

# **ENGLISH LANGUAGE USE IN THE FILM INDUSTRY: EXTRACTS FROM ROSY MY TAILOR AND ROYAL CHALLENGE: ERROR ANALYSIS**

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## **Abstract**

*Some Nollywood movies are seen as sources of errors; a hotbed for errors. They have also been tagged a negative influence on some viewers who have attained an appreciable level of mastery in the English language. The main purpose of this study therefore is to examine the use of English in Nollywood movies and find out if it is either an asset to its target audience or if the reverse is the case. Although works of art are for entertainment, they are also meant to improve the audiences knowledge of the use of language. This study seeks to find out if the English spoken in Nollywood movies can be termed errors or deviant forms of English. The theoretical frame work is based on Error Analysis. This research is a qualitative research. The population for the research comprised Four Nollywood movies Rosy my Tailor ( 1&2) and Royal Challenge (1&2). These movies were deliberately selected, excerpts from the conversations in these movies that exemplify wrong use of English formed the data for the research. The excerpts were selected according to the timing of the scenes in the movies and analysed in accordance with the research questions. Findings showed that these Nollywood movies are breeding ground for fossilized errors. It was also found out that the English Language use in the Nollywood is below average. The film makers do not make conscious effort to stick to the rules of the grammar of English in their movies. The wrong use of English was not as a result of characterization because characters that were schooled in countries where English is a native language equally committed unpardonable errors in the movies.*

## **Introduction**

Language is an inevitable gift to the human race. It is a significant means of human communication. The main purpose of language is communication. Nigeria is a multilingual nation with several indigenous languages and an exo-glossic language called English. Functionally, English outmatches all the indigenous languages in Nigeria. These indigenous languages are mainly geographically and ethnically restricted, but English fosters inter-ethnic communication. The advent of the English language in Nigeria can be traced back to factors like colonialism, immigration, religion, education and commerce. Although Nigerians were already linguistically armed with their first languages which fulfilled their communicative needs, they learned the English language because it is a prestigious language. It is a language of power; its speakers are adorned with certain level of prestige and honour. The

English language can be called a globe trotter, because it has spread its tentacles across many continents. It is a global language.

Film making, the process involved in making a film from script writing to editing, requires a language. The film industry has its own register which comprises words like – lights, camera, and action. The characters make utterances that are replications of real life utterances. This language is meant to effectively influence the thoughts and feelings of the audience and keep their eyes glued to the screen. The film industry in Nigeria – Nollywood – is highly rated. It produces more movies than Hollywood does in a year. “By 2009, Nollywood had surpassed Hollywood as the world’s largest movie industry by volume, right behind India’s Bollywood. And in 2014, the Nigerian government released data for the first time showing Nollywood is a \$3.3 billion sector, with 1844 movies produced in 2013 alone” (Bright par. 2). Although there are movies made in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba languages, movies made in English are ubiquitous in Nigeria. Most of the movies produced in the previously mentioned indigenous languages are subtitled in English. Mnet’s Africa Magic channels have made these movies reachable to people in the whole of Africa.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Language and language use**

Language is a systematic arbitrary set of linguistic symbols. Language is a tool in the hands of its users. It is employed by human beings to serve different purposes, and its primary purpose is communication. Language is used to communicate ideas, feeling, information, and many others. Whether in its written or spoken form, language is inevitable in human interaction. Bloch and Trager define it as “a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates” (10). Sapir asserts that it is “a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols”. (1). It can be deduced from these definitions that language fosters human interaction. Language is a system of communication that caters for the communicative needs of a particular speech community.

Language use is centered on the communicative use of language, because the primary purpose of language is communication. Human beings use language, daily. Every speech community has a language. Babies are predisposed with the capacity to learn and use, at least, one language. Suffice it to say that language use cannot be downplayed.

Bearing in mind the usefulness of language to mankind, an important question arises on how to use language. Language use highlights certain rules that ought to be adhered to in order to use language appropriately. Language use also deals with structures that have been put in place for making language.

In seeing the communicative needs of its speakers, language use can be analysed in different ways. The different levels of analyzing language use are grammar, phonology, syntax, semantics and morphology. Certain rules of a language need to be adhered to in order to make well formed, grammatical and acceptable sentences in the language. “Human language is rule-governed behaviour. For one to use it effectively, one must not only be familiar with its rules but must also be able to apply them correctly during usage” (Eyisi 11).

