

A comparative analysis of morphosyntactic features of Nigerian English and Ghanaian English

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ABSTRACT: This study analyses aspects of lexis and morpho-syntax of Nigerian English and Ghanaian English. It also compares the data from the International Corpus of English (ICE), Nigeria and Ghana components respectively, that are used in the same or similar way in the two varieties. A total of fifty-three lexical items are analysed in this study. All the data were drawn from ICE Nigeria and Ghana respectively. Corpus linguistics was used as a method of data analysis. The AntConc software was used to authenticate the data that are present in both corpora. This study adopts an eclectic approach of Structural Semantics, alongside the theory of Contrastive Analysis (CA), using Bamiro's tools of lexico-semantic variation for the categorization of the data. The study also uses ideas from Jowitt for this morphosyntactic analysis. The study found out among other things that, some irregular plurals are made regular in NE and GhE (+,-) for example, "...look for qualified staffs...", "...top officials and other staffs who..." respectively. Also, uncountable nouns are frequently made countable and used in the plural: "advice, agenda, jewelry, offspring, property, machinery" in both varieties (+,-): "...we'll uphold your advices..." and "...selfish agendas...". This work has identified some NE and GhE morphosyntactic features/usages from ICE Nigeria and Ghana which have not been mentioned in existing works in NE and GhE. The study has further provided raw materials for researchers interested in the study of these two varieties and also West African English and is of immense importance to the development of NE and GhE lexicon. The study concludes that NE and GhE are separate varieties and have quite a number of distinctive features in common. These two varieties are not errors or deviations.

Keywords: Acrolectal, contrastive analysis, corpus linguistics, ICE, non-acrolectal, structural semantics.

INTRODUCTION

This study is a comparative study of the lexis and morphosyntax of Nigerian English (NE) and Ghanaian English (GhE), which are among the varieties of New Englishes. "World Englishes" is another concept used for emerging localised varieties of English (Schneider, 2003). The study discusses the distinctiveness of NE and GhE at the levels of areas of morphosyntax, lexis and discourse as discovered in the two corpora; ICE Nigeria and Ghana components. The study also investigates the similarities and differences between the morpho-syntax of the two varieties of English. This study is a milestone in the efforts towards the codification and standardisation of Nigerian English and Ghanaian English. This study derives its motivation from the fact that the two varieties, despite their

peculiarities still generate disagreements among scholars whom Jowitt (1991) regards as "accepters" and "rejecters" (p. 42).

Since every language is peculiar in its features, the analysis of one language or variety cannot be used for others. Contrastive studies of languages or varieties of languages are of great help to students of English and linguistics, helping them to better understand various aspects and concepts in the languages or varieties under study. This is because contrastive studies expose similarities and differences between languages or varieties that could pose difficulties in the teaching and learning of the target language.

Efforts have been made by various scholars, according

to Adegbite (2016), to prepare the ground in terms of defining terms and concepts, rather than carrying out the real research of lexicography and grammatical description (p. 33). He observes that the major tasks of codification and elaboration are the ones in current contention among scholars. According to Adegbite, the efforts made by scholars like Igboanusi (2002) in the compilation of distinctive NE expressions (which is perhaps the longest of all inventories), and Blench's (2005, 2006) draft compilations, among others, are quite commendable but there is still a need because the "search for a comprehensive dictionary still continues" (p. 34). Jowitt (1991) recognizes the limitations of previous efforts and asserts that:

The task of differentiating variants from errors – of deciding which usage should be lifted out of the category of (merely) 'popular' expressions and exalted to the status of standard, and so prescribed expressions – is thus an interesting one. It is invidious for an individual, however, even if that individual is a Professor of English, to start making solo pronouncements. The task is one of delicacy and needs to be carried out by a team of experts, not by an individual (p. 29).

Concerning GhE, Owusu-Ansah (1997) concludes that the "standard codification of GhE in the areas of lexis, syntax and phonology is required ... (p. 63). This present study is thus a response to Adegbite's, Jowitt's and Owusu-Ansah's call for both NE and GhE.

Wolf (2020) says that Ghanaian English diverges considerably from the common West African English (WAE) prototype (p. 201). This study investigates and contests this claim, with the intention of ascertaining whether or not the similarities between these two varieties are strong enough to consider them as varieties of an umbrella variety; West African variety. This is in line with Omoniyi's (2003) view, who stresses that West African varieties, though unique in their features, are potential dialects of an "umbrella variety" which is "West African English", and recommends that efforts should be intensified in the codification and standardization of this "umbrella variety".

