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Editor-in-Chief's Comments

This 10th issue of *Ibadan Journal of English Studies* is a special edition, dedicated to the celebration of the 80th birthday anniversary of one of the icons of English Studies in Nigeria, Emeritus Professor Ayo Banjo. Although a little bit late when its release date is considered against the event of the birthday, its relevance and purpose remain justified, as it is a humble outlet to bring together articles that touch on aspects of Professor Ayo Banjo's research concerns. While this journal issue complements the book of tributes earlier published by the Department of English as an assemblage of approbative and evaluative comments on Professor Banjo's personal, social and professional engagements, its contents, it is admitted, are a mere token when the humongous profile of Professor Banjo is considered. It is our belief that Emeritus Professor would accept it as our miniature offer of appreciation.

The 16 papers in the volume are domiciled within the literature and language arms of English Studies, which represent the quintessential niche of the scholarship in which Professor Ayo Banjo excels. The papers in literature, including performance, provide clear and professional analyses that demonstrate an excellent blend of Literature from the West and from diverse African settings. Papers in style together with samples from literary resources establish African authorships and geographical identities through linguistic choices that are manifested in the texts studied. Papers in the area of phonology, discourse analysis and pragmatics provide nuanced analyses seated in theoretical principles and applications. The article on language teaching provides useful research-driven insights into pedagogical delivery and reception in English and Mathematics.

Overall, this issue, like the previous ones, put English Studies at the vanguard of Humanistic oriented disciplines in Nigeria. In format, content and style, the papers align with global professional conventions and for the umpteenth time demonstrate the international standard of our journal.

Emmanuel Babatunde Omobowale
Professor of Literature and Editor in Chief

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Regional Variation of Continuous Speech Processes in Nigerian English

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Abstract
Spoken Nigerian English (NigE) is said to be as divergent as the number of ethno-linguistic groups in the country. This claim is, however, confined to the segmental and suprasegmental levels, without consideration for the contextual features of speech. This study, therefore, examines the incidence of connected speech processes (CSPs) in NigE, focusing on boundary assimilations, boundary consonant deletions and r-liaison. This is with a view to establishing the convergence and divergence of NigE regional accents at the level of connected speech. Two hundred and forty educated Nigerian speakers of English from three regions in Nigeria (80 each from North, West and East) voiced 31 utterances and a short passage into digital recording devices. Instances of assimilation, elision and r-liaison processes produced at different boundary contexts were analysed statistically, using percentages and the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results showed that, at $\alpha = .05$ level, there was a significant effect of r-liaison on region ($F(2, 237) = 6.81$, $p = .001$); whereas, no regional differences existed in assimilation and elision. These findings have shown that only very little regional variation exists in NigE accents in terms of assimilation, elision and r-liaison processes of connected speech, which implies that there is more convergence than divergence in the regional accents of NigE in these aspects of CSPs.

Key words: Continuous Speech Processes, Nigerian English, assimilation, elision, liaison.

Introduction

Nigeria is a country with a population of over 140 million people (according to the 2006 population census) with diverse geo-tribal groups and numerous languages of more than 500 (Lewis, Simon & Fennig, 2013). Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, which are the three major languages spoken in the North, East and West of the country respectively, are constitutionally recognised as national languages alongside English (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). The English language, therefore, exists within such linguistic multiplicity as a national and the official language, cutting across ethnic boundaries and functioning as the lingua franca for Nigerians of diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds (Ogunsiji, 2004; Salami, 2001).

As in any language contact situation, the English language used in each of these ethnic communities exhibits influences or interference features of the indigenous languages of its users. As a matter of fact, it has often been claimed, hypothetically though, that there are as many geographical varieties of English in Nigeria as there are local languages spoken (Adetugbo, 2004; Banjo, 1979; Jibril, 1979). Strevens (1965: 113), for example, opines that "One would expect a description of the pronunciations of English which may be heard in West Africa to bear a close relationship to description of the phonetic characteristics of the language spoken as a mother tongue by various groups of people".

In the light of this, speakers from the same ethnic group in Nigeria have been shown to demonstrate homogenous features in their English accents. The spoken English of Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa/Fulani, Edo, Tiv or Ibiobio speakers in Nigeria tends to mirror the phonetic features of each of these ethnic nationalities. For example, while Hausa speakers insert vowels to split a consonant cluster, such as *resignation:* [rezigineʃən] for [rezɪgneɪʃən], Yoruba speakers nasalise English vowels preceded by nasals, such as *morning:* [mɔ̃niŋ] for [mɔːnɪŋ] (Simo Bobda, 1994). In the same vein, Igbo speakers find it difficult to produce two different vowels in the same English words (due to vowel harmony operating in Igbo), thereby producing *borrow* [bɒrəʊ] as [boro] (Dunstan, 1969).

Beyond ethnicity however, language has been proved to vary according to regions, nations and wider geographical areas. There abound, in the literature, features of non-native English which cut across national boundaries. Simo Bobda (1995) specifically reveals certain linguistic traits shared by Cameroon English and NigE. To this extent, Jibril (1979: 43) asserts in regard to the Nigerian English accents that "members of several ethnic groups residing in adjacent parts of the country share many characteristics in their spoken English with one another". It is against this background that we can talk of Southern or Northern NigE (Jibril,1982), Nigerian English, Ghanaian English, West African English, East African English, African English, South Asian English, and so forth (Simo Bobda, 2007).