**i) Grammar**

Grammar is central to any language. It is set of rules which when strictly adhered to produces well-formed sentences. “Grammar is the study of all the contrasts of meaning that it is possible to make within sentences. The ‘rules’ of grammar tell us how” (Crystal 93). Eyisi agrees that:

The place of grammar in the learning of any language, English inclusive, can be compared to the place of rules in playing a game. This is because every game has a set of rules that govern its *modus operandi*. To be successful, players must not only acquaint themselves with these rules but must also endeavour to apply them in the course of playing (11).

The term grammar is used to refer to the quality of the knowledge of a language possessed by a speaker, as inferred from the nature of his utterances. This is the meaning of grammar. One has it at the back of one’s mind when referring to the utterances of a particular speaker. One infers from the nature of the utterances that the quality of the knowledge of the language possessed by the speaker is poor. It can also be used “to mean the body of descriptive statements about the morphological and syntactic structures of a language” (Olu Tomori 1).

Every language possesses a grammar. The grammar of a language is the structure of that language. It comprises the structure of words (morphology), how these words are arranged in phrases and sentences (syntax), and how these sentences make meaning (semantics).

O’Grady and Archibald state that:

One of the most fundamental claims of modern linguistic analysis is that all languages have a grammar. It could not be any other way. If a language is spoken, it must have a phonetic and phonological system; since it has words and sentences, it must also have a morphology and syntax; and since these words and sentences have systematic meanings, there must obviously be semantic principles as well. Of course, these are the very things that make up a grammar(5).

Eyisi concurs in her words:

Perhaps the most useful definition of grammar particularly to language students is that which holds that grammar is a body or set of innate (internalized) linguistic rules which in the mind of a competent user of a language (i.e. the intuitive knowledge of the native speaker---). This knowledge includes: 1. *Phonology* which is concerned with the description of the sound system of a language 2. *Morphology* which deals with the structure and derivation of words. 3. *Semantics* which is concerned with meanings of expressions 4. *Syntax* which is concerned with the proper arrangement of words in a sentence and 5. *Pragmatics* which deals with the ability of a language user to pair sentences with the context in which they would be deemed appropriate (8).

Suffice it to say that a user of a language can only lay claim to the grammar of that language, if the user has an all-inclusive knowledge of all the levels of analysis of that language.

Searle concludes that:

The standard textbook accounts of language say that specific languages such as French or German consist of three components: a phonological component that determines how words and sentences are pronounced, a syntactical component that determines the arrangement of words and morphemes in sentences, and a semantic component that assigns a meaning or interpretation to words and sentences.

More sophisticated accounts add there must also be a pragmatic component that is not a component of specific languages (9).

**ii) Phonology**

Phonology is the study of speech sounds in a language. According to Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, “the study of how speech sounds form patterns is **phonology**. These patterns may be as simple as the fact that the velar nasal cannot begin a syllable in English, or as complex as why *g* is silent in *sign* but is pronounced in the related word *signature*” (227). Phonological rules determine sounds in a language. They govern the behavioral patterns of speech sounds in a word or sentence. Phonetics studies speech sounds in isolation while phonology considers how these sounds change and behave differently when they are combined in syllables, words or sentences. Allophonic rules, for instance, complete qualities of pronunciation that are not present in the lexical forms of morphemes but are required by their circumstances in speech as in the aspiration of a word – the initial /k/ in ‘close’- and the rounding of the word -initial /r/ of run.

**iii) Morphology**

Morphology is the study of word forms. The underlying factor in morphology is words. Words have internal structures. Some words possess independent meanings while others can only make meaning when paired with other words. When these words are classified into minimal units, they are called morphemes. A morpheme is “the smallest unit of speech that has semantic or grammatical meaning” (Olu Tomori 25). A morpheme can be either free or bound. Free morphemes make meaning of their own accord while bound morphemes must be attached to other morphemes to make meaning. The latter are affixes.

**Examples**

**Free Morpheme bound Morpheme**

Market -ly  
dog-tion

Bound morphemes are further divided into derivational morphemes (change the word class of the word they are attached to) and inflectional morphemes (do not change the word class of the word they are attached to).