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there seems at the moment to be no contrastive study between NE and GhE, especially one that focuses on both lexis and morphosyntax, using the ICE. Some previous studies in Nigerian English (Bamiro, 1994; Jowitt, 2019; Sey, 1973; Wolf, 2020), as observed by the researcher that focus on Lexical Semantics are either not comparative in nature or do not include morphosyntax. Some of the existing studies (Bambose, 1992; Anderson, 2009; Ngula and Nartey, 2016) also focus on English as a Second Language (ESL) situation and are prescriptive in approach. This research identifies and fills that gap. The major aim of this study is

to analyse some aspects of lexis and morphosyntax of Nigerian English and Ghanaian English. Its objectives include: identifying and describing the lexical and morphosyntactic features of NE and GhE in ICE Nigeria and Ghana; comparing the data from ICE Nigeria and Ghana respectively that are used the same or similar way in the two varieties and differentiating between entries that occur in acrolectal and non-acrolectal usages in ICE Nigeria and ICE Ghana respectively.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts an eclectic approach of Structural Semantics, alongside the theory of Contrastive Analysis (CA) for analysis. These two theories will be discussed below:

Structural semantics

Geeraerts (2010), in his text, presents the main ideas, landmark publications and also the dominant figures of five traditions relevant in Lexical-Semantics. They are: Historical-philological Semantics, Structuralist Semantics, Generativist Semantics, Neostucturalist Semantics, and Cognitive Semantics. Historical-philological Semantics according to Geeraerts, refers to the diachronic approach to lexical semantics which dominated the discipline from 1850- roughly 1930 (p.1). It is also referred to as the Prestructuralist diachronic semantics. The basic interest of Historical-philological Semantics lies in the concept of change of meaning and change in meaning is narrowed down to change in word meaning. Generativist Semantics dates back to 1960s. At the heart of the development of Generativist Semantics is the work of Katz and Fodor (1963). It was later developed by Katz (1972). It grew out of Structuralist Semantics. The aspects of Generativist Semantics were incorporated into Generative Grammar, especially the aspect of Componential Analysis. Katzian semantics took over the Chomskyan requirement that linguistic analyses be rigidly formalized (Geeraerts, 2010: p. 4).

Neostucturalist Semantics brings together the miscellaneous set of contemporary approaches that extrapolate the major types of Structuralist Semantics, but do so in a post-generativist fashion (Geeraerts 2010: p 124). These theories, however, build on structuralist ideas like decompositional or relational descriptions of semantic structure, but they do so with specific attention to the issues raised by Generativist Semantics. Cognitive Semantics is a sub field of cognitive linguistics, alongside cognitive approaches to grammar. Cognitive Linguistics, with the help of Cognitive Semantics gives an integrated view of language and thought. According to Patel (2016), it is important to note that a "model of meaning (cognitive semantics) has to be delineated before an adequate cognitive model of grammar can be developed" (p. 10).

It is basically concerned with language creation, learning and usage as best explained by reference to human cognition and focuses on the psychological side and embodies a maximalist approach that intends to study linguistic meaning as part of cognition at large.

Structuralist Semantics takes its inspiration from Ferdinand de Saussure who is termed as the father of Structuralism. According to Strawson (2011), "language is generally conceived to serve for the expression of thought, but if language depends on thought, then the force of an idea does not have just a one-way dependence. The thoughts must be present in the vocabulary and syntax of language or languages so that the meaning of an idea can be accurately expressed" (p. 97). The various approaches within the Structuralist Semantics include lexical field theory, relational semantics and componential analysis. Structuralism is a very efficient aspect of Semantics and has revolutionised semantics to what it is today.

Structuralism as a linguistic theory considers the structures and systems in language (Rajen, 2018: p. 28). Here, emphasis is on the process of segmenting and classifying the features of utterances. Structural Semantics is related to Structural Grammar which describes the grammar of a particular language based on the analysis of the description of the 'structure' of the sentences. The Structural model proposes that language can be studied based on structure; on the assumption that meaning can be literally derived. Early proponents of Structuralist theory such as Ferdinand de Saussure argue that individual elements of language are largely arbitrary; and therefore, the best way to study language is through its systematic structure. Grammar structures are necessary because they are "rules that allow speakers of a given language to make sentences that other speakers of that language can understand" (Parker, 2008: p. 51). It is these rules or structures that create a framework that allows people to communicate and understand each other. Meaning according to Parker can be found in the words themselves but unless these words are heard in context, a person cannot know which meaning is the correct one (2008: p.51). Language gains meanings from words around it creating a language structure. This framework (Structural Semantics) is useful in analysis of spoken and written texts like those in the ICE. It is relevant for this study.

Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive Analysis refers to the comparison of two languages or varieties of a language by paying attention primarily to their differences and similarities. It was first suggested by Whorf (1914) as Contrastive Linguistics and later changed by Lado to Contrastive Analysis (1957). The branches which CA is involved include translation, teaching, linguistics, textbook writing, and error analysis. In linguistics, to which the present study belongs, CA pays attention to different languages at lexical, phonological,

syntactical and semantic levels.

The main focus or idea of Contrastive Analysis as propounded by Lado (1957) is that it is possible to identify the areas of difficulty a particular foreign language will post for native speakers of another language. In CA, the two languages or cultures are compared which determine whether the learning will be easier or difficult. The present study focuses on countries where English language is not a native language, and so the development of a distinct variety of English language peculiar to each country is made "tedious" or quite challenging due to MT interference, culture differences among other issues. CA is based on the theoretical assumption of behaviourism. If L2 acquisition is hampered or disturbed by the habits of your native language, it is only reasonable to focus on the differences between native and target language. Recognizing the differences will help to overcome those linguistic habits of MT that interfere with the habit of target language. CA is founded on the assumption that L2 learners tend to transfer in the target language, features found in their L1 (native language) which may be positive or negative.

Carl (1980) states that the contrastive studies have four applications: predicting errors in L2, error diagnosis, testing the learners and designed (what to teach and when to teach it, planning courses and materials (p.61). Contrastive Analysis projects that a learner's first language interferes with his or her acquisition of a second language and could be a major obstacle to the mastery of the new or target language, and the English language is a second language in Nigeria and Ghana. CA is useful in this study even though the focus of this research is neither centred on mother tongue interference nor pedagogical in nature, which seems to be at the centre of CA. However, the theory of CA is of great help in the aspect of bringing out the differences and similarities between the two varieties of English under study, NE and GhE.

This study adopts an eclectic approach of Structural Semantics and Contrastive Analysis as the most convenient model of analysis for this research. Structural Semantics is concerned with the analysis of a language based on its structures and the relationships between the meanings of terms within a sentence and how meaning is composed from smaller elements. This theory is relevant to studies of lexical and grammatical semantics of which this study is one. The study employs the CA theory because it is based on the contrast of two different varieties of English; NE and GhE. The CA is responsible for bringing out the similarities and differences between the two varieties. The researcher adopts a Corpus Linguistics approach (specifically Laurence Anthony's AntConc software) to authenticate the data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are quite a number of studies done on Nigerian English and Ghanaian English. However, only few will be

reviewed in this study. Vincent (2021) seems to believe that mere identification of varieties of English in Nigeria does not amount to Nigerian English. He reasons thus:

What in fact is Nigerian English? Would this type of classification and description refer to the written or the spoken variety? What is the normative standard, is it attached to a class of speakers of a variety of English or a dialect? Nigerian English as a descriptive of a widely used and accepted dialect variety is a nebulous term. Patterns are still emerging, characterized by certain lexical, structural and phonological features. But what seems to be most prominent now are (sort cases of bad English) a few fossilized idiomatic collocations, lexical items and syntactic features which will have to crystalize, not settled patterns (p. 97).

It is obvious from Vincent's description that he does not believe in a variety known as NE. He rather describes them as "bad English" but the present research believes in a variety known as NE, which is not bad English, is different from pidgin English and not error.

Similarly, Onyema (2010) quoted Jowitt (1991) who writes that it is assumed among some Nigerians and foreigners that the term "Nigerian English is synonymous with inferior English" or that "the British are the owners of English language, that American English is a crude imitation of it, and that Nigerian English is a deformed creature which ought not even to be mentioned in good society" (p. 64). The present research however does not regard NE as a "deformed creature" but rather as a distinct variety with unique features.

