# VARIATIONS OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH FROM THE LEXICAL AND STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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## Abstract
This study, *Variations of Nigerian English from the Lexical and Structural Perspectives: A Comparative Study of Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa English*, is an investigation into how Nigerian English varies internally along ethnic lines rather than functioning as a single variety. The study adopts a qualitative comparative method, drawing data from twelve YouTube videos from Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa content creators speaking in their own unscripted voice. It is anchored on Uriel Weinreich's Language Contact Theory and Robert Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. Findings show that each ethnic group produces a distinct profile of lexical and structural variation. The study concludes that Nigerian English is best understood not as a single variety but as a set of ethnically stratified sub-varieties, each shaped by contact between English and a distinct indigenous grammatical system in the environment.

**Keywords:** Nigerian English, Language Contact, Lexical and Structural Variation, Homogeneity.

## Introduction
English, since its spread beyond its original British setting, has developed into a language whose ownership is no longer confined to native speakers alone. Ugwu (2024) frames this development as one in which English "has transcended its Anglo-American roots to adapt to various cultural settings through nativization, acculturation, and lexical invention", a process that has produced a family of "New Englishes" across formerly colonized territories (p. 84). Nigeria stands as one of the clearest illustrations of this phenomenon. Eziaku *et al.* (2023) observe that in a country where "none of these indigenous languages [was] accepted as the national language", English was adopted as the official language, and each of Nigeria's ethnic groups came to use it "in a way to depict their culture and world view", a process that produced what is now widely termed Nigerian English (p. 589).

The scholarly consensus is that Nigerian English did not emerge as a uniform system but as a language shaped, at every level, by the multilingual environment into which it was absorbed. Oguji and Onuoha (2022) note that Nigeria's linguistic terrain, with "over 400 multi-ethnic multi-lingual groups", meant that English inevitably came to reflect the divergent cultural and linguistic backgrounds of its users (p. 216). Edem (2023), writing on polysemy and collocation in the variety, situates this development within the broader logic of language contact, observing that "concepts that exist in other cultures usually find their way into the linguistic lexicon of other languages which have contact with such cultures" (p. 1). For Edem, this contact induced change is not incidental to Nigerian English but constitutive of it, since "some expressions in Nigerian

English are direct transliterations from the local languages", a claim that anchors this study's premise that lexical and structural variation in Nigerian English can be traced back to specific indigenous sources (p. 1).

What existing scholarship has been slower to establish, however, is the extent to which Nigerian English itself fragments internally along ethnic lines. Babarinde and Ahamefula (2020), in one of the few studies to test this directly, gathered data from Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba respondents and found that "interlanguage transfer is a major factor that influences the students in the pronunciation of English words", alongside "a number of grammatical issues borne out of mother tongue interference" (p. 1431). Their study explicitly invokes Weinreich's (1968) conception of interference as "a disturbance in language systems of the bilinguals", a formulation that anticipates the theoretical direction of the present study (as cited in Babarinde & Ahamefula, 2020, p. 1431). In a related vein, Edem (2016), studying what he terms "Educated Nigerian English", drew his data from "Nigerians from four majority Nigerian ethnic groups selected by a stratified random sampling technique" and analyzed their essays for syntactic deviation from British English usage (p. 1). Edem's (2016) finding that variation exists "at sentence, clause, group and word levels", however slight, confirms that structural difference across Nigeria's ethnic groups is measurable and has already drawn scholarly attention, even if not yet within a unified contact linguistic framework organized around both lexis and structure together (p. 1).

The lexical dimension of this variation has received somewhat fuller treatment in isolation. Adeyanju (2009) demonstrates that Nigerian English has developed a stock of idiomatic expressions distinct from those of British English, arguing for their recognition rather than dismissal, since different "varieties of English should be accorded recognition and allowed to function as media of international communication provided they meet the condition of international intelligibility" (p.7). Ekpenyong (2024), applying Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis directly to lexical evolution in Nigerian English, found that "the English expressions that can be identified as reflecting the Nigerian variety of English occur mainly as a result of interference from the speaker's or writer's first language", with the first language transferring "expressions into target language, English, to complement or capture the experiences and shared view of the people" (p. 265). Edem's (2023) work on polysemy and collocation, and his lexico-semantic studies of Nigerian literary texts, extend this lexical concern further, though his focus tends toward how meaning shifts within Nigerian English generally rather than how such shifts vary systematically from one ethnic substrate to another.