**iv) Syntax**

Syntax studies the arrangement of words and phrases to produce well-formed sentences. It can be seen as a set of rules that oversees the structure of sentences in any language. “The part of grammar that represents a speaker’s knowledge of sentences and their structures is called syntax” (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams 78). Syntactic rules govern the order (structure) of words in order to form meaningful sentences in a language.

Certain syntactic rules guide sentence formation in the written form of English. Sentences should start with capital letters, possess finite verbs, should be meaningful, end with punctuation marks (full stop, exclamation mark or question mark), and can be divided into subject and predicate.

Consider the sentence: The man killed the dog.

The man killed the dog  
Subject predicate

The subject and predicate are made up of different words. These words that belong to different classes of words, yet they have the same syntactic function, are said to be

syntactically equivalent. Rules that guide and describe syntactic equivalence are called phrase structures rules. Words are grouped into different word classes.

Example

The man killed the dog

S→NP VP

A sentence comprises a noun phrase and a verb phrase.

NP →(article) N

The noun phrase comprises an article and a noun.

VP→V NP

The verb phrase mostly consists of a verb and a noun phrase

NP→ (article) N

It can also be divided into subject, verb, and object. Syntax represents the structural aspect of a language.

Example

The man      killed      the dog.

    S      V                  O

Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams assert:

The rules of syntax combine words into phrases and phrases into sentences. Among other things, the rules specify the correct word order for a language. For example, English is a subject-verb-object (SVO) language. The English sentence in (1) is grammatical because the words occur in the right order; the sentence in (2) is ungrammatical because the word order is incorrect for English... 1. The President appointed a new Supreme justice. 2. \*President the new Supreme justice Court a nominated.

### **v) Semantics**

Semantics investigates meaning. It is the scientific study of meaning. A sentence can be grammatically and syntactically correct, but semantically wrong. Semantics does not really have a correspondence with grammaticality.

Example

The pizza ate the man.

Because a pizza does not have that animate disposition to eat something, the sentence, although well formed, is semantically wrong. It is impossible for a pizza to eat a human being. It happens the other way round. After words have been structurally arranged to form sentences, meaning comes into play. Semantics is centered on the validity and meaning of a sentence.

A word/sentence can even be laced with the ambiguity; dual meaning. Cruse says:

An expression (strictly, an expression form) is said to be ambiguous if it has more than one possible distinct meaning. However, since virtually every expression can be interpreted in more than one way in some context or other, the term is usually reserved for expressions with more than one established meaning(10).

The word 'run' is an ambiguous word. It could represent a physical activity. For instance, I always go for a run in the morning. It could also serve as a political ambition in a sentence like: Tinibu will run for president in 2023. In these examples, meaning is deduced from the context of use: Another example is the word bank. Bank 1: side of a river, bank 2: a place for safe keeping of money. The sentence, "Flying planes can be dangerous" is equally ambiguous. Is the sentence talking about the act of flying planes or planes that fly?

#### **vi) Pragmatics**

Pragmatics examines meaning with regards to context. It deals with how what one literarily says is quite different from what one means. It is ‘‘the way in which we use language with context’’ (Selinker and Gass 13).

Examples

A: Will you be at the vigil in church on Friday night?

B: I am not suffering from insomnia.

It can be deduced from the context that B would rather be at home sleeping than participate in the vigil.

Emeka and John are on a bus. John is sitting by the window and Emeka says to him: Can you wind up the window?

Emeka is not asking John if he has the ability to wind up the window, but it is a request for him to do so.

It is pertinent to reiterate the fact that an all-encompassing knowledge of all these levels of language use crowns a language user with the complete mastery of that particular language. A language user needs to be competent in all levels of language analysis before the person can be said to be competent in the grammar of that language. Language is particularly used in the movie industry.

#### **Language use in Nollywood**

Movies are made using language. From scriptwriting to the first production and editing, language is involved. English is the official language in Nigeria; a language of prestige. It is the language of wider communication. Nollywood is the second largest movie industry in the world.