Jowitt has written quite extensively in his works on Nigerian English. Some of his works include "Nigerian English Usage (1991)" and "Nigerian English (2019)". The position of Jowitt from his works, as he points out, is like that of a person wearing two different "hats"; affirming the existence of NE and encouraging that all its sub-varieties deserve to be described on the one hand, and on the other, that as a teacher seeking to improve students' use of English, (and perhaps not holding to the old-fashioned view that "communicative fluency can be pursued at the expense of accuracy"), he upholds and promotes the "only kind of Standard, an exoglossic one, which is practicable to teach" (p. 7). There is need however, for a "Standard Nigerian English" which will not be identical to SBE or SAE, even though at present, identifying the forms that belong to it is "problematic" as Jowitt says.

Sey (1973) provides a seminal documentation of lexical innovation in GhE, which he refers to as "Ghanaianisms". He lists some of the variety's important lexical features, in addition to features of grammar and pronunciation. He groups the vocabulary of Ghana into three: English words with native meanings, English words with new meanings

and words of Ghanaian origin. Sey (1973) assumes that the divergences are dominant in the second type English words with new meanings. He classifies Ghanaianisms based on deviation from British English, which he refers to as "Target English (TE)", into six types which are: coinages (for example **small room** meaning, 'toilet'), semantic extension (for example, **cloth** has the additional meaning, 'any Ghanaian dress'), semantic restriction (for example, a **chaser** is a 'philanderer'), a combination of semantic restriction and extension (for example, a **herbalist** is restricted to 'one who cures by the use of medicinal herbs'), semantic transfer (for example, **town council** refers to the 'sanitary department'), and semantic shift (for example **park** means a 'football field').

Ahulu (1994) argues the "existence" of a unique variety called GhE. His attitude on divergences in the lexis and other linguistic features of GhE does not deviate significantly from that of Sey (1973). Ahulu (1994) identifies loan words like **kente** and **kwashiorkor** among others, from Ghanaian languages in the English of Ghanaians and argues that the forms often labeled "Ghanaian" may not be uniquely Ghanaian. To him, such words have now gained "international currency". His rejection of GhE is explicit in his words:

If lexico-semantic divergence in the written English of educated Ghanaians is not of such magnitude as would call for relexification of English in Ghana, then it will be of little help linguistically and educationally to identify a distinct Ghanaian variety of English much on the basis of relatively few modifications that occur in the repertoire of educated Ghanaians (p. 27).

Ahulu's condition that there must be a complete revolution of English lexis in Ghana before a distinct Ghanaian variety can be appreciated or acknowledged sounds quite ambitious. It is vital to note that the "few" diverging features are what is required of a variety of a language, thus making the varieties remain mutually intelligible and varieties of the same language (since the converging features are vast and the diverging ones, few). His proposal for "relexification" of GhE is overtly an attempt to eliminate the intelligibility GhE shares with other varieties which are uncalled for. By relexification, he means that a "Ghanaian English" could only be spoken of if English in Ghana were relexified. The question here is; is this relexification possible and how long would it take?

It is obvious from Ahulu's arguments that he does not recognize the deviations in the use of English by Ghanaians, especially those relating to lexis, as creative and innovative processes that give GhE its uniqueness and which reflects the Ghanaian cultural environment. This calls for a "rethink" and more attention should be given on how to codify and characterize this variety. The present research does not regard NE and GhE as deviant forms

but as distinct varieties with unique features. Scholars like Adegbija (1989), Bamiro (1994), Banjo (1971), Anderson (2009), among many others believe in these varieties. These varieties should however deserve more attention by scholars in order to improve it.

The present study differs from the others reviewed because it does a comparative study of the lexis and morphosyntax of two varieties of the English language, NE and GhE, using the International Corpus of English (ICE), Nigeria and Ghana components as primary sources of data. Also, Jowitt's concept of acrolectal (+) and non-acrolectal (-) usage is used to distinguish all the sentences analysed. Most studies, as observed by the researcher, are studies that tend to focus on one of the varieties of English and are not contrastive in nature; especially the morphosyntactic aspect.

METHODOLOGY

The data used for this study were purposively collected through a careful study of the two language corpora; ICE Nigeria and Ghana respectively. These words and phrases were written down. Thereafter, a total of 80 lexical items and expressions were purposively selected and transcribed. From the total number, fifty-three lexical items/expressions are chosen and used for the analysis in this study. The tools used for the collection of data and analysis are the International Corpus of English (ICE), Nigeria and Ghana components and Lawrence Anthony's AntConc software. The ICE is an electronic-based data which provides the data for this research. AntConc software is a general-purpose corpus analysis tool used by corpus linguists, translators, and language teachers among others for linguistic analysis. The AntConc is used to aid further comparative analysis.