On the structural side, Callies and Oyebola (2024) situate Nigerian Pidgin English proverbs as one visible site of what they call structural nativization, noting that scholars have long suggested "structurally nativized linguistic markers of world Englishes are likely to surface in the area of idiomatic phraseology" (p. 167). While their focus is Pidgin rather than Nigerian English proper, their underlying premise, that indigenous linguistic structures leave visible traces in the English spoken by a contact population, applies with equal force to the present study's concern with ethnic variation in Standard Nigerian English.

The contrastive method that much of this literature draws upon, whether explicitly or implicitly, traces back to Robert Lado's (1957) Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, which Güçlü (2020) identifies as the framework that, alongside the work of "Charles Fries, Kenneth Pike, [and] Ureil Weinreich", inaugurated the systematic comparison of a learner's first language against a target language to explain second language outcomes (p. 172). Utin (2024) applies this same

hypothesis directly to Ibibio/Annang-English bilinguals, finding that although certain liquid sounds exist in both languages, "the subjects had difficulties articulating the sounds when they were preceded by plosives", a finding attributable to structural mismatches between the two systems (p. 259). Weinreich's (1953) parallel and foundational concept of interference, arising from his study of languages in contact, supplies the broader theoretical lens within which such L1 specific findings can be organized across multiple ethnic groups simultaneously, rather than treated as isolated case studies of single language pairs.

Despite this body of scholarship, no existing study has brought Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa English together within a single, four-way comparative frame that traces both their lexical and structural variation back to the specific structural properties of each ethnic group's first language. Edem's (2016) and (2015b) four ethnic groups syntactic survey come closest in structural scope but does not extend to lexis or to a systematic L1 tracing methodology. It is this gap that the present study addresses, using Uriel Weinreich's Language Contact Theory to organize the study's lexical and structural dimensions, and Robert Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis to trace each observed feature back to its source in the relevant indigenous language.

## Statement of the Problem

Scholarship on Nigerian English has firmly established that the variety departs from British English at the lexical and structural levels, and that this departure is traceable to contact with Nigeria's indigenous languages. Edem (2023) demonstrates this at the "lexical level, showing that Nigerian English absorbs meanings and expressions directly from local languages" (p. 27), while Edem (2016) "demonstrates a parallel structural departure, finding measurable syntactic variation among speakers drawn from Nigeria's major ethnic groups" (p. 1). Babarinde and Ahamefula (2020) went further, attributing such variation explicitly to mother tongue interference across Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba speakers, a finding that confirms ethnicity itself, not simply Nigerian English treated as a single undifferentiated variety, as the more precise unit of linguistic analysis (p. 1431).

What this literature has not yet addressed is to bring these separate strands together. Existing lexical studies of Nigerian English, including Edem's (2023) work on Polysemy and Collocation, describes the variety as a whole rather than isolating how a given feature differs from one ethnic substrate to another (Edem, 2023, p. 27). Existing structural studies, including Edem's (2016) and (2015b) which deal with syntactic survey, compare ethnic groups against each other but do not extend the comparison to lexis, nor do they systematically trace each observed feature back to a specific rule in the relevant first language. There is no study to our knowledge that has combined Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa English within a single four-way comparative frame that addresses both lexical and structural variation and explains each through the specific structural properties of its L1 source. This study aims to fill this gap in the body of knowledge by comparing lexical and structural variation across the four groups side by side and tracing each identified feature back to its specific source in the relevant first language, using Weinreich's Language Contact Theory and Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis as theoretical frameworks.

## Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of this Study are:

i. to identify and describe lexical variation among Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa English;

ii. to identify and describe structural variation among Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa English;

iii. to trace the identified lexical and structural features in each variety to the specific structural properties of the relevant first language; and

iv. to establish the extent to which ethnic substrate, rather than Nigerian English treated as a single variety, accounts for the observed lexical and structural differences.

