



The Influence of Intonation in Conveying Meanings in Conversation: A Study of Some Nigerian English Speakers

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Abstract: Beyond contextual factors, intonation significantly influences meaning in conversation. Many a times, identical utterances yield different interpretations based on their intonational patterns. This study investigates intonation patterns in marking meanings and attitudes in Nigerian English, while also examining the persistent neglect of intonation instruction in school curricula despite its crucial role in conveying speaker attitudes and meanings. The study involved forty respondents (twenty each from Federal University Gusau and Zamfara State University Talata Mafara) enrolled in 200-, 300-, and 400-level English programs who had received basic intonation training. Participants were made to read twelve utterance items designed to assess their intonational competence. Employing O'Connor and Arnold's (1973) framework with quantitative analysis and stratified sampling, findings reveal that while respondents demonstrated fair intonational knowledge, many struggled to appropriately apply intonation patterns to convey varying meanings and attitudes in Nigerian English. The results support Banjo's (1976) and Cruz-Ferreira's (1989) assertions regarding Nigerian English speakers' limited use of complex English intonation tunes, particularly those expressing speaker attitudes during conversation.

Keywords: Intonation Patterns, Nigerian English, Speaker Attitudes, Meaning Conveyance, English Language Education, Suprasegmental Phonology.

Research Paper

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INTRODUCTION

Intonation is very crucial in conveying meaning, attitude, and emotions of speakers in spoken language. Its impact could be likened to that of punctuation in written language. A shift in intonation tune could affect the intended meaning in particular circumstances. However, despite the importance of intonation in achieving effective communication, it is not accorded the needed attention in L2 spoken language situations, especially Nigerian English. Cruz-Ferreira (1989) observes that, of all the suprasegmental features, intonation is the last stronghold of a foreign accent in speaking any second language (L2). He further asserts that this observation holds true even for speakers who otherwise have perfect or near-perfect command of the phonetics of the L2. Banjo (1976) also observes that the appropriate use of English stress and intonation is the final hurdle, which a vast majority of speakers of English as a second language never manage to cross. As a result,

the intonation of non-native speakers poses a serious intelligibility problem for native speakers of the language, as reported by Tiffen (1974) and Bansal (1976) on Nigerian English and Indian English, respectively.

The study examines intonation usage among Nigerian speakers of English in conversations. The primary aim is to explore how intonation in English is used as a marker of meaning and attitude of speakers. Various studies have shown that intonation is put to restricted use among users of English in Nigeria, as it is rarely used to express the attitude of speakers. The study attests that many Nigerians, despite their knowledge and training in Phonetics and Phonology, could not adequately use intonational patterns to express varying degrees of meaning in conversation. Jowitt (1991) is particularly of the opinion that the rich intonational resources of Standard British English suffer neglect among Nigerian speakers of English, and this affects communication. Thus, according to him, public officials

may be misinterpreted due to their inability to use the appropriate intonation tune. Roach (2010) believes that foreign learners of English need to learn the appropriate way of using intonation in a given situation to avoid giving offence unintentionally. "That is, in trying to express gratitude or affection, they may end up expressing boredom or discontent, etc." This intelligibility issue, as reported by Tiffen (1974), is not unconnected with the restricted use to which intonation is put in the second language situation. The study therefore adopts the native speaker's usage as a model and examines how far speakers from Nigeria limit or deviate from that usage.

Statement of the Research Problem

It has been observed that intonation has been neglected in the teaching of the English language from secondary school up to the university level. As a result, Nigerian users find it difficult to make adequate use of intonational patterns to express different meanings and attitudes, even among those who undergo training in Phonetics and Phonology courses. This has then posed a serious intelligibility problem for speakers of English as a second language. The effect is that, many a time, a speaker of English as a second language may sound unintentionally rude due to their inability to use correct intonation tunes. Roach (2010) asserts that foreign learners of English must be conscious in learning the correct use of intonation to avoid giving offense unintentionally. Pike (1972) is of the opinion that listeners are more conscious of intonational meaning than lexical meaning. It is against this backdrop that this research intends to investigate the impact and causes of poor usage and how it affects communication.