Corpus linguistics and ideas from Jowitt's morphosyntactic analysis are used for data analysis. The AntConc software is used to authenticate those data that are present in both corpora. The features of morphosyntax as identified by Jowitt (2019) are used as a guide. Jowitt's categorisation of standard (acrolectal) and non-standard (non-acrolectal) usage is also used. "+" means acrolectal usage and "-" means non-acrolectal usage.

DATAPRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The researcher labels the words or expressions as either acrolectal (+) or non-acrolectal (-) according to Jowitt's classification (2019). In this study, rather than talking about "Standard Nigerian or Ghanaian English" and "Non-Standard Nigerian or Ghanaian English" as two mutually exclusive varieties that co-exist in Nigeria and Ghana (which actually do not exist), the researcher talks about single varieties: Nigerian English and Ghanaian English in standard and non-standard usages. According to Jowitt

(2019), this "could be called a diffusionist hypothesis; and it seems to be the right position to take, entailing that the usage of a large number even of educated people contains a smaller or greater number of non-Standard forms" (p. 78). However, it is important to note that non-standard forms are not errors. The data analysed are distinctly NE and GhE and not errors. The data and their analyses are as follows:

1. Some irregular plurals are made regular in NE and GhE (+,-): "...look for qualify staffs..." (con 57), "...top officials and other staffs who..." (W2A 032). These are unique usages different from Standard British English (SBE).
2. Uncountable nouns are frequently made countable and used in the plural: advice, agenda, jewelry, offspring, property, machinery" in both varieties(+,-): "...we'll uphold your advices..." (nbta 10), "...selfish agendas..." (W2E 009).
3. In NE, pluralia tantum nouns are made singular "pant, scissor, trouser, pyjama" (+,-): "...it's only trouser..." (con 49). There is no hit for any of these words in ICE Ghana.
4. In both varieties, the numeral "one" that is followed by "of" and a plural noun that denotes the group of which the "one" is part of in SBE is made a noun singular (-): "one of his daughter" (cr 08), "...one of our field work..." (W1C 016).
5. The noun forms used in certain idioms in both varieties are sometimes different from those of SBE. The plural is used for the singular and vice versa like "at all cost", "at loggerhead", "have the gut", "make amend", "in pain", "in details" (+,-): "at all cost resist the temptation..." (bta 19), "This has to end at all cost" (W2F 020).
6. It is also observed that in both varieties, the base form of an adjective is sometimes used when comparison is intended, especially when indicated by the presence of "than" like more better, more superior (+,-): "I'm more better than you" (con 06), "...Ghana is becoming more better..." (S1A 023).
7. "Matured" is sometimes used adjectivally in NE and GhE where SE uses "mature" (+): "...matured Christian..." (bta 10), "...for matured people..." (W2C 016).
8. In both varieties, there is a tendency for nouns to be used without any preceding article even when the noun is countable and singular (+,-): "...and man begin life..." (unsp 06), "...what happens when the man and woman are..." (W2B 020).
9. The indefinite article is usually omitted before the collective but countable noun series in NE and GhE(+,-): "...series of problems..." (unsp 23), "...series of rolls" (W2B 039).
10. The definite article is often omitted before geographical names in NE and GhE where it is present in SE (+,-): "...that you're from UK" (con 06), "...but am

