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**OF ENGLISH, LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

*The Ethiopie Journal of English, Literary, and Cultural Studies* (ISSN: 0795-5413) is an interdisciplinary journal that explores topical and generative issues in English linguistics and literary and cultural studies. We recognise that African humanities research is both problem-based and knowledge oriented, and we aim to provide a platform for scholars to analyse and theorise Africa in a way that is generative, conversational, and decolonial. Specifically, the journal focuses on both the analytical and theoretical approaches to knowledge production in the context of Africa and the Global South. We want to curate papers that are hinged on African indigenous paradigms and approaches or that seek to extend, reimagine, or contextualise current theoretical or analytical approaches in English language studies and literary and cultural studies.

We invite papers that dwell on all aspects of English language studies, including phonetics/phonology, semantics, syntax, discourse analysis, pragmatics, stylistics, ESL, ESP, etc. We also welcome papers that theorise literary and cultural texts, including film, still and moving images, music and dance, photographs, cultural objects, spaces and places, society and social formations, and other relevant corpora. While we accept purely analytical essays, we encourage authors to focus on theorising the texts or data they engage with. In particular, we welcome theoretical conversations that implicate postcolonial subjecthood, ecocritical approaches (especially postcolonial ecocriticism), feminism and gender studies, new trends in linguistics, object-oriented criticism and approaches, and other generative approaches to knowledge production. Authors are encouraged to do original theorisation rather than adopt extant theoretical frameworks. They may also extend the scope of extant theories and approaches based on the material they present and discuss.

Furthermore, papers with interdisciplinary approaches are also welcomed. We recognise that knowledge production is an elastic phenomenon, and that bright ideas might implicate various fields. Interesting multi-modal, eclectic, or collaborative research is encouraged in this journal.

## **JOURNAL POLICY**

The *Ethiope Journal of English, Literary and Cultural Studies* is published biennially by the Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. All papers submitted to this journal will undergo double-blind peer review before publication. Published papers are well-researched, original, and data-driven.

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The submitted manuscript which should not exceed 7000 words should be typeset in MS Word Times New Roman Font 12, with double line spacing. The first page should include the title of the manuscript, name(s), and institutional affiliation/address, abstract (not more than 250 words and with not more than six keywords). Manuscripts should conform to the current APA or MLA style sheet. Author(s) of published papers will derive the benefits from peer-review of contributions by seasoned scholars, global visibility, and receipt of hard copies as well as soft copies of their papers.

The papers in this edition of the journal cut across disciplines in cultural, and media studies and sub-disciplines in English and literary studies. The contributors include seasoned and renowned scholars of international repute and young astute scholars with a burning desire to excel in academics. It is pertinent to note that the journal accepts contributions from scholars and researchers across the globe. We believe that articles in this volume will be of immense interest to researchers and students.

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## CROSS-DIATOPIC INTELLIGIBILITY OF ASPECTS OF SNE LEXICOSEMANTICS

**Emmanuel Ogheneakpobor Emama**

### **Abstract**

Diatopic socio-semiotic variables exert significant lexicosemantic and interpretive influences on the cross-national intelligibility of English. This paper investigates the intelligibility of aspects of the lexicosemantics of Standard Nigerian English (SNE) to educated Ghanaian users of English. Fifty-nine lexical units of SNE lexicosemantics constitute the test items. Data was generated from two hundred and forty-three educated users of standard Ghanaian English. With insights from Variationist and Ideational theories, the analysis of the data shows that the intelligibility of aspects of SNE lexicosemantics is facilitated by (1) the operative morphological process and (2) the influence of mercantile, political, notoriety, and educational salience that underpin the test items and (3) semantic exclusivity and (4) aspects of socio-cultural convergence.

**Keywords:** non-native varieties, semantic exclusivity, lexicosemantics, meaning saliences, intelligibility, Nigerian English.

### **Introduction**

The role of English in global communication, science and technology, socio-cultural relations, and international business has made the language the dominant linguistic code in diverse Western and non-Western contexts. The spread of the language has generated ancillary linguistic, political, socio-cultural, literary, and educational issues. Debates on the status of the language on the native/non-native cline, its role in cross-cultural communication, and the link between English and identity have generated significant scholarly research.

Additionally, the international intelligibility of the language is also a matter of concern. Not surprisingly, the sociolinguistic literature is inundated by various theories and models to explain the spread, variation, and use of English worldwide.