According to Onuzulike,

Nollywood, which mirrors the names of Hollywood and Bollywood, is the name of the Nigerian movie industry. Despite the fact that Nigeria had been producing movies since the colonial period, the movie *Living in Bondage* (1992), which sold over 750,000 copies, is typically credited with ushering in Nollywood films( The Economist 2006). A 2006 survey conducted by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) classified Nollywood as the second-largest film producer in the world, only behind Bollywood, Hollywood was ranked third. The survey found that Bollywood produced 1,091 feature-length films, Nollywood produced 872 (all in video format) while Hollywood released 485 major film productions (UNESCO Press 2009). These statistics are relevant because it is often assumed that Hollywood makes more movies since it is more popular and has significantly higher marketing budgets. Conversely, while Nollywood’s marketing budget is minimal, the distribution of video films is cheaper and has wider appeal, in part because it is relatively easy for consumers to access video films. The industries also diverge in that Hollywood predominantly portrays the western world while Nollywood depicts the African world (287).

Although Nollywood film makers employ the languages available in Nigeria, Nollywood movies are majorly produced in English. Even many movies that depict the Igbo culture are produced using the English language. A few movies are produced in indigenous languages and subtitled in English. The Yoruba movie industry has taken it upon itself to churn out movies produced in the indigenous Yoruba language. Notwithstanding, these movies are subtitled in English.

Some movie producers are beginning to push boundaries, and are producing movies in Nigerian Pidgin. It is worthy of note that Nigeria Pidgin is an amalgamation of English and the indigenous languages in Nigeria. The language is spoken by both the educated and uneducated in specific social contexts. This pidgin language has also been creolised in Niger Delta region of Nigeria. However, this language has not really received much acceptance in Nigeria. People do not want to associate with it. Over the years, movie producers assign it to uneducated characters to highlight their levels of education, or the lack thereof. The narrative is slightly changing as we see both the educated and uneducated characters in movies use it as a code choice. There is a deception of true language behaviour of Nigerians.

On the other side of the divide are movies produced in bad English and hybrid languages. *The New Masquerade* (a sitcom of the late 1980s and 1990s), *Jenifa* (the movie), and *Jennifa's Diary* (a series) are examples of movies produced in hybrid languages. Many utterances in these movies and series can be termed un-English. Characters like Zebrudaya and Jenifa- in these movies- only make utterances in these hybrid languages. It is worthy of note that the use of hybrid languages in these movies is to create humour. They are equally few in numbers. But Nollywood movies produced in bad English are Ubiquitous. They are not comic movies, so the erroneous use Of English is not for the purpose of humour. These errors can be found in different levels of language use.

English has a major stake in the Nigeria movie industry. Many movies are produced in English, even the indigenous movies are subtitled in English. Nollywood actors are seen as global figures due to the ubiquity of these movies. They are the ones that bring the erroneous usages to the fore, even if they are the fault of scriptwriters or producers. So, international intelligibility is required of these actors and the movies. It behoves them to showcase a mastery of English, even though they are non-native speakers of the language. This work calls for appropriate use of English in the industry.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Error Analysis**

An Error according to Gass,

Errors can be taken as red flags: they provide windows onto a system- that is, evidence of the state of a learner's knowledge of the L2. They are not to be viewed solely as a product of imperfect learning; hence, they are not something for teachers to throw their hands up in the air about.---it has been found that Second language errors are not a reflection of faulty imitation. Rather, they are to be viewed as indications of a learner's attempt to figure out some system, that is, to impose regularity on the language the learner is exposed to. As such, they are evidence of an underlying rule governed system. In some sense, the focus on errors is the beginning of the field of second language acquisition, which at this point is beginning to emerge as a field of interest not only for the pedagogical implications that may result from knowing about second language learning, but also because of the theoretical implications for fields such as psychology (in particular learning theory) and linguistics (102).

Richard and Schmidt define it as the use of a word, speech act or grammatical items in such a way it seems imperfect and significant of incomplete learning (184). While Norrish (7) defines it as a systematic deviation that happens when a learner has not

learnt something, and consistently gets it wrong. From these definitions, one can deduce that errors are deviations from certain norms guiding correct language use.

Analysing these errors made by second language learners of a language during the process of language acquisition gives rise to error analysis. Error analysis in second language acquisition was proposed by Corder as an alternative to contrastive analysis, because contrastive analysis did not predict the majority of errors committed by second language learners. In the words of Grass,

What is error analysis? As the Name suggests, it is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. Unlike contrastive analysis (in either its weak or strong form), the comparison made is between the errors a learner makes in producing the TL and the TL form itself. It is similar to the weak version of contrastive analysis in that both start from learner production data; however, in contrastive analysis the comparison is made with the native language, whereas in error analysis it is made with the TL (102).