In this regard, a number of scholars (e.g. Adetugbo, 2004; Jibril, 1979, 1982; Jowitt, 1991) have established certain phonological divergence amongst speakers of English from different ethnic groups (especially the major Nigerian languages- Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) and regions in Nigeria. Jibril (1979), in particular, provides a detailed analysis of such divergence between the Northern and the Southern Nigerian accents in the realisation of consonant and vowel sounds. According to him, the following sounds segments /θ/, /ð/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɜ:/ have different realisations in both accents as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Regional realisations of some vowel sounds in Nigerian English

RP	Northern Accent	Southern Accent
/θ/	/s/	/t/
/ð/	/z/	/d/
/æ/	/e/	/a/
/ʌ/	/a/	/ɔ/
/ɜ:/	/ɔ:/	/ɔ/ or /e/

Jibril (1979), again, identifies few instances of Northern-Southern divergence at the suprasegmental level of stress in such polysyllabic words as *nationalism* and *enterprise* as follows:

RP	Conservative Northern Accent	General Southern Accent
/ˈnæʃnəlɪzm/	/ˈnaʃnəlɪzm/	/naʃɔˈna:lɪzm/
/ˈentəpraɪz/	/ˈɪntəpraɪz/	/ɪnˈta:praɪz/

The author finally concludes that the Northern accent tends to be rated much higher in terms of international intelligibility than the Southern accent.

So far, the geo-tribal description of Nigerian English accents has been confined to the segmental and suprasegmental features in isolation as shown above. Such detailed variationists' study has not been extended to the contextual features of speech (the effects of adjacent sounds on each other in a stream of connected speech). Yet, the human speech sounds are not so discreet; sound segments normally take new forms in connected speech. It is against this backdrop that this study examines incidence of connected speech processes (boundary assimilations, boundary deletions and r-liaison) of NigE speakers in terms of their regional groupings and contiguity- North (comprising Hausa, Fula, Kanuri, Tiv, Eggon, Beron and a few other language groups in the region, all using Hausa as lingua franca), West (comprising the Yoruba language group) and East (comprising the Igbo language group). Specifically, the study hopes to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify incidence of boundary assimilation, boundary consonant elision and r-liaison in NigE
- establish possible regional variations of these CSPs in NigE; and
- determine the extent of convergence and divergence of NigE regional accents in relation to the CSPs.

Research Questions

- How do NigE speakers perform in their use of boundary assimilations, boundary consonant deletions and r-liaison?
- Does regional affiliation significantly affect NigE speakers' use of these CSPs?

- To what extent do NigE regional accents converge or diverge relative to assimilation, elision and liaison processes of connected speech?

Connected Speech Processes

Connected speech processes (CSPs) refer to the phonetic modifications that characterise words in continuous speech compared to when such words are produced in isolation (Gimson, 1980). It is only in specific cases and for a particular purpose that natural speech may be spoken with a break between every word; sounds usually slur into one another. Adjoining segments at morpheme or word junctures normally undergo various alterations and modifications, owing to their phonological environment or speaker's articulatory mechanisms (Cruttenden, 2001). This follows, therefore, that a wide difference exists between words said in isolation and those occurring in connected speech, which are usually abridged and fused. The processes that account for such sound modifications are assimilation, elision, liaison, reduction and epenthesis, among others.

Assimilation is a process whereby two adjacent sounds become phonetically similar; that is, a sound takes on the features of another in a contiguous environment. It may be regressive (where a sound exact influence on the preceding one), for instance, *ten bikes* /ten baɪks/ becoming [tem baɪks]; progressive (where the preceding phoneme influences the subsequent one, for example, *lunch score* /lʌnʧ skɔ:/ becoming [lʌnʧ ʃkɔ:]; or coalescent (where adjacent sounds merge), for instance, *would you?* /wʊd ju:/ becoming [wʊʤu]: alveola stop /d/ and palatal glide /j/ merge to become palato-alveolar affricate /ʤ/ (Skandera and Burleigh, 2005). Assimilation may also affect place of articulation, for exampe, *that place* /ðæt pleɪs/ becoming [ðæp pleɪs]; manner of articulation, e.g. *that side* /ðæt saɪd/ becoming [ðæs said] or state of the glottis, for instance, *chose six* /ʧeʊz sɪks/ becoming [ʧeʊs sɪks] (Gimson, 1980; Roach, 2000).

Elision, on the other hand, refers to the loss of one or more sounds which may be a vowel, a consonant or a whole syllable, in a word or at word boundaries in fast speech, in order to maximise articulatory flow. This process is common, especially in a cluster of two or more consonants word-internally or across word boundary, e.g. *test drive* [tes draɪv], *exact colour* [ɪgzæ kʌlə] (Oladipupo, 2014a).