- now in USA..." (W1C 017), and inserted where SE would omit it: "the Mamprugu state" (W2A 015). This is not so in SBE.
11. "The" is not used before "late" which means "recently deceased" in both varieties (+): "...virtues of late chief Afolabi..." (bnew 28), "...late wife of my predecessors..." (W2B 008).
 12. In both varieties, "the" is used before society (+,-): "...to the development of the society..." (les 10), "...English defined roles in the society..." (W1A 009).
 13. "This" may be used in both NE and GhE, where concord demands "these" (-): "...and selected this men and women..." (bnew 18), "...could not structure these ideas..." (W1A 014).
 14. A demonstrative may be followed by a possessive in both varieties (+,-): "...we'll enjoy this our nation..." (con 57), "...I heard about this our contractors..." (S1A 030). SBE does not use such.
 15. "Much" is used before plural countable nouns in NE and GhE (+,-): "Nigeria has so much problems..." (con 47), "...much problem..." (W2C 012).
 16. "No" is followed by "any" in NE (+,-): "there is no any fighting..." (con 49). There is no hit (evidence of this) in ICE Ghana.
 17. A cardinal number word in both varieties is often followed by brackets containing the same number in figures (+): "...within two (2) days..." (admin 11), "...one (1) biological child" (W1B 027).
 18. A possessive determiner + a pronominal "own" is used instead of a possessive pronoun (+,-): "...my own is nineteen unit..." (con 50) instead of mine and "It's my own" (S1A 007).
 19. The coinage "you people" serves as a plural form for "you" which is used for addressing more than one person in both varieties (+,-): "...you people are still Christians..." (con 58), "You people run things" (S1A 007).
 20. In both varieties, a pronoun may be used as a "copy" of a subject noun phrase which is referred to as "pronoun copying" (-): "...my friend he said..." (con 21), "...my cousin he..." (S1A 080).
 21. In both varieties, "of which/in which" is widely used as a relativizer with the preposition playing no clear syntactic role (+,-): "...as a result of which government decided to erect storey..." (bnew 21), "...the modern world, of which Africa..." (W2A 013).
 22. The interrogative pronouns "who" and "what" are sometimes reduplicated to show plurality in both varieties (+,-): "...to determine what and what items you need..." (dem 12), "...where who and who are the only occupants..." (S1A 093).
 23. Irregular verbs are made regular in NE (+,-): Base verb (cast, cost, split, bind, grind) NE (casted, costed, splited, binded, grinded) while SE is (cast, cost, split, bound, ground) "...where he casted his own vote..." (con 53). GhE has no hit with any of such in ICE Ghana.
 24. In both varieties of English, in constructions with a simple lexical verb like "...not only...", the auxiliary "do" is introduced before "not" where SE permits the simple verb after "only" (+,-): "...they did not only let us down..." (leg 04), "...the new queen did not only have to create a good name..." (W2B 013).
 25. In reported questions in both NE and GhE, the word order of direct questions is often maintained (+,-): "...to analyze and see...what is the best thing for him" (con 07), "Many are wondering who is this person" (btr 03), "...the science that teaches us what is the political arrangement of..." (W2A 034).
 26. In both varieties, the modal past tends not to be used in the clause following "...wish..." or "it is (high) time..." but the present simple tense is preferred (+,-): "I wish you remain in touch..." (ph 01), "it is high time you know..." (con 47), "...I wish I have..." (S2A 005).
 27. Some stative verbs like "have, hear, understand" in both varieties are dynamic (+,-): "...we've been hearing all kinds of promises" (btal 27), "...I have been hearing about the castle..." (W1B 013).
 28. The active voice like "they" in NE and GhE tends to be used more often than the passive where SE would use the passive (+,-): "...they have done very very well in Imo state" (ph 06), "They are complaining like in every aspect..." (S1A 096).
 29. In verb complementation where after certain verbs like give, bring, SE has a choice between the pattern indirect object + direct object and direct object + to-or for- prepositional phrase, NE and GhE may produce the pattern prepositional phrase + direct object (+,-): "...he has left for us a profound legacy..." (btal 23), "The independence worn for us is a great heritage" (W2F 011).
 30. Expressions like "must have to", "can be able to", "can be possible" occur in both acrolectal and non-acrolectal usages in both varieties (+,-): "...we must have to complete the job" (unsp 43), "I can be able to..." (W2A 008).
 31. Both NE and GhE attempt a present-tense form, "use to" where SE "used to" has past-time reference only (+,-): "...they use to bring light there" (con 40), "...he use to fetch water..." (S1A 088).
 32. Adverbial phrases like "not quite long" (not long afterwards); "most times" (usually); "next tomorrow" (the day after tomorrow); "last week Wednesday" (last Wednesday) etc. are used in NE and GhE (+,-): "...I mean not quite long..." (bint 01), "...most times I cook" (con 29), "...seventh which is next tomorrow..." (con 42), "...last week Friday..." (con 55), "Most times..." (W1B 011).
 33. NE sometimes combines two prepositions in "since on..." and "until on..." (+,-): "...since on Friday..." (con 17), "...until on the twenty second..." (unsp 29). There is no hit in ICE Ghana with such combination.
 34. Where SE permits "in case..." or "should", NE and GhE combine the two "should in case..." (-): "...should