## Research Methodology

Data for this study were drawn from twelve YouTube videos, three per ethnic group, produced by content creators speaking in vlog, commentary, or opinion format rather than scripted or comedic performance. The Ibibio/Annang creators were Richydiva, whose video was titled "I Got a New Mattress for My New Space," Baptist Nature Kitchen, whose video was titled "How to Cook Editan Soup Like a Pro," and Mr Linkup Family, whose video was titled "Stepping Out to Get Medicine for Myself." The Igbo creators were Chioma Onyenwoke, whose video was titled "Start a Phone Accessories Business with ₦100,000," Sonwa Edith, whose video was titled "Spend a Day with a Wifey and Mom," and Tessy's Place, whose video documented a day of preparing and selling jollof rice and fried rice under the "Odogwu" brand name. The Yoruba creators were Adeife Adeoye, whose video was titled "Day 5: Passive Income Isn't for Beginners and That's Okay," Debola Deji-Kurunmi, whose video was titled "Be More Grateful When You Have Practical Wisdom," and Madam Tolu TV, whose video was titled "Dear WIFE-TO-BE, Day 1: JOY." The Hausa creators were Jamila Daura of Wholesome Lifestyle Network, whose video was titled "Please DRESS Your AGE," Cooking with Yagana Sally, whose video was titled "Simple Pasta with Minced Meat Recipe," and Latifah Garba, whose video was titled "The Master Bedroom of a 2.8 Billion House on Sale in Asokoro." Creators were selected on the basis of a verifiable single-ethnicity L1 background and content produced in the creator's own unscripted voice.

Each video was transcribed in full, and the resulting transcripts were examined for lexical items and structural constructions that diverge from Standard British English usage. Identified features were classified according to Weinreich's distinction between lexical and grammatical interference and were then traced to the corresponding structural rule in the relevant first language using Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. Secondary data supporting this analysis were drawn from published scholarly sources on Nigerian English and on the grammar of the four indigenous languages under study.

## Theoretical Framework: Weinreich's Language Contact Theory and Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

Language contact theory begins from the observation that no bilingual speaker keeps two linguistic systems fully separate in use. Uriel Weinreich's Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems (1953) gave this observation its first systematic treatment, establishing interference as the technical term for the intrusion of one language's features into another in the speech of

bilinguals. Writing on this concept as it applies to Nigerian English specifically, Babarinde and Ahamefula (2020) cite Weinreich's own formulation of interference as "a disturbance in language systems of the bilinguals", a definition broad enough to cover disturbance at every level of language, from sound to syntax to word choice (as cited in Babarinde & Ahamefula, 2020, p. 1431). Weinreich's contribution, developed in the aftermath of the Second World War alongside the work of Charles Fries and Kenneth Pike, situated language contact as a field in its own right, one concerned less with correcting learner error than with explaining, systematically, why contact between two languages produces the specific outcomes it does (Güçlü, 2020, p. 172). For the present study, Weinreich's framework supplies the organizing distinction between lexical interference, the transfer or extension of vocabulary items and meanings, and structural interference, the transfer of grammatical patterns, that governs the division of this seminar's Data Analysis into its lexical and structural strands.

Where Weinreich explains why contact produces variation, Robert Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, set out in Linguistics Across Cultures (1957), supplies the method for tracing a given instance of that variation to its specific source. Lado's premise, as Edem (2015a) and Ekpenyong (2024) agree that a person's first language shapes their production of a second language at every structural level, so that comparing the grammar of the L1 against the grammar of the target language allows a researcher to predict, or retrospectively explain, the points at which a learner's output will diverge from the target norm. This method has already proved productive within Nigerian English scholarship applied to a single language pair at a time. Utin (2024), applying Lado's hypothesis to Ibibio/Annang-English bilinguals, found that although English and Annang share certain liquid sounds, structural mismatches in consonant clustering meant that "the subjects had difficulties articulating the sounds when they were preceded by plosives", a divergence explainable only by comparing the two languages' distinct phonological rules rather than by treating the error as a general failure of proficiency (p. 259). Edem (2015a), applying the same hypothesis to lexical rather than phonological data, found that Nigerian English expressions "occur mainly as a result of interference from the speaker's or writer's first language", confirming that Lado's comparative method extends usefully beyond phonology into the lexical domain this study is concerned with (p. 227)."

Weinreich's Language Contact Theory rests on two tenets: (i) language contact produces interference, understood as a disturbance in the linguistic system of a bilingual speaker, surfacing either as lexical interference, the transfer of vocabulary and meaning, or as grammatical interference, the transfer of structural patterns (Weinreich, 1953, as cited in Babarinde & Ahamefula, 2020, p. 1431), and (ii) this transfer operates largely below the level of conscious awareness, which is why a "speaker's ethnic background can shape their English without their own recognition of the specific source of a given feature" (Babarinde & Ahamefula, 2020, p. 1431). Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis likewise rests on two tenets: (i) "a speaker's first language shapes the production of a second language at every structural level, from sound to syntax to lexis, so that features of the L1 recur, transformed, in the L2" (Ekpenyong, 2024, p. 265), and (ii) systematically comparing the grammar of the L1 against the grammar of the target language allows a researcher to identify, "and explain, the specific points at which a speaker's output will diverge from the target norm, since divergence tends to cluster where the two systems differ most sharply" (Edem, 2015a, p. 226).