English is categorised using two paradigms. The first subsumes varieties acquired as Mother Tongue and used as the primary language of a country's population. American and British English fall into this category. This group also includes Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This group, except British and American English, is also classified as 'settlement areas'. The second class denotes varieties used as a second language (L2) for national and international communication in multilingual speech communities with indigenous languages with marked functional domains. In the L2 context, English assumes prominent official functions in politics, media, jurisprudence, education, and other formal domains. Indian, Nigerian, and Singaporean English are a few examples. The third class incorporates varieties used as foreign languages exclusively for international communication with no recognised internal official roles. Here, the value of English is driven by its international utility value: the press, tertiary education, business, the sciences, and technology. This category includes English in China, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France.

Another categorisation paradigm is Kachru's 'Three Circles' model (1986, 1992), usually portrayed graphically as three partially overlapping circles. In classificatory terms, it is similar to English as the Mother Tongue (EMT), English as a Second Language (ESL), and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This model distinguishes countries as belonging to an 'Inner Circle', 'Outer Circle', and 'Expanding Circle'. What distinguishes the models is primarily Kachru's rejection of the claim that only the native varieties are acceptable. Kachru's objection responded to Quirk's (1992) assertion that only native English, specifically British and American English, should be used in formal international discourse and described the call for including non-native varieties as "half-baked quackery". Kachru's rejection of the a priori prominence accorded inner circle English at the expense of outer circle English was based on the

sociolinguistics of the collective ownership borne out of the reality that the most vigorous expansions and developments of the language occur in outer circle Englishes. He concludes that the norms and standards of English as an international language should be determined by synthesising the communicative needs of inner and outer circle users. The unequal access to non-native Englishes English lexicography exacerbates the lexicosemantic distinctiveness of outer circle Englishes with significant implications for cross-cultural discourse and cross-variety intelligibility (Maledo & Emama, 2020; Maledo & Emama, 2022).

### **Review of Literature**

Current sociolinguistic research is devoid of the native/non-native supremacy debates but is driven by the many fascinating sociolinguistic variegations that the language continues to engender. Thus, investigative resources are being expended on examining the role of English in language endangerment (Emama, 2022; Alzaben, 2019), in contact linguistics (Ajewole-Orimogunje, 2013; Bolton & Meierkord; 2013), in cross-cultural communication (Emama. 2017; Emama, 2020; Mowarin & Emama, 2020; Drewry et al., 2019; Alo, 2020; Maledo, (2012), Baker, 2018), in pedagogy (Vodopija-Krstanovi & Marinac, 2019; Arta et al., 2019), and its overarching role in globalisation.

Arising from its global value in communication, the problem of international intelligibility of aspects of the lexico semantics of outer and expanding Englishes has also attracted the attention of scholars. Intelligibility refers to a listener's ability to comprehend a speaker in a particular situation at a specific moment (Kenworthy, 1987). Intelligibility is thus connected to the number of words a listener interprets accurately. Smith's (1992) tripartite division of features of intelligibility to encompass intelligibility (word/ utterance recognition), comprehensibility (word/ utterance meaning), and Interpretability (meaning behind the word) provides the most elaborate of what intelligibility entails. Smith's description of intelligibility underscores two primary challenges of investigating intelligibility across the English language continuum. First, his three-

way features of what constitutes intelligibility underscore the complex variegations of meaning-making – from surface grammatical meaning to the pragmatic- a language system employs to create meaning. Second, it exposes the peculiar challenges of intelligibility imposed by non-isomorphic relations inherent in the socio-cultural differences between native and non-native language varieties. Those differences create strictures to international intelligibility of non-native Englishes, primarily because of the socio-semiotic influences that substrate languages exert on meaning-making in diatopic Englishes.

In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, the challenge of intelligibility between diatopic varieties and native Englishes has been investigated in the Nigerian, Cameroonian, and Kenyan contexts context at the phonological and lexicosemantic levels (Emama, 2019; Emama, 2018; Atechi, 2006). Much of the research on the cross-variety intelligibility of English is skewed in favour of testing the extent to which the speech of native speakers is intelligible to users of English in the outer and expanding circles. Thus, inner circle standards are constants, the primary consideration on which cross-variety intelligibility is tested. Few, except Atechi (2006), Tiffen (1974), Benrabah (1987), Gallego (1990), Munro & Derwing (1999), and Hahn (2004), have tested the intelligibility of the language using two-sided cross-diatopic parameters. The bias for inner circle Englishes in the studies that test cross-variety intelligibility of international native Englishes may not be unconnected to the prestige factor and the erroneous notion that all non-native Englishes are alike. Unsurprisingly, fewer studies are conducted to test the intelligibility of non-native varieties of English outside the shadow of inner circle parameters.