A Major finding of error analysis has been that many learner errors are produced by learners making wrong inferences about the rules of the target language. The steps that are involved in carrying out error analysis are:

1. Collection of data
2. Identification of errors
3. Classification of errors
4. Quantification of errors
5. Analysis of source
6. Remediation

The theory of error analysis identifies two major types of error, interlingual and intralingual errors. Intralingual errors arise from the complexities that are inherent in the native language, but Interlingual errors are as a result of the differences between the L1 and the target language. Interlingual errors are those which can be attributed to the NL (ie, they involve cross-linguistic comparisons). Intralingual errors are those that are due to the language being learned, independent of the NL'' (Gass 103). Suffice it to say that mother tongue influence causes interlingual errors, and this leads to negative transfer.

### **Research Methodology**

This research is a qualitative research; a case study model. Measurable data were not employed in carrying out the research; it is not concerned with measurement and numbers. This work focuses on four Nollywood movies which were purposively chosen. They are Royal Challenge 1 and 2 produced by Onyeka Okpeze and Rosy my Tailor 1 and 2 produced by Onyekachukwu Okeke jnr. Sentences that depict wrong use of English/ bad English were used for analysis. The data was analysed in accordance with the research questions and it produced results that were used to generalize.

### **Research Question 1**

How do sentences in Nollywood movies stick to the syntactic structures of the English language?

#### **Except from *Rosy My Tailor 1***

1. You see this my keke, is for special people. Is for my Rosy, not for people like you. 9:43



**Part 2**

2. \*Her phone is here. Is charging. 36:51  
3. \*Break up with him. Call it a quit 1:03:42

**Analysis**

**Excerpt 1**

\*You see this my keke, is for special people. Is for my Rosy, not for people like you. 9:43

First, it is totally unpardonable to start a sentence with *is*, unless the speaker is asking a question.

It is only interrogative sentences that can start with *is*. One of the criteria for constructing well-formed sentences is that a sentence must have a subject and predicate. It is ungrammatical and unacceptable to start a sentence, which is not a question, with the primary auxiliary verb *is*.

The correct forms are

- i. You see this keke, it is for special people. It is for my Rosy, not for people like you.  
ii. See, this keke is for special people.  
iii. Look at this keke, it is for special people.

**Excerpt 2**

\*Her phone is here. Is charging.

This sentence is wrong. The situation here is same as that of excerpt 1 above. The second sentence is without a subject. The speaker ought to have said - Her phone is here. It is charging.

It is charging.

S V C

**Excerpt 3**

\*Break up with him. Call it a quit.

The word 'quits' is an adjective. It serves as the complement in the sentence; therefore it should not have an article preceding it. The correct version is — 'call it quits'.

Call it quits.

V O C

**Excerpts from *Royal Challenge*1**

- 1) \*She must have to leave the palace. 34:11

**Part2**

- 2) \*Is absolutely unimaginable. How can a human being turn to snake? 21:35

**Analysis**

**Excerpt 1**

\*She must have to leave the palace.

The modal auxiliary verbs *must* and *haveto* should not be juxtaposed in a sentence, because they serve the same function. It is tautological to do so. Either of them is used in a sentence. The actor that made this utterance disrupted the sentence pattern by using modal auxiliary verbs that mean the same thing. The correct versions are

She must leave the palace.

S V O

She has to leave the palace.

S V O

### **Excerpt 2**

\*Is absolutely unimaginable. How can a human being turn to snake?

The fact that *is* cannot start a sentence that is not an interrogative sentence cannot be overemphasized. The correct sentence is-It is absolutely unimaginable.

It is absolutely unimaginable.

S V C

The contracted form of 'it is' - has been abused and reduced to *is*, in both speech and writing. This is ungrammatical.

Generally, these excerpts from *Rosy my Tailor* and *Royal Challenge* depict induced errors and errors of overgeneralization. These errors are as a result of the generalization of the target language's linguistic materials. Because some imperative sentences (sentences that ask questions) start with *is*, second language learners apply this pattern and generalize it to sentences that are not questions.

### **Research Question Two**

In what ways can the English language spoken in Nollywood movies be termed erroneous or Good English?

Good English or Standard English is synonymous with correct use of English, whether in the written or spoken form. It is the ability to speak English coherently and fluently. It is akin to competent use of English. Knowledge of the rules of grammar of a language makes one a competent user of that language.