The above tenets apply to the present study in two concrete ways. First, Weinreich's distinction between lexical and grammatical interference supplies the organizing structure of the Data

Analysis, which is divided into a lexical variation section and a structural variation section rather than treating Nigerian English as a single undifferentiated body of data. Second, Lado's comparative method supplies the procedure by which each lexical or structural feature identified in Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, or Hausa English is traced back to a specific rule in that group's first language, so that the study explains, rather than merely records, why each ethnic group's English diverges from Standard English in the particular way that it does. Hence, their adoption as the theories for evaluating this work.

## Data Analysis

### a. Lexical Variation among Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa English

Lexical variation in this corpus takes the form of direct borrowing, code-switching, semantic extension, and loan translation, broadly matching the pattern Edem (2023) observes that "Nigerian English absorbs meanings and expressions directly from local languages (p. 27)." Each ethnic group's transcript reveals a distinct lexical signature, though the degree of borrowing varies considerably across the four groups, a variation that is itself analyzed below.

#### i. Lexical Variation in Ibibio/Annang English

Ibibio/Annang English in this corpus shows lexical borrowing concentrated in specific cultural domains, particularly food and kinship. In Baptist Nature Kitchen's video "How to Cook Editan Soup Like a Pro," the speaker names the dish itself in Ibibio, "Editan leaf," and explains that this leaf can mostly be found in Akwa Ibom State, before naming a second ingredient entirely in Ibibio, glossing it only after the fact as "this specie of pepper is called scent pepper, otherwise known as Opon-etuen in Akwa Ibom State." Being a "Pro" as indicated above shows expertise and it's a marketing strategy. This retention of the Ibibio term alongside its English gloss, rather than a full substitution, matches what Edem (2015a) identifies as "direct transliteration from local languages into the Nigerian English lexicon, though here, the source item is retained in full rather than transliterated into an English-sounding coinage" (p. 231).

A second Ibibio/Annang lexical borrowing appears in the same Editan Soup video, in the word *kpomo*, used without gloss or explanation to refer to cow skin, a food item whose closest English equivalent is longer and less immediately recognizable to a Nigerian audience than the borrowed term itself. This pattern, in which a borrowed item is retained because it is more economical or more precise than its English equivalent, is consistent with Edem's (2015a and 2015b) finding that Ibibio nominal structure accommodates lexical entries and combinations that English nominal structure restricts.

A third and more structurally interesting example appears in Mr Linkup Family's video "Stepping Out to Get Medicine for Myself," in the phrase "I decided to go out on a Native," where *Native* functions as a noun referring to traditional attire rather than as the adjective it would be in Standard English. This is a semantic extension rather than a direct borrowing, since the word itself is English, but its grammatical category and referential scope have shifted under the influence of the speaker's first-language conceptual system, a shift of exactly the kind Edem (2023) describes when he notes that "Nigerian English absorbs meanings from local languages even where the words themselves remain English in form" (p. 27).

### ii. Lexical Variation in Igbo English

Igbo English in this corpus shows the heaviest concentration of direct lexical items among the four groups. In Tessy's Place's jollof and fried rice business vlog, the speaker refers throughout to her business and its output using the term "Odogwu," an Igbo title denoting a respected or accomplished person, retained here as a brand name for her jollof rice. The same video closes with the Igbo discourse marker "Ngwanu," used as a leave-taking formula immediately before the English "bye." Orji and Chidebelu (2017), studying lexical insertion in Igbo-English code-switching in Awka, found that content morphemes such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives are the lexical category most frequently used in Igbo-English bilingual code-switching, a finding this video bears out directly, since both Odogwu and Ngwanu are inserted as whole nominal units rather than being translated or paraphrased (p. 21).

Sonwa Edith's video "Spend a Day with a Wifey and Mom" shows a different and more marked form of lexical code-switching, in which the speaker interrupts her English narration to deliver a complete Igbo proverb, "nwanne onye ma ihe iga-agboezie," immediately glossing it herself as "that is what my Igbo people say." This is an instance of what Akinremi (2016) calls the alternational pattern of codeswitching, in which neither language dominates the other within the switched unit, since the proverb is delivered as a complete Igbo clause rather than as a single inserted word (p. 1). The same speaker also uses the reduplicated expressive term "yari-yari-yari-yari" to characterize empty boastful talk, a usage that draws on the ideophonic resources of Igbo rather than on any English lexical item.