The Concept of Intonation

Phonology can be analyzed based on the segmental and suprasegmental aspects (Roach, 2010). This suprasegmental aspect of phonology is also called prosody or prosodic phonology. The prosody of connected speech may be analyzed and described in terms of a large number of prosodic features. There are three prosodic features which linguists most commonly used for this purpose. These three features are pitch, length, and loudness. Pitch, as an acoustic feature, is the result of the speed of the vibration of the vocal cords in the voiced part of utterances. It concerns the varying height of the pitch of the voice over one syllable or over a number of successive syllables (Cruttenden, 1997).

Pitch is one of the features perceived by listeners. It is the prosodic feature most centrally involved in intonation, hence the concern of the present study. It primarily depends on the rate of the vibration of the vocal cords within the larynx.

Robins (1964), however, added that, since pitch results from the speed of vibration of the vocal cords in the voiced part of utterances, it is therefore assumed that the term does not properly apply to voiceless sounds, nor

to whispers. This is to say variation in the vocal folds produces sounds acoustically higher or lower. The faster the cords vibrate, the greater the number of regular changes in the pitch of the voice.

Ladefoged and Johnson (2011) assert that the pitch of the voice is however determined by many factors; the most important is the tension of the vocal folds. If the vocal folds are stretched, the pitch of the voice will go up. Altering the tension of the vocal folds is the normal way of producing most of the pitch variations that occur in speech. O'Grady *et al.*, (1997) believe that it is the variation of the tension of the vocal folds and the amount of air that passes through the glottis that results in different pitch levels. This means the combination of tensed vocal folds and greater air pressure results in higher voice pitch on vowels and sonorants, while less tense vocal folds and lower air pressure result in lower pitch.

In linguistics, intonation is used to distinguish words and utterances. All languages use pitch. Within the domain of words, pitch can be used to distinguish lexical meaning and grammatical properties. This is referred to as tone. Alternatively, pitch can also operate at the domain of an entire utterance, which indicates the different attitudes and emotions of the speaker, signaling the difference between statements and questions, and between different types of questions, focusing attention on important elements of the spoken message, and also helping to regulate conversational interaction. When used this way, this pitch variation is referred to as intonation (Katamba, 1989).

O'Connor & Arnold (1973) argue that there is variation of pitch in all languages; however, different languages use this pitch variation in different ways. They added three premises upon which intonation can be discussed. These are: intonation is significant, which indicates that difference in intonation could result in difference in meaning. This means that the same phrase could be said in a flat, reserved, or questioning tone of voice among others. Intonation is systemic; on the other hand, it states that tunes of intonation are not used at random, rather there is a specific system that governs their usage. Finally, intonation is characteristic maintains that there are different intonation tunes for different languages and applying a different language tune or wrong use of the tune may result in difficulty in communication or misunderstanding. The last one is the focus of this study: applying the right intonation tune by Nigerian users of English in order to express the meaning and attitude intended in a particular situation.

Furthermore, the intonation tunes of a language (e.g., English) may usually be associated in general with particular contextual functions of the speech and with various general semantic categories, such as emphasis, excitement, surprise, anger, etc. There are two major intonation tunes in English: Tune 1 (or falling tune) is

associated with statements or questions introduced by specific interrogative words, e.g., "Who gave you this book?" Tune II (or rising tune), on the other hand, is associated with questions requiring Yes or No answer (polar question) and with protest. Those two are certainly not the only intonation tunes recognizable in English, but they cover a good deal of ordinary speech.

Ladefoged & Johnson (2011) add that there are, however, different kinds of information that can be conveyed by variation in pitch. As is the case with other aspects of speech sounds, some of this information simply indicates the personal characteristics of the speaker. The pitch of the voice usually indicates whether the speaker is male or female and what age group he/she belongs to. In addition, it conveys a great deal of non-linguistic information about the speaker's emotional state—whether the person is calm or angry, happy or sad. Yet, nobody can say if the pitch changes conveying this sort of information are universal or not. But it is apparent that speakers of different languages have similar inflection when conveying similar emotional information.