Therefore, This study is motivated by the need to fill the gap in the literature by testing the intelligibility of aspects of the lexicosemantics of Standard Nigerian English to educated Ghanaian users of English with Standard British English/Standard American English serving merely as tools for evaluating preponderance of interpretations. Given that the lexicosemantics of outer circle Englishes do not enjoy commensurate inclusion into the

lexicography of international English, word meaning in ESL English is primarily fixed by mental communal codification. Following the preceding observation, this study examines the extent to which the lexicosemantics of SNE are intelligible to the educated Ghanaian user of English. The study will also evaluate the influence of the considerable cross-national contact and socio-cultural linkages between Nigeria and Ghana. Given the significant cross-national contact, the study will also evaluate the influence in enhancing the intelligibility of the test items.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research adopts Labov's Variationist sociolinguistics as the theoretical framework. Variationist sociolinguistics is a helpful framework for understanding how sociolinguistic forces (contact situation, influence of substrates, and variations in communicative needs) engender diatopic variations. Additionally, the choice of Variationist sociolinguistics is determined by several considerations. First, English overwhelmingly occurs in the context of bilingualism and multilingualism. These contexts usually stimulate variations in phonology, lexico-semantic usages, syntax, and pragmatics. Thus, English is increasingly being studied, not in isolation, but within the multilingual contexts within which it has become interwoven. The implication is that whenever we look at English, we inevitably look at the other languages with which it co-exists and the linguistic pull they exert on all aspects of ESL linguistic competence.

Again, given that this research investigates variation in intelligibility arising from divergent semantic usages in SNE compared to other diatopic varieties, variationist sociolinguistics provides several tools expedient to studying diatopic variation from the phonological to the semantic. The Variationist concept of 'marking' is instrumental in explaining variation. 'Marked' usages (phonological, semantic, and pragmatic) in the Kachruvian outer circle varieties of English are significant because the influence of unique ESL geographical and socio-cultural forces engenders them. Consequently, variations in the lexico-semantics of Standard Nigerian English are 'markers' of its distinctiveness within the

continuum of world English.

Given that this study is meaning-driven, underpinned on the intelligibility of SNE lexicosemantics, primarily expressed in lexical units, it will be necessary also use a theory of lexical semantics to delimit areas of meaning convergences and differences cross-diatonically. Consequently, the ideational theory of meaning will be used to determine the comparative meanings of the test items across the SNE/SBE continuum. The ideational theory of meaning was propounded in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the British empiricist philosopher John Lock. Ideational theory is underpinned primarily by two central tenets. First, it is mentalistic. The theory posits that meaning is a mental attribute; meaning originates in the mind as ideas. Lexical units or expressions, therefore, have distinct meaning(s) because they are associated with ideas and mental images. Words are, therefore, symbolic signs of communication. Second, successful communication occurs at the lexical and sentence levels when the words generate the same ideas in the speaker's and hearer's minds (Lyons, 1981; Kempson, 1977). The ideational theory makes no attempt at defining the semantics of words or expressions in terms of their associations with objects in the physical world but in terms of a continuum of meanings ascribable to a lexical item. Additionally, all the gamut of thoughts, ideas, feelings, inferences, images, and concepts that are mentally associated with the word constitute the semantics.

Like other theories of meaning, the ideational has its drawbacks. Chief is the claim that it is abstract because of the reliance on mental images for deciphering lexical meaning. There may be no one-to-one correspondence between the mental images, thoughts, and concepts in the speaker's and hearer's minds. However, it should be noted that powerful sociolinguistic forces exert unifying influences on lexical meaning within a defined speech community. First, coined words and neologisms are not immediately absorbed into the language's lexicon but are processed by communal filters. This process ensures that meaning nuances intrinsic to every lexical item are adequately dispersed within the speech community. As a result, the collective communicative needs that underpin all language systems entrench

and diffuse aspects of meaning germane to all users and filter out idiolectal peculiarities of meaning. Thus, communal socio-semiotics are supreme (Halliday, 1985). From the preceding, all competent language users can make synonymous meaning distinctions due to shared social semiotics.