Liaison, a French word which means 'connection' or 'link', is a process whereby words following each other in connected speech are linked together in special ways (Roach, 2000). The most prominent means of achieving this in English is r-liaison, a process involving the insertion of /r/ in-between two adjacent vowels at word boundary for ease of articulation. R-liaison comprises both linking and intrusive /r/. Linking /r/ is used when an orthographic word-final *r* or *re* is followed by another word beginning with a vowel, e.g. *wear out* [wɪər aʊt], *car owner* [ka:r əʊnə], *more and more* [mɔ:r ən mɔ:]; while intrusive /r/ is pronounced at a word boundary where *r* is absent orthographically between two consecutive vowels, e.g. *drama and music* [drɑ:mər ən mju:zɪk], *law and order* [lɔ:r ənd ɔ:də] (Gimson, 1980; Roach, 2000; Simo-Bobda, 1994).

Reduction, according to Bald (1990:317), is "a process in which a form or set of forms undergoes changes with respect to certain phonetic features". An instance of this feature in English is vowel reduction, which involves the substitution of full vowels with weak or reduced vowels– /ə/, /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ in unstressed syllables. It is a principal means by which syllables can be squeezed. In content words, unstressed vowels normally weaken to / ə, ɪ / and, less often, /ʊ/ or are sometimes deleted completely, e.g. pil*o*t /ˈpailət/ (/ɒ/ becomes [ə]), *survive* /sə'vaiv/ (/ɜ:/ becomes [ə]), *village* /ˈvɪlɪʤ/ (/eɪ/ becomes [ɪ]). Similarly, most function words commonly have varied pronunciations depending on whether they are strong or weak. Unstressed function words usually show reduction of the length of sounds, obscuration of vowels towards / ə, ɪ, ʊ /, and the elision of vowels and consonants in connected speech, except when used for special emphasis, e.g. *it's 'the'* /ði:/ *cat!* and *the* /ðə/ *dog; All I want is YOU* /ju:/ and *I'll get you* /jʊ/ *some apples.*

The foregoing as well as other phonological processes which are responsible for sound modifications in speech are said to be language universal. This implies that they are 'available to all languages, though not necessarily used by all' (Chomsky and Halle, 1968:178). However, it has also been observed that some of them are language specific, as each language or dialect dictates which process is permissible or prohibited and to what extent (Dressler & Wodak, 1982; Kerswill, 1985, 1987; Nolan & Kerswill, 1990; Roach & Widdowson, 2001). For instance, regressive voicing assimilation, whereby a word-final voiceless consonant changes to a voiced segment if followed by a voiced sound, is allowed in French, e.g. /avek/ may change to [aveg] in *avec vous*: [aveg vu]; whereas, it is regressive devoicing that is preferred in RP (a word-final voiced consonant becomes voiceless when followed by a word beginning with a voiceless sound), e.g. *I have to* is pronounced as /aɪ hæf tu: /, but not as /aɪ hæv tu:/; *nice voice* as /naɪs vɔɪs/ not as /naɪz vɔɪs/.

CSPs also vary from one variety or accent to another within the same language. For example, CSPs in Durham English and RP have been shown to differ significantly from each other (Kerswill, 1987). Durham English permits regressive voicing assimilation like French, e.g. [dɪz vɪlɪʤ] *this village*, rather than regressive devoicing [dɪs fɪlɪʤ] which obtains in RP. On the other hand, regressive place assimilation is not attested in Durham English. Thus, *had been*, usually pronounced as [hæbbi:n] in RP, is commonly realized as [haed bi:n] in Durham English.

Therefore, given that NigE is a common cover term for a conglomeration of many spoken varieties of English in Nigeria (Jibril, 1982), it becomes pertinent to examine variation in the CSPs of some of the sub-varieties that make up the NigE accent; hence this study.

Previous Research

There have been attempts by scholars (e.g. Awonusi, 2004; Jibril, 1982; Joshua, 2009; Laver, 1968; Oladipupo, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c; Simo-Bobda, 2007) to study contextual features of speech in Nigerian English. Jibril (1982), in his study of "Phonological variation in Nigerian English," examines, in passing, consonant assimilation as well as vowel

and consonant deletion. He discovers from the data gathered from 45 speakers that:

- only nasals undergo assimilation of place in Nigerian English, e.g. *government council* [gʌvməŋ kausl], *man power* [mampaːwaː]; alveolar nasal /n/ changes to velar and bilabial nasal.
- cases of assimilation of manner that affect alveolars are regressive and involve the change of /d/ and /n/ to liquids, e.g. *would like* [wul laik], *don't like* [dol laik].
- regressive assimilation of voice affects final plosives only, which become devoiced or voiced before a word beginning with voiceless or voiced consonant, e.g. *with the* [wid di], *twelve thousand* [twep θauzn].
- using vowel epenthesis to resolve consonant clusters does not occur in the speech of most Nigerian speakers of English except in just few cases involving Hausa and Igbo speakers;
- consonant deletion is common in Nigerian English in fast speech or in a bid to reduce consonant clusters.

Laver's (1968) article was restricted to assimilation. Using educated Nigerian speakers of English from diverse mother tongues including Yoruba, Efik, Etsako, Emai, Bini and Otwo as participants, he also discovers:

- a tendency for regressive assimilation, e.g. *outbreak* [aupbrek]; the place of articulation of alveolar plosive /t/ changes to reflect the place of the following bilabial plosive /b/.
- absence of progressive assimilation of voice
- extensive cases of assimilation of place, e.g. *hard blow* [hab blo], *bad business* [bab biznɛs]; the place of articulation of alveolar plosive /d/ changes to bilabial in anticipation of the following bilabial plosive.
- that Nigerian English allows regressive voicing assimilation while RP does not, e.g. *black bird* [blag bɛːd], *make them* [meg dɛm]; voiceless velar /k/ becomes voiced to reflect the voicing of the following voiced segments.