They, however, conclude that there seem to be universal aspects to the ways in which languages use pitch differences to convey linguistic information. All languages use pitch to mark boundaries of syntactic units. In almost all languages, the completion of a grammatical unit, such as a sentence, is signaled by a falling pitch. The last stressed syllable is on a lower pitch than it would have been if it were non-final. Conversely, incomplete utterances, such as mid-sentence/clause breaks where the speaker intends to show that there is something still to come, often have a basically rising intonation.

Discourse information can also be conveyed by intonation in English. For example, the statement "Michael has written a few short books, but he also wrote a very 'long one'" can be pronounced to convey that the new information in the sentence is that "the book is a long one," said by putting a high pitch accent on the word "long." The same sequence of words can also be used to convey that the new information is that "the book is one that Michael wrote," say in the context of a preceding sentence like "*Michael wrote a very long book*," by placing a high pitch accent on the word "wrote." If these sentences are said with correct and incorrect accent placement, the speaker will experience the importance of intonation in conveying discourse information (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011).

Intonation, Meaning and Nigerian Situation

Various studies (Akinjobi, 2012; Tiffen, 1974; Udumuh, 1971; Jowitt, 1991, etc.) have shown that intonation is put to restricted use among users of English in Nigeria, as it is rarely used to express attitude and other aspects of meaning. Jowitt (1991) argues that the rich intonational resources of Standard British English

are put to limited use among Nigerian speakers of English, and this, however, affects communication in the language. Thus, according to him, public officials may unintentionally sound rude as a result of their inability to use the appropriate intonation tune. Roach (2010) believes that foreign learners of English need to learn the appropriate way of using intonation in a given situation, so as not to misrepresent meaning or give offense unintentionally. "*That is, in trying to express gratitude or affection, they may end up expressing boredom or discontent, etc.*"

Pike (1972:56) has aptly explained the relationship between intonation and meaning, where he states the communicative importance of intonation very vividly in the following words:

Actually, we often react more violently to the intonational meanings than to the lexical ones; if a man's tone of voice contradicts his words, we immediately assume that the intonation more faithfully reflects his true linguistic intentions.

Pike (ibid.) also added that:

If one says something insulting but smiles in face and voice, the utterance may be a great compliment; but if one says something very complimentary but with an intonation of contempt, the result is an insult.

Also commenting on the communicative importance of intonation, Gimson (1980: 264) describes it as "*the most efficient means of rendering prominence for a listener, those parts of an utterance on which the speaker wishes to concentrate attention.*"

However, despite the communicative importance of intonation, it is not usually given the adequate attention it deserves. Scholars like Odumuh (1971), Jowitt (1991), and Osisanwo (2009) have all expressed similar opinions. In particular, Jowitt remarks that the intonation patterns of Standard Nigerian English are in some ways different from the intonation patterns of Standard British English, otherwise known as RP. In trying to find out the reason for the above variations, Tiffen (1959) says that the choice of intonation patterns in British English (BrE), 'rise' and 'fall,' is, more or less, deliberate and conscious, but such a choice in Nigerian English (NigE) is, more or less, accidental and unconscious. Wilkins (1972) also remarks that in a second language-learning situation, where a spoken form is required with a view to extensive social contact in a particular language, intonation assumes major importance.

Intonation, in particular, of all the prosodic aspects of English, appears to be a fertile area for language transfer. It is the area in which the teaching of English to non-native learners is least welcome. It is, therefore, not surprising that intonation, as an area in

phonological study, is least successful. Consequently, while an average educated non-native learner of English can attain a very high standard of grammatical accuracy in the language and master the pronunciation of its sound segments and word stress, they often cannot appropriately use its intonation with any reasonable degree of confidence. Hence, the description of intonation by Odlin (1989) as “one of the crucial parts of language transfer which foreign language teaching strategies seem not to have taken seriously” is, therefore, very appropriate.