## **Materials and Methods**

Ninety lexical items of SNE lexicosemantics constitute the test items. The test items are derived from SNE semantic extensions, affixations, blends/coinages, and aspects of SNE pragmatic meaning. The test items presented are presented within the framework of sentences that eliminate meaning ambiguity to ensure the validity of the responses to the research parameters. Questionnaires and tests, the primary means of data collection, were administered to Ghanaian acquaintances through several social media channels cultivated over many years. The challenge of proximity made this mode of administration inevitable. Educated Ghanaian users of English constitute the study population. Responses received from four hundred and forty-three were successfully retrieved (two hundred and three from those meant to test the international intelligibility of SNE. The respondents were selected based on their level of education. The participants are all graduates or undergraduates of tertiary institutions. The level of education is the most crucial variable in this study. The high level of education of the participants should provide the academic wherewithal to enable them to decipher the illocutionary force embedded in the test items.

## **Statistical Procedure**

Simple statistics describe features of the data generated from the questionnaires. Simple statistics, in addition to charts, are used to provide summaries of the linguistic features being investigated. The peculiar nature of the data gathered by dint of the questionnaire lends itself to statistical calculation using simple percentages. Since respondents can provide more than one interpretation (maximum of three) of the test items in the questionnaire, each response is calculated and scored based on the cline of acceptability of the



response.

### **Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion**

The data presented in Tables 1A, 1B, 2, 3, and 4 detail the intelligibility of the lexico semantics of standard Nigerian English to educated users of Ghanaian English. Each table is designed to test the intelligibility of the lexico semantics derived from semantic extension (table 1), affixation (table 2), coinages/blends (table 3), and aspects of SNE pragmatic meaning (table 4). The responses received for each test item are counted and calculated based on whether the meaning is underpinned by International or SNE English. The delimitation of the underlying morphological process is to expedite comparative analysis of the influence of the method on cross-variety intelligibility.

Tables 1A and 1B indicate that forty-three (43) test items were used to test the intelligibility of semantically extended lexical units of Standard Nigerian English to educated Ghanaian respondents. The statistics indicate that educated users of standard Ghanaian provided interpretations that are 38% underpinned on SNE meaning. The test items had variegations of meaning convergence with SNE meanings. Some test items, corner mates, flit, dub, gallops, cross carpet, mobile, data, cross carpet, purge, and issues, were unintelligible to educated Ghanaian respondents. Those test items generated zero interpretations from the study population. The primary reason for the complete lack of meaning convergence of the zero test items is the total absence of linkages between the collocational range of the test items and every conceivable meaning relation in international English. The preceding renders lexicographical resources ineffective.

### **Semantic Exclusivity**

The sentences (1, 2, and 3) illustrate the semantic exclusivity of aspects of semantically extended Standard Nigerian English usage and the SNE meaning exclusivity imposed on the interpretation of 'purge' 'issues' 'flit' and 'gallops' in the sentences below.

1. She delivered four **issues** before the divorce
2. He insisted that the hotel attendant must **flit** the room
3. Many Nigerian roads are full of gallops

In international English, the three text items above possess meanings different from those imposed by Standard Nigerian English in the sentences above. In international English (1) has meanings that include 'an important topic or problem for debate, supply/distribute an item for use, but never the sense of 'children' as used in (1). In international English, (2) is used concerning insects or birds to describe their swift or rapid movement and, informally, to mean changing home to avoid creditors. It does not carry the sense of 'fumigate' as used in Standard Nigerian English. Gallops (3) SNE means portholes/depression on roads caused by wear or sinking but means 'the pace of a horse or human. The context of use in the examples above renders the interpretation of meaning outside the SNE context impossible.