Josiah (2009) also focuses on assimilatory processes. Using a sample of one hundred final year university students from nineteen linguistic groups in Nigeria, he examines various aspects of assimilatory processes from perceptual and acoustic dimensions. His findings, which corroborate earlier studies reveal nasalisation (*in case* [ɪŋ kes]), devoicing of final segments (horses ['hɔzis]) and regressive assimilation (*would be defeated* [wub bi di'fited]) as some of the assimilatory processes that characterise Educated Standard Nigerian English (ESNE). He concludes that ESNE phonology is markedly different from that of SBE, and therefore, requires an endonormative rather than exonormative model as long as it facilitates effective national and international interaction.

Oladipupo's (2004c) findings do not differ from earlier work in terms of the CSPs found in NigE. He, however, goes a step further to categorise them into three; namely, dominant, minor and idiosyncratic processes. The first category, which he claims is prevalent in NigE and cuts across ethnic and social considerations, comprises regressive devoicing, e.g. [ʧoz̥ siks] *chose six* (voiced /z/ becomes devoiced before voiceless /s/); final devoicing, e.g. [ʃɪs] *she's* a *good girl* (word-final *s* which in RP becomes /z/ when preceded by a voiced segment remains unchanged); progressive devoicing, e.g. [nais b̥ɔi] *nice boy* (voiced /b/ becomes devoiced due to the influence of the preceding voiceless /s/); nasal assimilation, e.g. [iŋ kes] *in case* (alveolar nasal /n/ changes to velar nasal /ŋ/ before velar stop /k/); and elision, e.g. [tɛsˀdraiv] *test drive*, (final alveolar stops /t/ is deleted at word boundary)

The CSPs he identifies in the second category are progressive voicing, e.g. [dɔgz] *dog's mine* (voiceless /s/ becomes voiced [z] after a voiced segment); alveolar stop assimilation, e.g. [mɛp pita] *met Peter*; (alveolar stop /t/ takes on the place of articulation feature of the following bilabial stop /p/); regressive voicing, e.g. [aiz blu] *ice blue* (voiceless /s/ changes to voiced /z/ before a voiced segment); yod coalescence, e.g. [miʃɔ:] *miss your train* (alveolar /s/ and palatal /j/ changed to palato-aveolar /ʃ/ at word boundary); t-voicing, e.g. [wɔd̬u] *what you* (intervocalic /t/ is realised as a voiced tap rather than a voiceless plosive); linking /r/, e.g. [aftar e wail] *after a while* (the word-

final *r* in *after* is articulated to link the word with *a*); and intrusive /r/, e.g. [aidiar ɔf] *idea of* (a phonetic /r/ is articulated at word boundary to link both words). According to him, a minority of speakers use these CSPs in Nigeria.

Consonant substitution, e.g. [ɔp kɔs] *of course,* is the process found in the third category. Here, /v/ of *of* is devoiced to /f/ and then substituted with /p/. This process which, according to the author, deviates completely from the native English speech and reveals ethnic bias and mother tongue deficiency of speakers, was found to be peculiar to a minute number of people in a particular region of the country.

In concluding, the author affirms that only dominant CSPs, which were found to be typical of NigE speakers, are acceptable as Standard Nigerian spoken English

Despite these groundbreaking discoveries however, the best the foregoing studies have succeeded in achieving is mere identification and categorisation of processes that characterise NigE connected speech as a monolithic variety. So far, no deliberate attempt has been made to compare the usage of these processes based on the ethnic or regional affiliations of speakers, yet it is agreed that NigE is composed of different sub-varieties. This study, therefore, builds on the previous studies to determine whether regional variation exists in some CSPs found in NigE.

The Variability Concept

The variability concept, according to Dittmar (1976: 104-105), is a sociolinguistic theory that aims to "describe and explain the entire social network practice and the complex competence that speakers have at their disposal for communication, in correlation with the social norms and parameters". This theoretical paradigm, propounded by Labov (1963, 1966) and expounded by Dillard (1968) and Baratz (1969) amongst others, is a complete departure from and reaction to the earlier prescriptive analysis of linguistic structure devoid of the social contexts within which such structures are used.

The theory is premised against the notion that language use varies from persons to persons, between social groups and from one

community to another. The variation may be influenced by the age, sex, social class or ethnic grouping of speakers as well as the context of speech. Specifically, the variability concept provides explanation for the correlation between language use and the existing social structure by examining speakers' social status and their speech behaviour, speech forms employed by males and females or young and old, and the influence of a speaker's ethnic origin on his language use.

Ethnicity, a concept that describes regional or geographical identification or groupings of people on the basis of common genealogy and ancestry, is therefore one of the social variables usually considered in measuring language use. This is so because ethnic groups primarily share cultural and linguistic traits as well as a group history. To a great extent, then, language is an important marker of ethnicity. If one considers Milroy and Milroy's (1997) assertion that the same language varies from speaker to speaker or from community to community, it will not be difficult to agree that ethnic or regional leaning of speakers contribute largely to variation in speech. This view is succinctly supported by Bailey and Robinson (1973):

> Because the forces of standardization have not yet completely levelled the individuality resulting from genetic make-up and rearing, removed the human impulse to gather in manageably small groups, or erased the cultural differences that distinguish group from group or nation from nation, language must be as various as the groups who use it and the activities they engage in.