The Attitudinal Role of Intonation

Many Scholars have written about the attitudinal function of intonation part of which includes politeness. O'Connor and Arnold (1973), Bartel (2013) and Roach (2010) have identified that there are some intonation tunes which speakers use to express surprise, detachment, politeness, doubt, reservation, protest, and apology and so on. O'Connor and Arnold (1973) identified ten intonation tunes which express different relationship between particular intonational patterns and particular meanings and attitudes. Here are some examples:

1. **LOW FALL (Low Drop)** surliness, reserved, or categorical, (statements); detached, unsympathetic, hostile, or serious, urgent (questions); unemotional, or very serious, very strong (commands, interjections).

- i. (Where are you heading to?) home.
- ii. (Do you go to school?) yes I do
- iii. (Are you sure?) Absolutely certain

2. HIGH FALL (High Drop):

Feeling of involvement, light, airy (Statements); businesslike, friendly (wh-questions); showing interest, sometimes skeptical (yes - no question); demanding agreement (tag-question) suggesting a course of action, not worrying about being obeyed (commands); mild surprise (interjections) etc. examples:

- i. (Can you pay me a visit next weekend) I am afraid I can't, I have examination to *write on Monday, may be some other times.
- ii. (Nuhu's coming as well.) Really!
- iii. You are not comfortable here. Are you?

3. LOW RISE (Take off) with Low Head:

Encouraging further contribution in the conversation, showing guarded attitude, reserving judgment, appealing to the listener to change his mind, resentful (Statements): Wondering, mildly puzzled, or disapproving, resentful (questions). Examples:

- i. (Hello Mr. Benjamin) Hello Frank, you look smart, going somewhere?
- ii. I would have to sack him.) You can't do that. He is still useful to us.
- iii. (You haven't submitted your assignment.), yes I have, I did that this morning

4. LOW BOUNCE (High-Rise):

Soothing and reassuring statement, Questioning, trying to elicit a repetition, lacking any suggestion of disapproval or puzzlement (Statements); echoing the other speaker's question, or light and casual (yes -no question); quarrying all or part of the other speaker's words (commands, interjections).

- i. (Where are you going?) just to visit a friend
- ii. (I said he was a thief) You actually *called him a thief?
- iii. (Sani cut his finger)! Badly?
- iv. Good morning, good bye

5. SWITCH BACK (Fall-Rise):

Showing non-finality in statement for contrast purpose, grudging admission, concerned, reproachful, hurt, reserved tentatively suggesting (Statements); greatly astonished (echoes); interested and concerned as well as surprised (questions); urgently, with a note of reproach or concern (commands); contempt or scornful (interjections). Examples:

- i. We all like tea for breakfast, but Mr. Salmandoesn't.
- ii. (I didn't know that you take alcohol.) I do sometimes.
- iii. (I play football rather well.) You think you do?
- iv. (I beg for your pardon.) but I afraid I must contradict you.

6. LONG JUMP:

(Rise-Fall) emotional & protesting, as if suffering under a sense of injustice, definite and complete (Statement) asking about something not expected of him and not pleasing (Wh- questions); surprised; impressed (interjections). Examples:

- i. (You ought to have informed us) I didn't think it was necessary.
- ii. (I asked Femi to bring the chair) Why did you do that?
- iii. (Isn't this soup horrible?) Mine's fine.
- iv. (I wonder who would repair my phone?) take it back to the shop where you bought it.

7. HIGH BOUNCE:

Statements have the effect of questions; and very often used in echoed statements; showing also non-finality (statement) call for the repetition of information already given; or echoing for the speaker to be clear about the question, straightforward Wh-question which is tentative & casual (WH-question) echoing and straightforward when the question is lighter & casual. (Yes-No question) also oh! & really?

- i. Chocolate? or tea? Mean 'Do you like chocolate? Or tea?'
- ii. He bought some milk, chocolate and cheese.
- iii. How many children he has? How many? Or who are you talking to?

8. TERRACE (High Bounce): calling out to someone from a distance. Showing also non-finality
 Audu! Zaid! Aminu! Abba!

Two, three, four, five, six.....

Is that the best you can do? To patch it up?

What a pity - that you just couldn't manage it!