#### **Excerpts from *Rosy my Tailor***

- 1) \*So, tell me, where did you get this brains from? 15:29
- 2) \*I'm serious than a heart attack, baby. 17:31
- 3) \*That young man has bright futures. He may not be financially buoyant but he makes fatsalaries. 18:24
- 4) \*No, mama. Have you asked Nnana? I saw him when he came back and rushed into the parlour. And rushed out almost immediately without offing the engine of his keke. 30:20
- 5) \*That's just my consign. 54:26
- 6) \*That guy is a 'rear' gem. 56:28
- 7) \*Sommy, what different does it make? 57:14
- 8) \*It does. He has to like her first \*/fost/. 57:23

#### **Part 2**

- 9) \*I told her at the onset, see I am going to carry my Rosy. 21:19
- 10) \*What do you want me to prepare for you? I told you I'm a very good chef. 48:50

### **Analysis**

#### **Excerpt 1**

\*so, tell me, where did you get his brains from? 15:29

The brain, a part of the central nervous system, is an organ in the head which controls functions, sensory movements and thoughts. Brain can also be defined as the ability to think and reason. In informal situations, an intelligent person can be addressed as "the brains" of something.

Examples

- a) Chika is the brains of the project.
- b) Emeka was the brains of that company.

However, in the context above, the word *brain* is used as the ability to think and reason correctly; therefore, it is outrageous for the speaker to add –s to that noun. This is bad English. It is an error. The actor have said - So, tell me, where did you get this brain from? This sentence is also wrong because ‘this’ ought not to modify ‘brains’.

**Excerpt 2**

\*I’m serious than a heart attack, baby.

*Serious* is a gradable adjective. Comparative adjectives compare the differences between the two nouns they modify. Two syllable adjectives that do not end in –y, like *serious*, have the word *more* added before the adjective.

The sentence above is an error. It is an anomaly. The actor should have said: I’m more serious than a heart attack, baby.

**Excerpt 3**

\*That young man has bright futures. He may not be financially buoyant, but he makes fat salaries.

The word ‘futures’ is associated with finance and the stock market. Future, generally, refers to a certain time has not come. Although future is a count noun, a human being has just one future allotted to him or her. It highlights certain events that may take place in a person’s life at a later time. The sentence is wrong. The correct thing to say is –‘that young man has a bright future’.

**Excerpt 4**

\*No, mama. Have you asked Nnanna? I saw him when he came back and rushed into the parlour. And rushed out almost immediately without offing the engine of his keke.

*Off* is an adverb. It also serves as a preposition and an adjective. It could also be used informally, as a verb, to mean kill. In a context where one is talking of putting off a machine/engine, it is wrong to add –ing to *off*. In such contexts, *off* ought to appear as part of a phrasal verb; switch off or turn off. The correct sentence is -And rushed out almost immediately without switching off the engine of his keke.

This error has gained a certain level of ubiquity in Nigeria. This error has been fossilized to the extent that it is evident in both formal and informal speech and writing. People also tend to say ‘oning’, that is, they talk about \*offing and \*oning switches, engines, machines and others.

**Excerpt 5**

\*That’s just my consign.

*Concern* is wrongly pronounced in this sentence. Concern is transcribed and pronounced in this sentence. Concern is transcribed and pronounced /kənsɜ:n/ not \*/kɒnsam/. This pronunciation error is glaring in the speech of many second language users of English in Nigeria.

**Excerpt 6**

\*That guy is a ‘rear’ gem.

In the sentence above, the word *rear* is used in place of *rare*. These two words are spelt with the same letters of the alphabet, but they are not similar. They are not related. A rare gem is an amazing human being, and there is nothing like a rear gem in English. Rear is synonymous with back.

The sentence exemplifies an error in pronunciation. The correct sentence is – That guy is a rare gem.

**Excerpt 7**

\*Sommy, what different does it make?

In the sentence above, ‘different’ was wrongly used in place of ‘difference’. ‘Different’ is an adjective while ‘difference’ is a noun. A noun is most suitable in the sentence. The correct version is – Sommy, what difference does it make?

**Excerpt 8**

\*It does. He has to like her first\*/fɔːst/.