This theory therefore provides insight into the present study which seeks to examine the possible convergence and divergence of NigE regional accents at the level of connected speech, focusing on speakers of English from the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Methodology

Participants and data gathering procedure

A sample of 240 NigE speakers, with a minimum of 2-3 years post-secondary education, was purposively drawn from the Northern, Eastern and Western regions of Nigeria (80 from each). The three regions were selected in view of the fairly homogenous linguistic background of English speakers in each of them. They represent regions where the three major Nigerian languages- Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba respectively- are spoken. In the North (comprising Hausa, Fula, Kanuri, Tiv, Eggon, Beron and a few other language groups in the region), Hausa is the lingua franca, while Yoruba and Igbo languages are lingua franca in the West and the East respectively. The participants were asked to produce 31 utterances and a short passage, containing potential assimilation, elision and r-liaison sites at different word and morpheme boundaries, into digital recording devices. Corresponding questions were constructed to guide the production of each utterance item, on which basis each participant was engaged in a question-and-answer session in a manner that resembled casual conversation (see appendix B). The initial attempt of each participant was recorded and then played back to verify whether the conversations sounded casual and natural enough. The final recording was made after that had been ascertained.

The data

The potential CSPs sites extracted from different boundary contexts (BC) in the participants' production are as follows:

(a) Assimilation:

BC1 Word boundaries where a voiced obstruent precedes a voiceless one: *have to, chose six, live show, of course, we've planned* and *five pounds.*

BC2 Boundaries where the reduced form of the third person singular of verb *be* is preceded by a voiced segment at word-final position: *she's a good girl, he's a nice boy* and *the dog's mine.*

BC3 Word boundaries where a voiced obstruent is preceded by a voiceless one: *he's a nice boy, she wore a black dress, do you think it is really ice blue?* and *the job was half-done.*

BC4 Word boundaries where alveolar stop /t/ is followed by bilabial stops /p, k/ (*met Peter, that case)* and alveolar stop /d/ by velar stops /g, b/ (*good bye, good girl*)

BC5 Word boundaries where alveolar nasal /n/ is followed by bilabial stops /b, p/ or velar stop /k/ (*it'll cost you ten pounds, there are ten boys* and *in case you don't buy it).*

BC6 Word boundaries where /s, z, t and d/ are followed by the palatal glide /j/: *you will miss your train, God bless you, in case you, those young men, will amaze you, has your letter come? what you want, that you need, it'll cost you, do you think?, would you leave here?* and *could you rather.*

(b) Elision

BC7 Consonant clusters involving /t/ and /d/ at word and morpheme boundaries: *doesn't she, won't do it, kept quiet, exact colour, test drive, don't buy it, jumped well, equipped with, fixed price, found, five, old man, cold launch, seemed glad, robbed both* and *advertised car.*

(c) R-liaison

BC8 A hiatus in-between two adjacent vowels at word boundaries: *Peter at, more of him, after a while, their action, wore a black dress, inquire about, colour of, for all,* there are, over eat, *power-assisted steering, law and order, idea of it* and *media event.*

Data Analysis and Results

Incidence of connected speech processes in NigE

The recordings were played back and tokens of boundary assimilation, consonant deletion and r-liaison processes produced by the participants at the different boundary sites were identified and transcribed. An accepted CSP used by a speaker at a particular boundary context was allotted 1 mark. The participants' scores in each process were summed up according to the regions of speakers (see Table 2).

Table 2: Participants' scores according to regions

Context		BC 1	BC 2	BC 3	BC 4	BC 5	BC 6	BC7	BC8
Process		Rd	Pv	Pd	Rps	Rp n	YC	Elisio n	r-liaison
Region	North	468	32	243	70	156	15	773	53
	East	480	55	181	83	169	17	718	110
	West	479	72	186	96	153	37	702	84
Total Score		142 7	159	610	249	478	69	2193	247
Token Expected		144 0	720	960	960	720	960	3600	3360

Keys: BC: Boundary Context; **Rd:** Regressive devoicing; **Pv:** Progressive voicing; **Pd:** Progressive devoicing; **Rps:** Regressive place (stop); Rpn Regressive place

These scores were further converted to percentages in order to measure the regional performance index and the overall rating in each process (see Table 3).

Table 3: Participants' percentage scores according to regions

Context		BC 1	BC 2	BC 3	BC 4	BC 5	BC 6	BC7	BC8
Process		Rd	Pv	Pd	Rps	Rpn	YC	Elisio n	r-liaison
Region	North	32.5	4.4	25.3	7.3	21.7	1.6	21.4	1.6
	East	33.3	7.6	18.8	8.6	23.5	1.8	19.9	3.3

West	33.3	10	19.4	10	21.2	3.8	19.5	2.5
Total %	**99.1**	**22**	**63.5**	**25.9**	**66.4**	**7.2**	**60.8**	**7.4**

From Table 3, it is evident that participants predominantly produced Regressive devoicing (Rd) at BC1 (where a voiced obstruent precedes a voiceless one), e.g. *we chose six player* [ʧos siks] and *five pounds* [faif paunds]: word-final voiced /z/ and /v/ sounds became voiceless /s/ and /f/ respectively at both word boundaries under the influence of the following voiceless /s/ and /p/ sounds. Overall, 99.1% tokens of this assimilatory form were observed. North, East and West scored 32.5%, 33.3% and 33.3% respectively.