METHODOLOGY

A total of forty (40) questionnaires were administered, twenty (20) each in Federal University Gusau and Zamfara State University Talata Mafara (ZAMSUT). The researcher and his assistants interacted with respondents in their various universities. For ease of collection, respondents were required to read a number of utterances which were designed to elicit the use of intonational tunes to bring out different meanings and attitudes. The utterances served to indicate if students, who were in their various levels of studies and who had adequate training in Phonetics and Phonology, could make correct use of intonation tunes to convey varying meanings and attitudes.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections (Section A and B). Section A consisted of the demographic information of the respondents while Section B consisted of the series of utterances meant to test the respondents' knowledge of using appropriate intonation tunes to elicit the meanings and attitude. The data generated was analyzed using O'Connor and Arnold (1973) as the framework for the analysis.

As indicated earlier, a total of forty questionnaires were administered to students of English at the Federal University Gusau and Zamfara State University Talata Mafara in their 200, 300 and 400 Levels of studies. The levels were chosen because they had taken enough courses in Phonetics and Phonology in their curriculum to accord them with adequate knowledge of the use of intonational tunes to convey varying degrees of meaning and attitude in conversation. The paper used stratified sampling method to get the

population for the study and quantitative method for the analysis of the data generated.

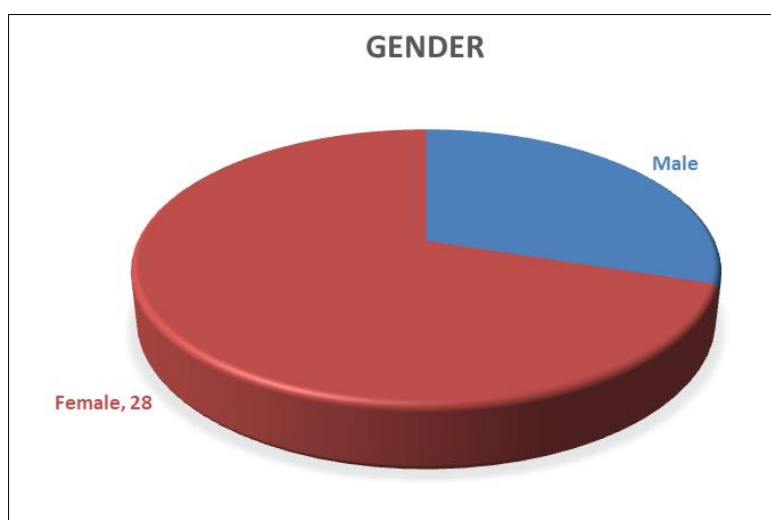
The data was analyzed to identify how the respondents used different intonation tunes (e.g. low-fall, low-bounce, high-rise, take-up, terrace etc.) where necessary to convey different meanings in the prepared utterances. The utterances were graded as 'correct' when said with the required intonational pattern to bring out the required meaning. They were graded 'intermediary' when said with some level of compliance but not entirely correct. They were adjudged 'wrong' when they went contrary to the required intonation tune. Each of the appropriate productions of utterance was counted and then the cumulative points were converted into percentages. The analysis of the data generated was made into tables and graphs for pictorial representations.

Data Collection and Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the data for the study was collected through a questionnaire containing two sections: a section for demographic information and a section for the utterances which would elicit different uses of intonation tunes to express different meanings and attitudes. Respondents were asked to read utterances using correct intonation patterns to indicate the intended meaning. This demonstrates their level of familiarity with using intonational tunes based on their training and regular practice. Below are the collected and analyzed data:

Gender					
Male		Female		Total	
12	30%	28	70%	40	100%

The table above shows gender distribution of the respondents, the data show 30% male and 70% female. The gender proportion was deliberately chosen considering the fact that, based on sociolinguistic study, female tend to speak with extra perfection than male.

