

Aspects of Tone in the Educated Nigeria Accent of English

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Abstract : The study seeks to analyze tone in the Educated Nigerian accent of English (ENAE) using the three tones: Low (L), High (H) and Low-High (LH). The aim is to find out whether there are any differences or similarities in the performance of the experimental group and the control. To achieve this, twenty educated Nigerian speakers of English who are educated in the language were selected by a Stratified Random Sampling (SRS) technique from two federal universities in Nigeria. They were given a passage to read and their intonation patterns were compared with that of a native speaker (control). The data were analyzed using Pierrehumbert's (1980) intonation system of analysis. Three different approaches were employed in the analysis of the intonation Phrase (IP) as used by Pierrehumbert: perceptual, statistical and acoustic. We first analyzed our data from the passage and utterances using Willcoxon Matched Pairs Signs Ranks Test to establish the differences between the performance of the experimental group and the control. Then, the one-way Analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical and Tukey-Krammar Post Hoc Tests were used to test for any significant difference in the performances of the twenty subjects. The acoustic data were presented to corroborate both the perceptual and statistical findings. Finally, the tonal patterns of the selected subjects in the three categories - A, B, C, were compared with those of the control. Our findings revealed that the tonal pattern of the Educated Nigerian Accent of English (ENAE) is significantly different from the tonal pattern of the Standard British Accent of English (SBAE) as represented by the control. A high preference for unidirectional tones, especially, the high tones was observed in the performance of the experimental group. Also, high tones do not necessarily correspond to stressed syllables and low tones to unstressed syllables.

Keywords : accent, intonation phrase (IP), tonal patterns, tone

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