**Table 1A: Semantic extensions supply**

SN	Test items	No. of interpretations	Int. English	SNE	Diatopic %	
					Int. Eng.	SNE
1	Blocking	48	48	0	100%	0%
2	Go slow	29	29	0	100%	0%
3	Introduction	15	14	1	95%	7%
4	National cake	22	0	22*	0%	100%
5	Carryovers	35	35	0	100%	0%
6	Flirt	62	58	4	94%	6%
7	Underworld	23	23	0	100%	0%
8	Settle down	44	44	0	100%	0%
9	Flit	0	0	0	0%	0%
10	Bushman	49	0	49	0%	100%
11	Back	31	31	0	100%	0%
12	Lesson	12	11	1	91%	9%
13	Mobile	0	0	0	0%	0%
14	Yahoo	71	9	62*	13%	87%
15	Yahoo plus	66	11	51*	23%	77%
16	Cross carpet	0	0	0	0%	0%
17	Data	61	61	0	100%	0%
18	Corner mates	0	0	0	0	0%
19	Dub	0	0	0	0%	0%
20	Backyard	66	22	44	33%	67%
21	Scaled through	46	19	27*	43%	57%
22	Estacode	47	0	47*	0%	100%
23	Garage	69	68	1	100%	0%

#### Sources

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## Saliency-driven Intelligibility

On the other hand, interpretations of some of the test items converged with their SNE semantically extended meanings. Examining those test items indicates the positive influence of different kinds of saliences, economic, political, and notoriety, attached to some test items. The term 'saliency' refers to the property in a stimulus of standing out from the rest. Salient items or features that are attended to are more likely to be perceived, and are more likely than others to enter into subsequent cognitive processing and learning (Boswijk & Coler, 2020). The preceding may explain why test items largely devoid of saliency (flit, gallop, data, vacate, vendor) presented the highest percentage of interpretive challenges to the study population. The highest percentage of SNE-underpinned meanings are found in the test items that are educationally, politically, and economically salient. The saliency of notoriety, for want of a better term, was also a significant factor.

**Table 1B: Semantic Extension**

SN	Test Items	Number of interpretations	Int. English	SNE	Diatopic %	
					Int. Eng.	SNE
24	Query	34	34	0	100%	0%
25	Foam	28	18	10*	64%	36%*
26	Attachment	31	31	0	100%	0%
27	Decamped	38	22	16*	58%	42%
28	Light	26	11	15*	43%	57%
29	Gallops	0	0	0	0%	0%
30	Issues	0	0	0	0%	0%
31	Purge	0	0	0	0%	0%
32	Short time	34	34	0	100%	0%
33	Celebrant	40	21	15*	62%	38%
34	Molue	23	0	23*	0%	100%
35	Tokunbo	24	0	24*	0%	100%
36	Impeachment	28	28	0	100%	0%
37	Defected	34	26	8	76%	24%
38	Put to bed	17	0	17*	0%	100%
39	Maradona	8	0	8	0%	100%
40	Belgium	36	12	24*	33%	67%
41	Settled	26	15	11	58%	42%
42	Toasted	0	0	0	0%	0%
43	Pure water	49	20	29	41%	59%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,286</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>38%</b>

The salience attached to semantically extended SNE test items: foam, light, molue, tokunbo, Belgium (economic salience), yahoo, yahoo plus (notoriety), National cake, estacode, decamp, impeachment (political salience), Yahoo, Yahoo plus (notoriety salience) and celebrant (social salience) explains the intelligibility of the test items to educated Ghanaian users of English. The internet has revolutionised mercantile activities and news dissemination and has expedited the dispersal of diatopic socio-semiotics by serving as a broad lexicographical resource. Nigerian users provide online adverts and news items that perform a general lexicographical function to the study population. Thus, some of the respondents were able to correctly interpret Yahoo/Yahoo Plus (SNE: online and shaman-aided scam), national cake/estacode (SNE: national wealth/travelling allowances), tokunbo/molue/light/foam (SNE: used car/bus for public transport/electricity/mattress) and celebrant (SNE: one who celebrates a birthday or some other achievement). Limited post-data collection interviews and online research show that e-resources aided some respondents.

The significant cross-country contact between Nigeria and Ghana may partly explain the intelligibility of SNE semantically extended test items. For instance, Blench (2006) has many instances of meaning convergences in the standard Ghanaian and Nigerian English lexicon. He says, "one of the surprising things about Ghanaian English is the extent to which it has a common lexicon and grammar with other West African Englishes, notably Nigerian". Similarly, Atechi (2010) posits that cross-variety intelligibility of English is a minor problem within West Africa. He concludes by observing that there are more significant cross-variety intelligibility challenges between West African Englishes, on the one hand, and East and Southern African Englishes, on the other hand. However, this research suggests that salience and the general lexicographical function of the internet are plausible factors in the cross-variety intelligibility of West African Englishes.