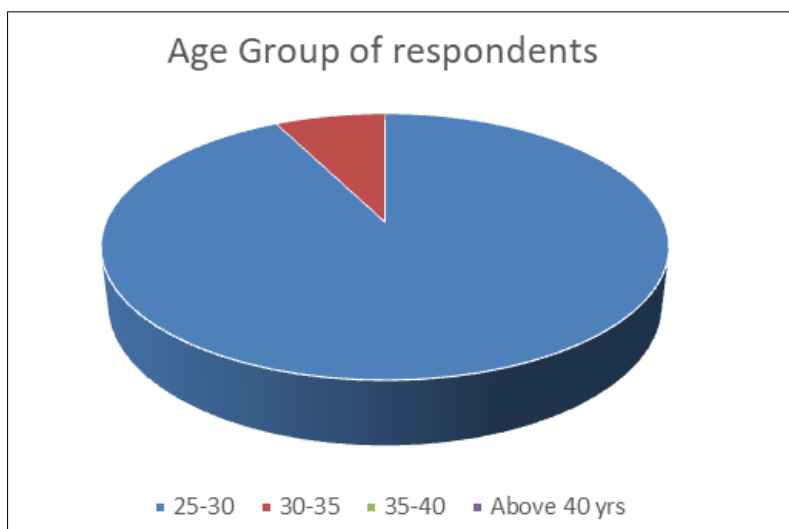


Age Group of the Respondents

25-30		30-35		35-40		Above 40 years	
37	92.5%	3	7.5%	Nil		Nil	

The table shows that greater percentage are youths between the ages of 25-30 years (92.5%) while nobody among the respondents is up to 35 years of age. The concentration of respondents between the ages of

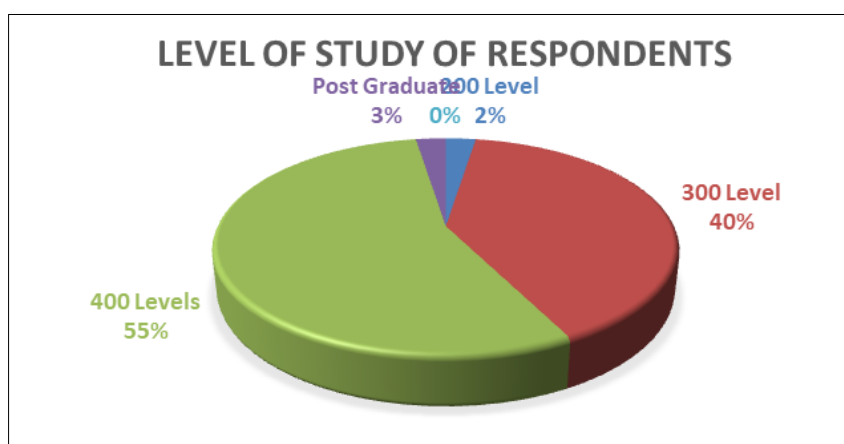
25-30 years show that the age of respondents are within age bracket that is easier to adopt change. This is coupled with the fact that they are students that have underwent training in the aspect of Phonetics and Phonology.

**Level of Study**

200 Level		300 Level		400 Level		PG	
1	2.5%	16	40%	22	55%	1	2.5%

The table indicates that students of 300 and 400 Levels formed the majority of the respondents. These groups of students are strategically sampled as the students underwent different level of trainings in Phonetics and Phonology (ENG 103: Spoken English;

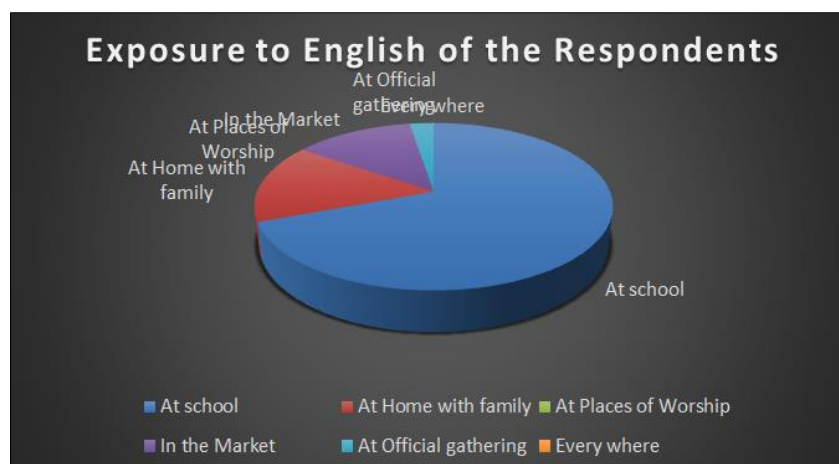
ENG 203 & 204: Introduction to General Phonetics and Phonology I & II and ENG 302: Phonology of English). They are believed to possess level of training in the use of intonation to convey meaning and attitude.

