarded as institutionalized variations which characterize ENEA and should be taught alongside the RP/native English variants. This (second) option is the most sociolinguistically expedient for pedagogy, effective communication, and the description of the features of ESL.

CONCLUSION

The paper examined the psycho-sociolinguistic influences of the phonemic realizations of letter <e>. One hundred examples were presented to demonstrate the patterns of the pronunciation of the letter <e>. Five patterns of intraference in the main, and interference, were thus established. The results and presentation reveal clear differences between the RP and ENEA variants of the realizations of the letter <e>. The proposal is that the ENEA variants should be taught alongside the RP variants if the teachers know them because the ENEA examples is prestigious in Nigeria, socially acceptable, mutually intelligible nationally and internationally.

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