

## Stress and Rhythm in the Educated Nigerian Accent of English

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**Abstract :** The intention of this paper is to examine stress in the Educated Nigerian Accent of English (ENAE) with the aim of analyzing stress and rhythmic patterns of Nigerian English. Our aim also is to isolate differences and similarities in the stress patterns studied and also know what forms the accent of these Educated Nigerian English (ENE) which marks them off from other groups or English's of the world, to ascertain and characterize it and to provide documented evidence for its existence. Nigerian stress and rhythmic patterns are significantly different from the British English stress and rhythmic patterns consequently, the educated Nigerian English (ENE) features more stressed syllables than the native speakers' varieties. The excessive stressed of syllables causes a contiguous "Ss" in the rhythmic flow of ENE, and this brings about a "jerky rhythm" which distorts communication. To ascertain this claim, ten (10) Nigerian speakers who are educated in the English Language were selected by a stratified Random Sampling technique from two Federal Universities in Nigeria. This classification belongs to the education to the educated class or standard variety. Their performance was compared to that of a Briton (control). The Metrical system of analysis was used. The respondents were made to read some words and utterance which was recorded and analyzed perceptually, statistically and acoustically using the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The Turkey-Kramer Post Hoc test, the Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Ranks test, and the Praat analysis software were used in the analysis. It was revealed from our findings that the Educated Nigerian English speakers feature more stressed syllables in their productions by spending more time in pronouncing stressed syllables and sometimes lesser time in pronouncing the unstressed syllables. Their overall tempo was faster. The ENE speakers used tone to mark prominence while the native speaker used stress to mark pronounce, typified by the control. We concluded that the stress pattern of the ENE speakers was significantly different from the native speaker's variety represented by the control's performance.

**Keywords :** accent, Nigerian English, rhythm, stress

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