At BC2 (where the reduced form of the third person singular of the verb *be* is preceded by a voiced segment), participants produced only 22% instances of Progressive voicing (Pv), e.g. *she's a good girl* [ʃiz] and *the dog's mine* [dɔgz main]. In each case, /s/ changed to /z/ under the influence of the preceding voiced /ɪ/ and /g/ sounds. North, East and West got 4.4%, 7.6% and 10% respectively.

At BC3 (where a voiced obstruent is preceded by a voiceless one), overall cases of Progressive devoicing (Pd) produced were 63.5% (North 25.3%, East 18.8% and West 19.4%). For example, the word-initial /d/ and /b/ in the second words of *black dress* and *ice blue* respectively became devoiced due to the influence of the preceding voiceless /k/ and /s/ segments, e.g. [blak d̥rɛs] and [ais b̥luː].

At BC4, 25.9% cases of Regressive place stop (Rps) assimilation were observed altogether at word boundaries where alveolar stop /t/ is followed by bilabial stops /p, k/ and alveolar stop /d/ by velar stops /g, b/ (North 7.3%, East 8.6% and West 10%). For instance, /t/ in *met Peter* and /d/ in *good girl* took on the place of articulation feature of the following bilabial stop /p/ and velar stop /g/ respectively to become [mɛp pita] and [gug gɛl]

At BC5 (where alveolar nasal /n/ is followed by bilabial stops /b, p/ or velar stop /k/, participants produced 63.5% tokens of Regressive place nasal (Rpn) assimilation. The three regions- North, East, and

West- scored 21.7%, 23.5% and 21.2% respectively. For example, alveolar nasal /n/ in *ten boys* and *in case* changed to bilabial nasal /m/ [tɛm bɔis] before bilabial stop /b/ and velar nasal /ŋ/ [iŋ kes] before velar stop /k/ respectively.

Only 7.2% cases of yod coalescence were observed at BC6 where alveolars /s, z, t, d/ are followed by the palatal glide /j/ (North 1.6%, East 1.8% and West 3.8%). For example, in *miss your train* [miʃɔ:], alveolar /s/ and palatal /j/ merged at word boundary to become palato-aveolar /ʃ/), while alveolar /d/ and palatal /j/ merged at word boundary to become palato-aveolar /ʤ/ in [wuʤu] *would you leave here?*

Participants produced substantial cases of boundary consonant elision at BC7 (consonant clusters involving /t/ and /d/ at word and morpheme boundaries). Altogether, 60.8% was recorded: 21.4 for Northern region, 19.9 for the East and 19.5 for the West. For instance, final alveolar stops /t/ and /d/ in *test* and *found* respectively were deleted before the following word-initial consonants *drive* in *test drive* [tɛsˀdraiv] and *five* in [faunˀ faiv] *found five*.

R-liaison (linking and intrusive /r/) was produced minimally in BC8, where there is a hiatus in-between two adjacent vowels at word boundaries. Only 7.4% tokens were produced by all participants. North, East and West shared 1.6%, 3.3% and 2.5% respectively. For example in *after a while* [aftar e wail], the word-final *r* in *after* is articulated to link the word with *a,* which is the following word, while an orthographically non-existent /r/ is articulated in *idea of* [aidiar ɔf] to link the adjacent vowels.

Regional consideration of connected speech processes in NigE

In order to ascertain the convergence and divergence of NigE speakers' regional accents, the raw scores were subjected to the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), using the IBM SPSS statistics 20 package. ANOVA is used to reveal the effect of a categorical independent variable (e.g. region) on a quantitative dependent variable (e.g. boundary assimilations). It is a parametric statistical procedure which tests for significant differences between groups by comparing the variation

between the groups with the variation found within the groups. The key statistic in ANOVA is the F test of difference of group means (or averages), which tests if the means are different enough not to have occurred by chance. The null hypothesis is that group means do not differ at all. A level of less than 0.05 indicates significantly different group means.

In order to arrive at valid and accurate statistical outputs and to also make the analysis manageable, only the principal CSPs under investigation (boundary assimilations, boundary consonant deletions and r-liaison) were subjected to the inferential analysis. Thus, all processes identified under boundary consonant assimilations were combined and treated together. Table 4 contains the aggregated assimilation, deletion and r-liaison mean scores for each region.

Table 4: Mean scores for assimilations, deletions and r-liaison according to regions.

	CSPs		
Region	BA	BCD	R-liaison
North	12.30	9.66	0.66
East	12.31	8.97	1.38
West	12.79	8.78	1.05
Total Means	12.47	9.18	1.03

Key: ***BA:*** *Boundary Assimilations;* ***BCD:*** *Boundary Consonant Deletions*

Table 4 (corroborated by Fig. 1) suggests that only slight differences exist among the regions in each of the CSPs. In boundary assimilations,

participants from the West assimilated most with a mean score of 12.79, followed by those from the East (with 12.31 mean score) and the North (12.30 mean score). The table also shows the Northerners (with 9.66 mean score) minimally using boundary consonant elision process more than participants from other regions. They were followed by the Easterners (8.97 mean) and the Westerners with a mean of 8.78. The Eastern participants had the highest mean score (1.38) in liaison, followed by the Western (1.05) and the Northern participants (0.66).