### Affixation-driven intelligibility

As indicated in Table 2, all affixation-based SNE lexicosemantic usages received 100% SNE-underpinned interpretations despite having no helpful lexicographical resources.

**Table 2: Affixation**

SN	Test item	Number of Interpretations	Int. Eng	SNE	Diatopic %	
					Int. Eng	SNE
1	Hijabist	67	0	67	0%	100%
2	Disvirgin	57	0	57	0%	100%
3	Instalmentally	56	0	65	0%	100%
4	Occultic	33	0	33	0%	100%
5	Academician	31	21	10	68%	32%
6	Plumpy	26	0	26	0%	100%
7	Matured	34	0	34	0%	100%
8	Opportuned	21	0	21	0%	100%
9	Trafficated	32	0	32	0%	100%
10	Cultism	40	0	40	0%	100%
11	Guyish	51	0	51	0%	100%
12	Buharist	65	0	65	0%	100%
13	Confusionist	34	0	34	0%	100%

The interpretation of these test items has been expedited by the interpretive context provided by the bound morphemes coupled with the influence of the lexicographical listing of the stems to which the meaning-changing affixes were attached. Of the thirteen test items that are affixation-underpinned, twelve: **hijabist**, **disvirgin**, **intalmmentally**, **occultic**, **academician**, **plumpy**, **matured**, **opportuned**, **trafficated**, **cultism**, **guyish**, and **confusionist**, have stems that have lexicographical entries in international English dictionaries. Meaning interpretation of these test items was therefore facilitated by the availability of lexical entry and the respondents' knowledge of the meanings of the bound morphemes. Of the thirteen affixation-underpinned test items, only **buharist** enjoys the salience-based (political) interpretive influence of its stem.

### Pragmatic Meaning.

Four test items are employed to test the intelligibility of aspects of the pragmatic meaning of standard Nigerian English to educated users of Ghanaian English. These test items are **head**, **people**, and **touched**. The purpose is to determine how international respondents can decipher the pragmatic meaning embedded with the test items used in the questionnaire.

**Table 3: SNE Pragmatic Meaning**

SN	Test item	Number of Interpretations	Int. Eng	SNE	Diatopic %	
					Int. Eng.	SNE
1	Touched	31	22	11	67%	33%
2	People	51	10	41	16%	84%
3	Head	63	9	54	25%	75%

In standard Nigerian English, the head and people reflect aspects of pragmatic meaning underpinned by aspects of the religious beliefs of Nigerians. Head and people are pragmatically extended to mean 'destiny' or 'fate' and 'witches' in examples 4 and 5 below.

1. My head rejects it.
2. His village people killed him because he bought a new car.

On the other hand, the test items (**touched**) employ an indirectness strategy to avoid direct reference to sex or genitalia-related topics in example 6 below.

3. Her mother persistently demanded to know whether he touched her.

The data indicate that SNE pragmatic meaning, especially the test items based on aspects of culture and religion (head/people), are highly intelligible to the educated Ghanaian user of English. For instance, those test items received the highest SNE-convergent interpretations (51 and 61) from the study population. This is unsurprising as several Ghanaian and Nigerian languages share deep cultural ties from shared ancestry. For instance, Steven and Falola (2002) state that Ghanaian languages, such as Ewe, Ga, and Tabon, are derived from the Yoruba language. Even before pre-colonial times, significant cross-ethnic migration is a powerful dispersal influence of both countries' non-religious/cultural components of diatopic socio-semiotics. The preceding explains the significant intelligibility of the SNE-underpinned meanings of some of the test items. Recently, an increasing number of Nigerians have become residents in Ghana, a preferred destination for those who engage in internet-enabled fraud, popularly known as **Yahoo** in Nigeria. Another attraction Ghana holds to many Nigerian youths is the conviction that the most potent spiritualists who facilitate the acquisition of wealth (Yahoo Plus) are found in Ghana. Thus, the constant emigration of Nigerians to Ghana for savoury and

unsavoury reasons and the dynamics of shared socio-political and cultural experiences have facilitated the steady transfer of aspects of SNE meaning to the Ghanaian linguistic space.