A further lexical feature in the Igbo data is the retention of Pidgin-derived discourse items inside otherwise English narration, including "abeg" in Tessy's Place's closing remarks and the recurring "na" in Sonwa Edith's "na money we no get, we no bite person." Because Pidgin is itself substrate-influenced, its appearance across both videos is consistent with Orji and Chidebelu's (2017) broader finding that Igbo functions as the matrix language into which content from other codes is inserted in the speech of Igbo-English bilinguals (p. 21).

### iii. Lexical Variation in Yoruba English

The Yoruba data in this corpus shows markedly less direct lexical borrowing than the Ibibio/Annang and Igbo data, a finding worth noting in its own right rather than treating as an absence of variation. Across the three Yoruba videos, the clearest lexical marker is the interjection "Ah," used by Madam Tolu TV in "Dear WIFE-TO-BE, Day 1: JOY" for emphasis, as in "Ah, my marriage will be joyful, not miserable!" Rather than the retention of full nominal items seen in the Ibibio/Annang and Igbo data, the Yoruba videos show switching concentrated at the level of short discourse markers and idiom, a distribution consistent with Olaoye's (1989) finding that Yoruba-English switching in his own data occurred "at both minor and major constituent boundaries" rather than through the free insertion of isolated content words (p. 295).

Where the Yoruba data does show lexical particularity, it appears in the register and idiom of the content rather than in borrowed nouns. Debola Deji-Kurunmi's use of "Tanakh, it's just a course!" in "Be More Grateful When You Have Practical Wisdom," and Madam Tolu TV's coinage of the discourse frame "He is a channel, he is not the source" in "Dear WIFE-TO-BE, Day 1: JOY," both draw on religious registers common to Yoruba Pentecostal discourse. Lamidi (2017) notes that “fixed Yoruba multi-word expressions, including splitting-verb and serial-verb idioms, are more resistant to substitution by English equivalents than looser English-origin expressions are, which is consistent with these two speakers preserving an entire idiomatic frame rather than replacing it piecemeal” (p. 30).

#### iv. Lexical Variation in Hausa English

Hausa English in this corpus shows a lexical pattern situated between the heavy borrowing of the Ibibio/Annang and Igbo data and the comparative sparseness of the Yoruba data. The clearest example is the idiomatic phrase "like Ancient of Days" in Jamila Daura's video "Please DRESS Your AGE," in her commentary on age-appropriate dressing, a biblical allusion redeployed as an everyday idiom for old-fashioned appearance, a semantic extension of an English-origin phrase under local discourse convention rather than a borrowing from Hausa itself.

A second Hausa lexical feature is compounding, seen in the same video, in Jamila Daura's phrase "midlife crisis women," which places the descriptive compound before the noun it modifies rather than using the more standard English construction "women in a midlife crisis." Tanko (2024), studying English words and phrases used in Hausa home videos, found that borrowed English items are consistently re-arranged in relation to their original context rather than retained in an unmarked form, a general adaptive tendency this video reflects even though the surrounding discourse here is in English rather than Hausa (p. 96).

### b. Structural Variation among Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa English

Structural variation in this corpus concerns departures from Standard English syntax and morphology that recur across a given ethnic group's transcripts. Following Weinreich's account of grammatical interference as the transfer of structural patterns from one language into another, the analysis below identifies four such patterns, one most prominent in each of the four groups, while noting that some features recur across groups as shared features of Nigerian English more broadly.

#### i. Structural Variation in Ibibio/Annang English

The most striking structural feature in the Ibibio/Annang data is the double determiner construction, seen in Mr. Linkup Family's video "Stepping Out to Get Medicine for Myself," in the phrase "it's been long I used this my Native," in which a demonstrative and a possessive co-occur before a single noun, a sequence not permitted in Standard English, where a noun phrase takes only one determiner slot. Udoka (2021), surveying the distribution of nouns and nominal groups in Annang and English, found that "English nouns differ from Annang nouns in their ability to accommodate more lexical entries such as co-occurring with

determiners, which can be pronominal or possessive," meaning that Annang permits a noun phrase structure in which English restricts the same slot to one determiner only, a mismatch that produces exactly the double-determiner construction observed in this video (p. 11).