The actor that produced this sentence pronounced first/fɜːst/ as/f\*/fɔːst/. This is a pronunciation error that is prevalent among many speakers of English in Nigeria.

**Excerpt 9**

\*I told her at the onset; see, I am going to carry my Rosy.

‘Outset’ is more suited in this sentence. ‘Onset’ and ‘outset’ are similar but they explain different statuses. ‘Onset’ talks of the beginning of a situation. It is used mainly to depict an unpalatable situation. But ‘outset’ talks of the beginning of events or a journey. The actor ought to have said – I told her from the outset; see, I am going to carry my Rosy.

**Excerpt 10**

\*What do you want me to prepare for you? I told you I’m a very good chef /tʃef/.

This speaker commits pronunciation error. S/he over generalises certain rules of pronunciation. Some words that begin with ch, like church /tʃɜːtʃ/, start with the /tʃ/sound, so this speaker intends the same rule to chef. But this rule is not applicable in pronunciation of chef. The correct pronunciation is /tʃ/.

**Excerpts from Royal Challenge**

- 1) \*What I see sitting down, you cannot see, even if you climb /klamb/ the highest mountain. 22:07
- 2) \*Bundle her out. The gods has exposed her. 40:40

**Part 2**

- 3) \*He also made me understand that the Bible says that the devil came to kill, steal and destroy. 21:18
- 4) \*Should we use this great opportunity /opochuniti/ to formally ask for her hand in marriage? 30:51

**Analysis**

**Excerpt 1**

\*What I see sitting down, you cannot see, even if you climb the highest mountain.

*If* is used to construct present unreal conditional sentences. The present unreal conditional is used to explain (un)certainities in imaginary situations. These conditional sentences have their verbs in the past tense form, even though they do not make reference to past events. The correct version is – What I see sitting down, you cannot see, even if you climbed the highest mountain.

**Excerpt 2**

\*Bundle her out. The gods exposed her.

The sentence above is erroneous. Plural verbs take plural subjects. But that is not the case in the sentence above. A singular verb has been allocated to a plural subject, and this is totally wrong. Subjects and verbs have to agree in number. The correct sentence is – Bundle her out. The gods have exposed her.

### **Excerpt 3**

\*He also made me understand that the Bible says that the devil came to kill, steal and destroy.

*Made* is a causative verb. Causative verbs indicate another action. They indicate that someone caused an event to take place. Therefore, *made* is a bare infinitive. It is not used with 'to'. The correct version of the sentence is – He also made me understand that the Bible says that the devil came to kill, still and destroy.

### **Excerpt 4**

\*Should we use this great opportunity /ɒpɔːtʃuːnɪti/ to formally ask for her hand in marriage?

*Opportunity* is wrongly pronounced in this sentence. The correct pronunciation is /ɒpətʃuːnɪti/.

This error has been fossilized, and many non-native speakers of English speak it.

The use of English in Nollywood movies is quite poor. Their sentences are replete with errors. These errors are committed by both the highly educated characters and the barely educated ones. Some of these highly educated characters, like Sommy in *Rosy my Tailor*, were schooled abroad. This shows that the errors are not a case of characterisation of illiterate characters. Although errors are found in *Rosy my Tailor* and *Royal Challenge*, errors are ubiquitous in *Rosy my Tailor*.

### **Research Question Three**

To what extent is the semantic appropriateness of utterances in Nollywood movies?

Semantics studies meaning. One of the criteria for constructing a well-formed sentence is that the sentence must express a thought. This simply means that the sentence ought to be meaningful. A sentence may be syntactically correct but semantically inappropriate. An example is – The pizza ate the man. This sentence is semantically inappropriate because it does not make meaning. It does not express complete thought. Pizzas are meant to be eaten and not the other way round.

### **Excerpts from *Rosy my Tailor* 1**

- 1) \*If you permit me, I would have love to court with you. 17:03
- 2) \*That guy is a rear gem. 56:28

### **Part 2**

- 3) \*I've been looking at your dress (male shirt). I've been admiring it. Tell me, who made this dress for you? 41:52

### **Analysis**

#### **Excerpt 1**

\*If you permit me, I would love to court with you.

This conversation plays out as Greg, one of the main characters in *Rosy my Tailor*, woos a woman. *Court*, in the sentence, is used in a context where a man intends to get married to a woman. It is called 'courting' someone not courting with someone. For the purpose of semantic clarity, the actor should have said – If you permit me, I would love to court you.