The emergence of modern English owes a lot to technology. The invention of the printing press standardised English orthography and eliminated the spelling chaos prevalent in the Middle English period. Subsequent technological inventions, the radio, telegraph, television, and cable television, exerted telling influences on the development of English, especially concerning the rapid dispersal of coinages. More than any other invention, the emergence of the internet has geometrically influenced the development and dispersal of diatopic Englishes. The globalising effect of English and the effect of globalisation on the English language is significantly internet-driven. The internet obviates the traditional strictures prevalent in the print media and empowers the educated user of any diatopic variety of English with unparalleled freedom to disperse diatopic socio-semiotics beyond national boundaries. This explains why salient test items, directly borrowed from the substrates, are intelligible to the study population.

## **Conclusion**

Mutual intelligibility between all standard varieties of English, especially at the lexicosemantic level, ultimately depends on the availability of all-inclusive lexicographical reference materials. The publication of a comprehensive dictionary of Nigerian English may be of limited usefulness without some form of non-prescriptive collaboration between English-speaking countries. The usefulness of the internet in expediting cross-variety intelligibility has already been established in this study. Consequently, the availability of online lexicographical information on the lexicosemantic usages of standard Nigerian English should aid international intelligibility. The potential that the internet offers in aid of the international intelligibility of SNE will only be fully utilised if two conditions are met. First, it has to be comprehensive. Second is the need for supervision by organisations with the requisite linguistic knowledge.

In the absence of a dictionary of Nigerian English of international

renown, one of the main impediments to the international intelligibility of standard Nigerian English, compared to BrE and AmE, is the need for comprehensive online lexicographical resources. The world is increasingly becoming ICT-reliant for information. As a result, the intelligibility of the lexicosemantic usages of non-native varieties of English is increasingly becoming Google-reliant. Therefore, the intelligibility of Nigerian English can be improved upon if a concerted effort is made to provide a comprehensive online lexicographical reference database. Relevant research associations such as the Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN) and the English Studies Association can spearhead this endeavour.

Many languages with international utility value have adopted two basic approaches to ensure, among other things, cross-topic intelligibility. First is establishing language academies and standardisation institutions that exert regulatory powers over such languages. For instance, French is regulated by the Académie Française. The academy is saddled with the task of maintaining the standard of the language by ensuring adherence to definite rules meant to preserve its purity and eloquence. Portuguese has the "Lisbon Science Academy Class of Letters" and the "Brazilian Academy of Letters" located in Portugal and Brazil, respectively. Urdu, Chinese, Spanish, and others have academies that, among other functions, regulate the inclusion of unentrenched lexical items into the lexicons of those languages. Some of these academies are not devoid of political intrigues. For instance, political considerations necessitated the establishment of disparate language academies for China/Taiwan, India/Pakistan, Portugal/Brazil, and France/Canada.

The second approach is that of cooperation largely devoid of political undertones. For instance, the Rat für deutsche Rechtschreibung (Council for German Orthography) facilitates cooperation in matters relating to the German language. It covers Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and other German-speaking communities of South Tyrol in Italy and Belgium. Other languages that have established cooperative language academies include Swahili, Persian, Arabic, and Spanish. The Baraza la



Kiswahili la Taifa (National Swahili Council), domiciled in Tanzania, regulates Swahili in Tanzania and Kenya. The Persian Language Academy covers Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Uzbekistan.

English language, the world's foremost international language, has no regulatory body. Paradoxically, the lack of regulation is why it has become the unrivalled linguist superpower of the modern world. English speakers rely on dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster's and Oxford English dictionaries. The absence of a regulatory academy for the English language is part of the reason for its emergence as the lingua franca of the world and the reason why it may possess the greatest challenge of cross-diatopic intelligibility.

Cross-variety challenges can be obviated mainly by some form of international cooperation between relevant bodies in the English-speaking world. In every language system, lexical units are the primary carriers of intelligibility. International cooperation, aiming to enhance mutual intelligibility at the lexical level, will optimise the utility value to all the federating units. This requires a comprehensive analysis of standard national varieties of the English language. One primary aim of such an endeavour is establishing a Corpus of English as an international language. This undertaking will be huge, requiring the input of various disciplines, but there is no doubt that the topic is primarily one of sociolinguistics.

The emergence of English as an international language is a product of cultural diversity and not racial homogeneity. Second, new varieties of English took root in different sociolinguistic milieux because of the influence of substrate languages on English. Third, English is increasingly being used as a communication tool between people who use it as a second or foreign language. Third, undermining the norming influence of the native user, as some researchers have suggested, is equally unwise. Consequently, the challenges of international intelligibility of the English language can be better tackled if all users' input is considered. The result will be an international English that caters to all its users' communicative needs.

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