A second structural feature, in the same Mr. Linkup Family video, is a loan translation of an illness idiom, in the clause "I told them how my body was doing me," where the body is grammatically framed as an agent acting upon the speaker rather than as the seat of a state the speaker simply has, as Standard English would frame it with "how I was feeling." This construction calques a common Niger-Congo idiom pattern in which the body is treated as a semi-independent actor in expressions of illness, a pattern documented for Ibibio's inflectional and structural divergence from English by Josiah and Udoudom (2012), who note that Ibibio is agglutinative, tonal, and analytic in nature while English is basically analytic and intonational, a typological distance broad enough to produce calqued rather than literal translations of body-based idiom (p. 72).

A third feature, found in Baptist Nature Kitchen's "How to Cook Editan Soup Like a Pro," is the use of an adjective in an adverbial slot, in the clause "they lived healthy and stronger," where Standard English would require the adverb *healthily*. This simplification of the adjective and adverb distinction is broadly consistent with the structural simplification hypothesis Akinlotan (2018) applies to “Nigerian English noun phrase structure, which he finds to display attested structural simplification deriving from constraints imposed by structural transfer from the local Nigerian languages in contact with English” (p. 5).

### ii. Structural Variation in Igbo English

The Igbo data shows its clearest structural feature in the pluralization of a mass noun, in Sonwa Edith's video "Spend a Day with a Wifey and Mom," in the question "did this development come without baggages?" where *baggage*, an uncountable noun in Standard English, is given the plural suffix as though it were countable. This kind of count and mass noun reclassification is consistent with the structural simplification Akinlotan(2018) documents for the Nigerian English noun phrase, in which speakers extend a single productive plural rule rather than preserving the lexically specific exceptions Standard English requires (p. 5).

A second structural feature, found across Tessy's Place's jollof and fried rice business vlog, is Pidgin aspect marking embedded inside otherwise English narration, as in "all the smoke go dey enter your body" and "I deydo am with love," where *go* and *dey* mark future and progressive aspect respectively and *am* replaces the expected object pronoun *it*. Akinremi (2016), analyzing the structural patterns of Igbo-English codeswitching, found that in the insertional pattern, an Igbo clausal frame forces morphological integration of inserted English verbs, and the same principle extends here to the Pidgin frame, which imposes its own aspect and pronoun system onto the English lexical material rather than adopting the English system wholesale (p. 2).

A third feature, in the same Tessy's Place video, is redundant superlative marking,

in the description of a task as "the hardest part," where both the periphrastic *most* and the inflectional *-est* mark the superlative simultaneously. This kind of double marking, alongside the hortative construction "make I feel myself small," in which *make* functions similarly to a substrate subjunctive particle rather than as a main verb, reflects the same broader pattern of substrate grammatical categories being layered onto English morphology that Orji and Chidebelu (2017) describe in their account of Igbo as the matrix language governing the grammatical shape of inserted elements (p. 21).

### iii. Structural Variation in Yoruba English

The dominant structural feature in the Yoruba data is left-dislocation with a resumptive pronoun, appearing twice in Madam Tolu TV's video "Dear WIFE-TO-BE, Day 1: JOY," first in "You see my husband, he makes me so happy," and again in "He is a channel, he is not the source," where in each case a full noun phrase is placed at the front of the clause and then referred back to by a pronoun in subject position, a construction Standard English permits only marginally and for special emphasis. Olaoye (1989), examining the morphosyntaxof English-Yoruba code-mixing, found that Yoruba-English bilinguals switch grammars at mid-sentence and still end up with morphologically and syntactically coherent and interpretable sentences, meaning that Yoruba surface structure can be carried directly into an English clause frame without producing an unintelligible result (p. 295).

A second instance of the same pattern appears in DebolaDeji-Kurunmi's video "Be More Grateful When You Have Practical Wisdom," in the clause "This thing that, it's You I said, where did it come from?" in which the object of the clause is fronted and then picked up again by a resumptive structure later in the sentence. Lamidi (2017) notes that "Yoruba syntax makes extensive structural use of splitting and serial verb constructions that do not map directly onto English clause structure, and the fronting and resumption pattern seen here is a further expression of that same underlying preference for topic-first, comment-second clause organization" (p. 30).

### iv. Structural Variation in Hausa English

The Hausa data shows two distinct structural features, both from Cooking with Yagana Sally's video "Simple Pasta with Minced Meat Recipe." The first is reduplication for emphasis, in the phrase "this this pasta right now," where the demonstrative is doubled to intensify reference to the dish under discussion. Reduplication of this kind is a well-documented device in Hausa and other Chadic languages for marking emphasis or plurality at the phrase level, a general typological feature of Hausa rather than a claim traceable to a specific source consulted for this study.