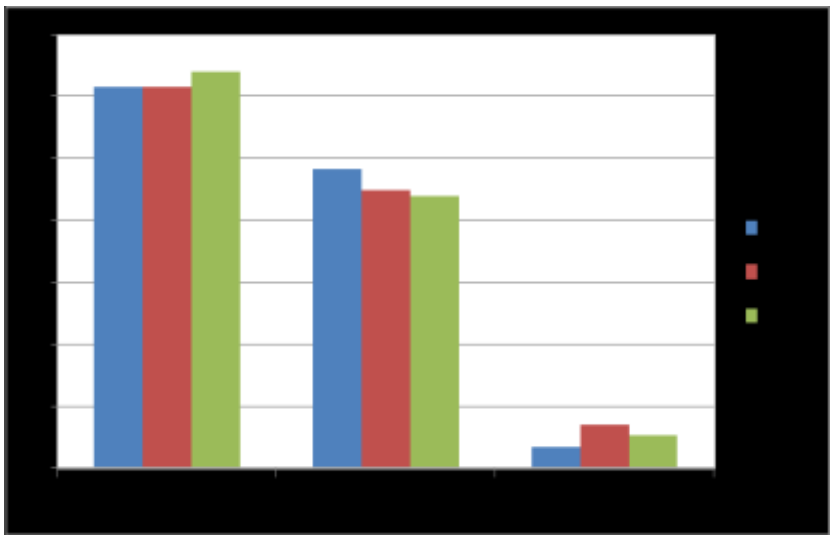

Fig. 1. Participants' aggregated mean scores by regions.

In order to test the significance of the results, therefore, a One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed (at $\alpha = .05$ level), with individual raw scores for boundary assimilations, boundary consonant deletions and r-liaison as the dependent variables (DVs) and region as the independent variable (IV). The ANOVA results showed that only the mean scores for r-liaison differed significantly across different regions (see Table 5). With $p < .05$, there was a significant effect of liaison on region ($F(2, 237) = 6.81$, $p = .001$), while assimilation and elision had no significant effect.

Table 5: Results of ANOVA analysis for region

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
BA	Between Groups	12.358	2	6.179	1.757	.175
	Within Groups	833.375	237	3.516		
	Total	845.733	239			
BCD	Between Groups	34.675	2	17.337	2.443	.089
	Within Groups	1681.788	237	7.096		
	Total	1716.463	239			
R-liaison	Between Groups	20.358	2	10.179	6.806	.001
	Within Groups	354.438	237	1.496		
	Total	374.796	239			

However, because the IV (region) has more than two levels, it became necessary to examine the post-hoc test for liaison in order to identify the exact point of the regional difference. The results of Games-Howell post hoc test (see Appendix A) indicated that it was the liaison mean scores for Eastern (M = 1.38) and Northern regions (M = 0.66) that were significantly different from each other. The mean score differences between the East and the West, and between the North and the West were not statistically significant. This implies that the only regional variation found in the data was in r-liaison, between Eastern and Northern regions.

Discussion

The variation analysis of NigE speakers' disposition to assimilation, elision and r-liaison processes of connected speech, as highlighted above, shows that only very little regional variation exists in these aspects of CSPs. The findings revealed a regional pattern of usage which does not support theoretical claims in the literature about the heterogeneity and diversity of NigE as found in other domains of phonology. Since it is believed, theoretically though, that NigE is as varied as the number of indigenous languages spoken within her border (Adetugbo, 2004; Banjo, 1979), one would have expected a pattern of connected speech that fully justifies this claim. Surprisingly, however, boundary assimilations and boundary consonant deletions mean scores were not found to be statistically significant. This indicates a regional convergence of these CSPs in NigE.

However, this performance does not imply that NigE speakers represent a completely homogeneous speech community or have essentially the same speech norms. Rather, it is a demonstration of certain shared phonetically motivated patterns of speech, traceable to phonological naturalness and mother tongue influence of speakers (Oladipupo, 2014a). For instance, it is on record that users of English in Nigeria, like any other L2 speakers, usually employ sounds which are more natural (easier to articulate) and seek to simplify the patterns of the English language in a bid to speak the language (Ellis, 1985; Oladipupo, 2014c; Simo Bobda, 1994). In this regard, scholars (e.g. Jibril, 1982; Oladipupo, 2014a; Simo Bobda, 2007) have established (it has also been demonstrated in this study) that there is a high tendency to simplify consonant clusters by consonant deletion in connected speech in NigE, irrespective of the region or ethnicity of speakers. The reason adduced for this is that the complex consonant clusters of Standard English usually pose problems to many NigE speakers, whose

mother tongues consist of a limited number of syllable structures (Dunstan, 1969). This justifies the uniform performance of speakers and explains non-regional variability in boundary consonant deletion process.