**Exposure with English Language**

At School Only		At Home with family		At places of worship		In the market		Official gathering		Everywhere	
27	67.5%	6	15%	Nil		5	12.5%	1	2.5%	1	2.5%

The table shows where respondents have exposure to English Language. The data shows that greater percentage of the respondents have exposure to

English only when they are at school. This may have some impact on their use of English Language.



Appropriate Intonation Tunes to indicate meaning and attitude

Come and <i>have dinner</i> with us (command which is expected to be obeyed) CWO- low –drop	Correct		Intermediary		Wrong	
	12	30%	19	47.5%	08	20%
I said he was a liar. You actually called <i>him a liar</i> (Echoed showing surprise or disbelief) ESD – low bounce	16	40%	14	35%	09	22.5%
Would you mind moving along <i>a bit</i> (polar displaying genuine interest) PDGI- low bounce	27	67.5%	08	20%	04	10%
. <i>Good morning Good bye</i> (Leave-taking showing friendliness (LTSF)) –low bounce	13	32.5%	20	50%	06	15%
I can do that on Monday - <i>*You can't</i> (I have just explain to you, you can't) –high drop	17	42.5%	17	42.5%	05	12.5%
- <i>You can't</i> (you ought to know very well, you can't.)- take off	24	60%	09	22.5%	06	15%
- <i>You can't</i> (I am sorry you should think you can) – switchback	14	35%	22	55%	03	7.5%
I beg <i>your pardon</i> - I am afraid I must contradict you. (Apology suggesting reservation (ASR)) –switchback	16	40%	16	40%	07	17.5%
Try and be there <i>by six</i> – otherwise, it will be too late (command indicating warning/urgency (CIWU))–switchback	23	57.5%	14	35%	02	5%
Thank you very much - <i>Don't mention</i> it. (command aim to refuse credit for action (CARC)) – Jackknife	17	42.5%	18	45%	04	10%
Ibrahim has arrived - <i>I'm glad</i> he was able to come (statement showing happiness or surprise (SSHS)). High dive	20	50%	16	40%	03	7.5%
<i>What a pity</i> - that you couldn't manage it (Interjection) –terrace	29	72.5%	06	15%	04	10%

DISCUSSION

The table above shows that respondents have fair knowledge of the application of intonational patterns to indicate varying degrees of meanings and attitudes. The data show instances where respondents pronounced the utterances with correct intonational patterns having higher percentages than the remaining two options. It could be seen that in six utterances, respondents with correct pronunciations are higher than those with incorrect and intermediary pronunciations. Intermediary follows with four utterances, while the two (correct and intermediary pronunciations) are equal in two utterances. This indicates respondents' fair level of familiarity with intonation tunes. The data equally show that in five utterances, the correct usage is more than 50% of the total number of utterances. Intermediary follows with only two utterances where it is more than 50%. This further supports the earlier claim that respondents, who are students in their 200, 300, and 400 levels, have fairly

adequate knowledge of using intonation tunes to vary meanings in conversation.