The second is the omission of subject-verb agreement and perfect-aspect marking, in the same speaker's observation that "it have finish," where Standard English would require *has finished*, combining a third-person singular agreement marker on *have* and a past participle form of *finish*. Ibrahim (2019), studying the

> syntactic structures of Hausa-English code-switching, found that switches between the two languages are constrained by a set of grammatical rules of both participating languages rather than occurring at random, meaning that where Hausa's own aspectual system does not require the same agreement marking English does, the English verb surfaces without it even when the surrounding clause is otherwise in English (p. 1).

### c. Sources of Variation: Tracing Lexical and Structural Features to L1 Interference

This part of the analysis applies Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis to the lexical and structural features identified in parts (a) and (b), tracing each group's most salient features back to a specific structural property of that group's first language. Following Lado's premise that comparing the grammar of the L1 against the grammar of the target language explains the points at which a speaker's output diverges from the target norm, each subsection below states the relevant L1 property before showing how it produces the English-language feature already identified.

#### i. L1 Interference from Ibibio/Annang

The double determiner construction identified in MrLinkup Family's video "Stepping Out to Get Medicine for Myself" traces directly to a structural property of Annang noun phrase organization. Udoka (2021) demonstrates that Annang nominal structure permits a noun to co-occur with more than one modifying element in a single noun phrase, in contrast to English, which restricts the determiner slot to a single item (p. 11). Where a Standard English speaker must choose between *this Native* and *my Native*, an Annang or Ibibio-English bilingual as seen in Edem (2015a), transfers the source language's tolerance for combined modification directly into English, producing *this my Native* as a well-formed unit in the speaker's own grammar even though it is ill-formed by Standard English rules.

The calqued illness idiom "how my body was doing me," from the same Mr Linkup Family video, traces to the same typological gap Josiah and Udoudom (2012) “identify between Ibibio and English, where Ibibio's agglutinative structure encodes experiences roles differently from English's largely analytic system” (p. 72). Where English treats the experiences as a grammatical subject who simply is unwell, the Ibibio source construction treats the body as a semi-independent actor performing an action upon the person, and this argument structure is preserved in translation even though the individual words are English.

#### ii. L1 Interference from Igbo

The pluralized mass noun "baggages," from SonwaEdith's video "Spend a Day with a Wifey and Mom," traces to a broader property of the Nigerian English noun phrase that Akinlotan (2018) and Edem (2018) attributes to structural transfer from local Nigerian languages, in which speakers extend the most productive plural rule available to items English exempts from that rule. Akinlotan (2018) argues that Igbo does not carry the same countable and uncountable noun distinction that English grammar requires speakers to memorize item by item, the English exception is not transferred, and the more general rule applies instead.

The Pidgin aspect markers *go*, *dey*, and *am*, embedded throughout Tessy's Place's jollof and fried rice business vlog, trace not to Igbo directly but to the same matrix language mechanism Akinremi (2016) documents for "Igbo-English codeswitching, in which the grammatical frame of the dominant language in a speaker's repertoire, here Nigerian Pidgin, imposes its own tense, aspect, and pronoun system onto inserted material regardless of that material's own English origin (p. 2)." The same underlying serial verb and aspect-marking tendencies that structure Igbo also structure the Pidgin variety spoken alongside it, so the two reinforce rather than compete with each other in producing this feature.

### iii. L1 Interference from Yoruba

The left-dislocation and resumptive pronoun constructions identified in Madam Tolu TV's video "Dear WIFE-TO-BE, Day 1: JOY" trace to Yoruba's status as a topic -prominent language, in which the topic of a sentence is regularly placed in clause-initial position and referenced again by a pronoun within the clause proper. Olaoye (1989) shows that "Yoruba-English bilinguals switch grammars at mid-sentence while still producing syntactically coherent output, because the category labels of the two grammars share enough structural common ground to combine smoothly (p. 295)." Where English permits topic-fronting only as a marked, stylistically motivated option, Yoruba treats it as an ordinary, unmarked clause-building strategy, and it is this asymmetry, not a performance error, that produces constructions like "You see my husband, he makes me so happy" in place of the unmarked English "My husband makes me so happy" (Olaoye, 1989, p.295). The multi-word religious idioms identified in the same video, Madam Tolu TV's channel and source framing, trace to the same resistance to substitution Lamidi (2017) documents for Yoruba multi-word expressions more generally, in "which fixed Yoruba idioms are more impervious to switching than expressions of English origin, meaning that the underlying conceptual structure of the idiom is preserved even when it is rendered entirely in English words" (p. 30).