In the same vein, most NigE speakers lack the capacity to speak rapidly and join words together in connected speech (Adetugbo, 2004). The implication of this is that they are unable to produce some assimilatory processes typical of Standard English, since assimilation is often triggered when speech is spoken fast and sounds are linked with each other without junctures between them. This, again, justifies the absence of regional variability in assimilation.

The only regional contrast found in the data was in r-liaison between speakers from the Eastern region (with the highest mean score) and the Northern region (with the lowest mean score). Even this was not categorical. As shown by the regional and overall mean scores for liaison in the data (see Table 4), the incidence of this CSP was very low compared to others. This demonstrates paucity of r-liaison usage in NigE, which only became most glaring among participants from the Northern region. Thus, there was a convergence of sort amongst speakers from the West and the East.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings have shown that only very little regional variation exists in NigE accents in terms of assimilation, elision and r-liaison processes of connected speech. This suggests that there is more convergence than divergence in the regional accents of NigE speakers in these aspects of CSPs. In view of this, we cannot but agree with Laver's (1968) opinion that variation in speech in NigE seems to be confined to certain sound segments and particular intonation patterns. The same sentiment was echoed by Jibril (1982:232) who avers that "the most important and consistent indicators of ethnic identity in the spoken English of Nigerians are precisely those non-segmental features of rhythm, intonation and voice quality". Therefore, Kerswill's (1985; 1987)

observation that CSPs may be socially differentiated in a community, depending on the regional affiliation of speakers among other factors, is not fully supported by this study, at least relative to boundary assimilations, boundary consonant deletions and r-liaison.

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Appendix A

Table of multiple comparisons: Post hoc test

Multiple Comparisons

Games-Howell

Dependent Variable	(I) REGION	(J) REGION	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
BA	NORTH	EAST	-.01250	.27501	.999
		WEST	-.48750	.31376	.269
	EAST	NORTH	.01250	.27501	.999
		WEST	-.47500	.29941	.255
	WEST	NORTH	.48750	.31376	.269
		EAST	.47500	.29941	.255
BCD	NORTH	EAST	.68750	.44506	.273
		WEST	.88750	.44470	.117
	EAST	NORTH	-.68750	.44506	.273
		WEST	.20000	.36929	.851
	WEST	NORTH	-.88750	.44470	.117
		EAST	-.20000	.36929	.851
Liaison	NORTH	EAST	-.71250*	.19835	.001
		WEST	-.38750	.17416	.070
	EAST	NORTH	.71250*	.19835	.001
		WEST	.32500	.20614	.259
	WEST	NORTH	.38750	.17416	.070
		EAST	-.32500	.20614	.259

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix B. TEST DATA

Test 1 items are responses to some questions you'll be asked. Please respond as quickly and in the most casual/natural way as possible. Test 2 is a dialogue, read it as naturally as possible.

TEST 1

	Researcher	The participant
1)	*Have you ever met Peter?*	I've met Peter at the station
2)	*How many boys are here?*	There are ten boys
3)	*What do you know about the girl?*	She's a good girl
4)	*Please, wake me up by 7am*	You will miss your train
5)	(The respondent asks):	Has your letter come?
6)	*Yeah. But who brought the letter*	Those young men
7)	*I need a lot of money.*	Money? What you need is a good job.
8)	(The respondent says):	Would you leave here?
9)	*OK! But She is looking for you.*	Why? Doesn't she know her teacher?
10)	*I don't know. But why not ask him to do it?*	He won't do it
11)	*Did he say something?*	No, he kept quiet
12)	*I want more food, please*!	You mustn't over-eat
13)	*How many did you find?*	I found five
14)	*Is he a young man?*	No, he is an old man
15)	*Did you enjoy your launch?*	That was cold lunch
16)	*Did he look sad?*	No, he seemed glad
17)	*Did they rob the Mall?*	No, but they robbed both banks
18)	*How did I jump?*	You jumped well
19)	*What do you want from your husband?*	I want more of Him
20)	*Did you meet him at that time?*	I met him after a while
21)	*What can you say about their action?*	Their action is wrong
22)	*What is the main duty of the police?*	They maintain law and order
23)	*Do you know the answer?*	Know what? I don't have an Idea of it

24)	*Where were you yesterday?*	I was at a media event
25)	*How many players were chosen?*	We chose six players.
26)	*Do you have to go there?*	Yea! I have to go
27)	*What was the show like*?	Oh! It was a live show
28)	*What can you say about the boy?*	He's a nice boy
29)	*Whose dog is it?*	The dog's mine
30)	*What did she wear?*	She wore a black dress
31)	*Did you finish the job*?	No, the job was half-done

TEST 2

A. Good morning. I'd like to inquire about the advertised car

B. Yes, we have the car here. Its features will amaze you

A. Is the information about it valid?

B. Yes, of course. It is equipped with power-assisted steering, which I suppose, is the most important piece of information that you need

A. Well, obviously, but...do you think it is really ice blue with darker blue inside?

B. Oh... yes, this is the exact colour of the car.

A. All right, then. Can I arrange a test drive for tomorrow?

B. Y..es, you can have it tomorrow... It'll cost you ten pounds in case you don't buy it

A. Ten pounds!! Could you rather make it five pounds?

B. Sorry, madam, we have a fixed price for all customers.

A. Well...in that case, I'll be there tomorrow. Goodbye.

B. Goodbye and God bless you.