Although there are a number of correct pronunciations in the utterances, there are also wrong and intermediary (neither wrong nor completely correct) utterances. The number of these intermediary and incorrect pronunciations put together, in most cases, are more than the correct utterances. We have seen in the statement 'You actually called him a liar (Echoed showing surprise or disbelief),' which is supposed to be a 'low-bounce,' only 16 (40%) of the respondents pronounced it with the correct pattern, while the remaining 60% pronounced it with either an intermediary pattern or incorrect pattern. Likewise, in 'I beg your pardon (Apology suggesting reservation (ASR),' 'Good morning – Good bye (Leave-taking showing friendliness),' and 'Come and have dinner with us (command which is expected to be obeyed),' which are supposed to have 'switchback,' 'low bounce,' and

'low-drop' patterns respectively, have 16 (40%), 13 (32.5%), and 12 (30%) correct responses each, with the rest being either intermediary or wrong responses.

The data show that despite the respondents' exposure to courses that equip them with knowledge of using intonational patterns to show meaning and attitude, they still fall short of making adequate use of such patterns for that purpose. This agrees with the position of Cruz-Ferrera (1989) and Banjo (1976), who believe that intonation is the last hurdle that even educated speakers never manage to cross. These limited uses, even among educated Nigerians, explain the reason for the neglect of this area. The area of intonation is constantly neglected from primary to university levels, although the knowledge is sometimes embedded in usage without actually treating the subject area separately.

In terms of its impact on proper communication, wrong meanings and improper attitudes are communicated unconsciously due to the way intonation is used in Nigerian English. Consider saying the utterance 'Good morning' 'Good bye' with 'low-drop.' The tendency is that the friendliness that is supposed to be communicated when uttered with 'low-bounce' will not be there, and the meaning has therefore been changed. Likewise, a statement 'Ibrahim has arrived - I'm glad he was able to come,' when said with 'High-drive,' indicates a statement showing happiness or surprise. However, if said with different intonational patterns, it will communicate different meanings or attitudes entirely.

There is indeed a limited use of intonation patterns in Nigerian English. This is evident from the data where students in their 200, 300, and 400 levels could not make perfect use of intonation patterns to communicate appropriate meanings and attitudes despite their training in Phonetics and Phonology courses, which equip them with adequate knowledge to do so. This indicates that if students in English departments who have special training in usage could get such percentages of incorrect pronunciations, what more of students who are not specialists in the area (science, Engineering, administration, etc.) and the general users of Nigerian English in the categories identified by different scholars (Banjo, 1969; Brosnahan, 1958; Akere, 1987; Bamgbose, 1982; and Awonusi, 1987).

Recommendations

A special strategy is needed to address the gap that exists in the use of intonational tunes to express meanings and attitudes among Nigerian speakers of English, with special attention to categories of speakers believed to have mastered aspects of grammar and sound systems, but who were found to be making errors that testify to the fact that intonation in Nigerian English is not fully utilized for communicating meaning in conversation. Based on the above, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Educators and policymakers should be aware that we cannot attain communicative competence in the English language except when we can use intonation patterns to communicate meanings. Hence, there is a need to entrench in our curriculum and education policy how this gap will be addressed.
- ii. Aspects of spoken communication should be given priority in the design of English school curricula. It should be included in language drilling so that pupils can become conversant with its usage right from primary school.
- iii. Language teachers and school administrators (principals, headmasters/headmistresses) should be encouraged to follow the designated curriculum (which textbook writers follow) diligently so that no topic is skipped. By doing this, all aspects of language learning will be adequately covered.
- iv. Language users at all levels should be made to understand the importance of using different intonational tunes to communicate meaning, in addition to the grammatical structural method.

CONCLUSION

The research studied the influence of intonation patterns in communicating appropriate meanings and attitudes in Nigerian English. Forty respondents at different levels of study in the Departments of English at Federal University Gusau and Zamfara State University Talata Mafara (both in Zamfara State, Nigeria) were asked to pronounce utterances designed to elicit different uses of intonational patterns to communicate varying meanings and attitudes. The data show that the percentage of correct utterances is less than that of incorrect ones (combining intermediary and wrong pronunciations), despite the fact that the respondents belong to Brosnahan's Level IV category in his categorization of Nigerian English (which he calls the university variety), Banjo's VIII category, and Bamgbose's School English. This confirms the earlier claim that intonation is a neglected area, with the result that Nigerian English speakers find it difficult to fully utilize intonation to communicate meanings in conversation.

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