- in case you're one of..."(dem 14), "...should in case you have not received it yet"(W1C 024).
35. "Am" is used as the supposed contracted form of "I am" in both varieties (+,-): "...am a very patriotic Nigerian..."(con 46), "Am sorry" (S1A 022), "...am serious" (S1A 022).
 36. The abbreviation e.t.c. is commonly used instead of etc. in NE and GhE (+,-): "...trousers e.t.c." (ex 03), "...hair creams. Soaps e.t.c." (W2B 029).
 37. American influence on NE and GhE grammars is largely concentrated in lexis and spellings. Examples include: use of "gonna" for going to, "wanna" for "want to", "cos/cause" for "because" etc.(-): "You mentioned something I was gonna come to that" (bdis 2), "...it's gonna be more expensive in Ghana..." (S1A 092), "I wanna ask you why" (bdis 16), "...cause she said yes to my proposal" (S1A 022), "coz you don't know" (leg 02), "...maybe you've not gotten a good cook" (S1A 098), "...cause she said yes to my proposal" (S1A 022).
 38. Pidgin influence on both varieties (-): "I just sit down there dey look them"(con 04), "...hunger no go kill am" (ph 0), "So the thing be say..."(S1A 007), "...cos me them record me already" (S1A 007).
 39. Use of double subjects (+,-): "So many people in Nigeria they've actually intermarry"(bdis 5), "...like they in Ghana they call it..."(S1A 096), "The brother and the wife-to-be they came before the pastor" (unsp 12), "I'm going to communicate with you girls..." (S1A 047).
 40. Sometimes in both varieties, there is an exchange of positions of "not" and "to" in a sentence (-): "...is to not use too much" (skHo 01), "...do my best to not be there..." (S1A 091).
 41. Peculiar use of preposition in both varieties (-): "In search **for** beauty" (bint 4) instead of "of", "I hope that everyone **at** abroad is doing fine (ex 07), "...will you say this is typical **for** Ghana" (S1A 073), "I am a graduate **from** university of Cape Coast, Ghana" (W1C 021), "...you'll be paying **by** installments" (S1A 067).
 42. Unique use of "maybe" in a sentence in both varieties (-): "I don't know maybe they are one of the greatest universities" (bint 09), "That maybe ...was why...on market days"(W2F 005).
 43. Mentioning oneself before others in both varieties (+,-): "Myself and a couple" (bint 10), "About myself and Felix" (S1A 016), "... it's just me my wife my kids" (S1A 073).
 44. Deletion of subject in both varieties (+,-): "Yes is possible" (led 04), "...and is a continuous process" (W2A 030). "It" is absent before "is" in both expressions.
 45. Deletion of article and conjunction where they should feature in both varieties (+,-): "Wash rice soak overnight" (W2D 019), the conjunction "and" before "soak" is missing and "...fornication is sin I mean sex before marriage is sin" (S1A 083), the article "a" before "is" is also missing.
 46. The use of "sef" for emphasis in both varieties (-): "...if he's not careful sef..."(con 62), "Adam was 99 years sef" (S1A 034).
 47. "The" is frequently not used before "majority of" in both varieties of English (+,-): "...you don't see majority of our people..."(leg 11), "...wish of majority of Ghanaians..." (W2E 004). It is used informally.
 48. In both varieties, "even" is sometimes placed at the beginning of a sentence with the sentence as its focus where SE would place it before the verb (+,-): "Even you know Hausa can say..."(con 52), "Even, how will the well-being..." (W1A 019)
- Pragmatic features are observed in both varieties in the use of proverbs, idioms, kinship terms, transfer, greetings, euphemisms, conversational implicatures.
49. Kinship terms reflect deep family relationship in native English situation but used differently in Nigerian and Ghanaian environments for instance "brother", "uncle", "sister" among many others. "Brother, sister" are also used to denote a fellow-member of Christian organizations like churches, someone of the same ethnic group as oneself or to a fellow Nigerian or Ghanaian in general. NE- "...uncle or senior brother" (nov 09), GhE- "sister Mercy" (W1B 013).
 50. The qualifications "senior, junior" are used where native speaker varieties would use "older, younger" in both varieties. NE- "senior brother" (bnew 29), GhE- "senior sister" (S1A 086).
 51. Proverbs which are old sayings of wisdom are used in both varieties for instance "a word is enough for the wise". NE- "You know what the Sunday will be from what the Saturday is" (unsp 14), GhE- "You do not have to show God to a child" (W2A 002).
 52. Greeting is also a pragmatic feature. Greetings in indigenous languages are replicated in English both in Nigerian and Ghanaian Englishes because the cultures of both countries place much importance on greeting. Examples are "well-done, good day, safe journey" among many others: NE -"...good day..." (com 43) and GhE- "well-done" (W2F 017).
 53. Both varieties use "let me" which is pragmatically the statement of an intention corresponding to "I am going to..." or "I will..." in other varieties: NE- "...let me allow you to look at..."(dem 04), GhE- "...let me congratulate your mum..."(W1B 014)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It is important to note that these features discussed above are distinctively NE and GhE. They occur in both acrolectal and non-acrolectal usages in both varieties as Jowitt (2019) points out that "the use of the one or the other does