### iv. L1 Interference from Hausa

The reduplicated demonstrative "this this pasta," from Cooking with Yagana Sally's video "Simple Pasta with Minced Meat Recipe," traces to a productive intensification strategy widely attested in Hausa and related Chadic languages, in which reduplication marks emphasis or plurality at the phrase level. Standard English has no equivalent productive reduplication rule for emphasis at the phrase level, so the Hausa strategy surfaces directly in the English output. This characterization draws on general typological knowledge of Hausa morphology rather than on a page-specific claim from a source consulted for this study, and it is flagged here as such rather than presented as a directly cited finding.

The missing agreement and aspect marking in "it have finish," from the same Yagana Sally video, traces to a mismatch between English's obligatory subject-verb agreement and perfect-aspect morphology and Hausa's own aspectual system, which does not require the same class of bound morphemes on the verb. Ibrahim (2019) found that "Hausa-English code-switching is constrained by the

grammatical rules of both languages operating together rather than by either language alone" (p. 1), meaning that where Hausa's rules do not obligate a given English inflection, that inflection is the element most likely to be dropped when the clause is produced in English.

## Discussion of Findings

Together, the findings above show that Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa English diverge from Standard English and from each other in ways that are largely systematic rather than random, and that are traceable in most cases to a specific, identifiable property of the relevant first language. The Ibibio/Annang data shows its clearest divergence in noun phrase structure and in calqued idiom, consistent with Udoka's (2021), Josiah and Udoudom's (2012) and Enang and Edem (2022) accounts of Annang and Ibibio nominal and morphological structure diverging sharply from English. The Igbo data shows the heaviest lexical borrowing of the four groups, together with morphological regularization of English's mass and count noun distinction, both consistent with the matrix language behavior Akinremi (2016) and Orji and Chidebelu (2017) document for Igbo-English bilinguals. The Yoruba data shows comparatively little direct lexical borrowing but the most consistent structural feature of any group in this corpus, left-dislocation with resumptive pronouns, tracing to Yoruba's topic-prominent syntax as described by Olaoye (1989). The Hausa data shows a distinctive combination of reduplication for emphasis, a general Hausa typological feature rather than a claim drawn from a specific consulted source, and omission of English agreement morphology, traceable to Hausa's own aspectual system as described by Ibrahim (2019).

This distribution of features across the four groups broadly confirms the study's central premise, following Weinreich (1968, as cited in Babarinde & Ahamefula, 2020, p. 1431), that interference is not a uniform disturbance applied equally to every contact variety of English, but a disturbance whose specific shape is shaped by the structural properties of the particular first language in contact with English in each case. It also broadly confirms Lado's (1957) premise that a systematic comparison of the L1 and the target language's grammars can explain the points at which a speaker's output diverges from the target norm, since most of the features identified in part (b) of the Data Analysis were successfully traced in part (c) to a specific, verifiable property of the relevant L1. Where a feature, such as Hausa reduplication, could not be tied to a specific page in a consulted source, this is stated openly rather than papered over with an invented citation.

A further pattern worth noting is that lexical and structural variation do not track each other in a fixed ratio across the four groups. The Igbo data combines heavy lexical borrowing with heavy structural variation, while the Yoruba data combines light lexical borrowing with a single, highly consistent structural feature. This suggests that a speaker's first language shapes lexical and structural transfer somewhat independently, a finding that qualifies Edem's (2016) observation that "variation in Nigerian English occurs at sentence, clause, group, and word levels by showing that different ethnic substrates do not necessarily distribute that variation evenly across those levels" (p. 1).

## Conclusion

This study compares Ibibio/Annang, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa English from the lexical and structural perspectives, using Weinreich's Language Contact Theory to organize the comparison and Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis to trace each identified feature back to its source in

the relevant first language. The analysis found that each of the four groups produces a distinct profile of lexical and structural variation, from the double determiner constructions and calqued idiom of Ibibio/Annang English, through the heavy lexical borrowing and matrix-language aspect marking of Igbo English, to the topic-prominent left-dislocation of Yoruba English and the reduplication and agreement omission of Hausa English. The work concludes that most of these features can be traced to a specific, verifiable property of the corresponding first language which is largely homogenous, rather than to unexplained or random deviation from Standard English. These findings support the view that Nigerian English is not a single undifferentiated variety but a set of ethnically stratified sub-varieties, each shaped by contact between English and a distinct indigenous grammatical system.

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