not mean that the usage generally occurs at the level in question". The major explanation to this is the issue of mother tongue interference, direct translations and the differences between the structures of indigenous languages and that of the English language. Majority of the morpho-syntactic data identified and analysed are the same in the two varieties (NE and GhE). They include irregular nouns and verbs made regular, double use of subjects, and deletion of subjects in certain sentences, use of "even" at the beginning of sentences among many others. Although data at the syntactic level are not as numerous as those at the vocabulary domain, Ajani (2007) notes that it appears to be most interesting of all; also, very subtle and not easily detected and it is at this level that Nigerian creative writers have blossomed and excelled (p. 7).

A major reason for these morpho-syntactic features in the two varieties is the use of different innovative strategies and structures from the local languages. This is what Schneider (2007) refers to as "culture-bound speech patterns" (p. 297). From the data at the morpho-syntactic level, it is observed that there are a lot of expressions that are English at the surface but have L1 underlying structures. This implies that the vocabulary is English but the syntax is from a substrate language as also observed by Ajani (2007, p. 15). Such strategies include translation of first language (L1) idioms, sayings and proverbs, reduplications, among many others.

There are a number of features at the discourse level that are transferred from the English language to L1. According to Ajani (2007), this is because the rules of appropriateness vary from society to society and from culture to culture (p. 9). Most of the communicative strategies are used in order to avoid direct confrontation or in order to give respect to an older person during conversations. An Example is the use of "they" at the beginning of expressions for respect in Yoruba which is not applicable in English language except if the subject is plural.

However, it has been observed from this research that there are some errors which are recorded in ICE Nigeria and Ghana as distinctive varieties of the two varieties. Such examples include:

1. There is wrong use of concord in many instances in both varieties (-): "one of the reason why the governor..." (bint 03), "The lawyer say he will give reasons" (leg 02), "There was so many presentations" (S1A 095), "They were all Ghanaian" (S1A 091).
2. In both varieties of English, there are spelling errors including dinning for dining, interpret, strainous, non-challant, among others (-): "...you interpret in Yoruba..." (unsp 20), "...because of the strainous..." (W1B 004).
3. The parts of "be, been, being" are each sometimes used in place of the other to produce has, have, am, is, are, was, were, etc. in both varieties (-): "She have

been with you" (cr 09), "...other staffs who has direct relationship with the organization..." (W2A 032).

Jowitt (2019) suggests a categorization of errors according to users which are: "idiosyncratic errors" and "common errors". The latter he says, compromising those that are vulgar (basilectal-mesolectal) and those that are institutionalized (acrolect) would be candidates for inclusion in the specifications of "Standard Nigerian English" and would then cease to be categorised as errors (p. 75). This is the case of quite a number of the examples cited above. However, there are still controversies among linguists as to the acceptability of certain grammatical features.

Conclusion

This work has demonstrated some of the unique morpho-syntactic features of NE and GhE that have become part of the speeches and writings of Nigerians and Ghanaians; even the highly educated in the two countries. The study portrays NE and GhE not as deviant varieties but as innovative national varieties like other varieties of English with peculiarities that demonstrate the socio-cultural environments or settings in which they emanate.

The study however makes efforts to differentiate between entries that occur in acrolectal and non-acrolectal usages in ICE Nigeria and Ghana respectively. This is because "errors" should be treated as errors and not considered as part of NE or GhE. Meanings of NE and GhE words and expressions have been created by Nigerians and Ghanaians respectively to suit their convenience and also conform to their socio-cultural environment and experiences. There are more morpho-syntactic features common between these two varieties than differences. Deeper studies between the two varieties could foster the codification of the "West African Variety" of English.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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