#### **Excerpt 2**

\*That guy is a rear gem.

This sentence is confusing. A gem is something – usually a stone – that is admired because it is beautiful. Rear, on the other hand, defines something that is found at the posterior/back of something. Rear gems do not exist. Something closer to 'rear gem'

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is rare gem. A rare gem is an amazing individual who is hard to find. The correct sentence is – That guy is a rare gem.

#### **Excerpt 3**

\*I've been looking at your dress (male shirt). I've been admiring it .Tell me, who made this dress for you?

This sentence is a compliment from Sommy (a female character) to Greg (a male character). This sentence is totally confusing because Greg, a man, was wearing a shirt and pair of trousers at the time the comment was made during the movie. A dress (gown) is a specific kind of clothing for females which covers both the upper and lower parts of the body. It is worthy of note that Greg is neither homosexual nor a cross dresser. The correct sentence is – I've been looking at your shirt. I've been admiring it. Tell me, who made this shirt for you?

#### **Excerpt from Royal Challenge**

1) \*Before you fall for her, the chief priest has to certify her, to avert you from contacting evil spirit. That is our tradition. 11:45

#### **Analysis**

\*Before you fall for her, the chief priest has to certify her, to avert you from contacting evil spirit. That is our tradition.

The wrong use of the verb 'contacting' affects the semantic appropriateness of the sentence. Evil spirits are spirits, therefore they cannot be physically touched. They cannot be communicated with, ordinarily. They cannot be contacted. 'Contract' (verb) is more suited for this sentence. The correct sentence is – Before you fall for her, the chief priest has to certify her, to avert you from contracting evil spirit. That is our tradition.

The sentences above are syntactically correct but semantically anomalous. Certain errors committed in these sentences tampered with their meanings. The sentences do not express complete thought, even though they meet certain criteria for constructing well-formed sentences. These movies, especially *Rosy my Tailor*, contain sentences that are not semantically appropriate. These sentences are very confusing for viewers and tend to mislead them. They equally inhibit comprehension.

#### **Research Question Four**

How are the basic rules of concord flouted in Nigerian films?

Concord means agreement. This agreement is between words in terms of their grammatical categories - case, number, person and gender. Agreement influences the forms that words assume in sentences. This entails that if the subject of a verb (sentence) is singular, the verb has to be in its singular form. Put succinctly, singular verbs take singular subjects and plural verbs take plural subjects. Also, pronouns and their antecedents must agree in gender and number.

Examples

- a) The man loves his wife.
- b) Men love their wives.
- c) Michael is intelligent. He does not frolick with retards
- d) The police are here.

If grammatical categories of a sentence do not harmonise or agree, a concord error occurs.

**Excerpts from *Rosy my Tailor*1**

- 1) \*So, is it only your mum and your dad that likes me? 16:08
- 2) \*Dad, mum, Greg and I has something to tell the both of you. 23:39

**Part 2**

- 3) \*So, how is dad and mum? 18:16
- 4) \*I told you. Older men does not last long in bed. 38:40

**Analysis**

**Excerpt 1**

\*So, is it only your mum and your dad that likes me?

This is an aberrant sentence. The plural subject – your mum and your dad – takes a singular verb ‘likes’. The subject and verb are not in synergy. The rule of concord is not applied in this sentence. The non- aberrant sentence is- So, is it only your mum and your dad that like me?

**Excerpt 2**

\*Dad, mum, Greg and I has something to tell the both of you.

This sentence is not correct. A singular primary auxiliary verb is allocated to a plural subject. This sentence is bereft of the subject verb agreement rule of concord. It is an anomaly. The correct sentence should read: ‘Dad, mum, Greg and I have something to tell the both of you’.

**Excerpt 3**

\*So, how is dad and mum?

This third excerpt is an error. It is an example of bad English. The plural subject – dad and mum – take a singular verb – is. The rule of concord is not applied in the sentence. The non-aberrant sentence is – ‘So, how are dad and mum?’

**Excerpt 4**

\*I told you. Older men does not last long in bed.

The second sentence is completely wrong. The noun phrase, older men, is plural, and should take a plural verb. But a singular verb is apportioned to it in the sentence above. This is grammatically wrong. A plural subject should take a plural verb. The non- aberrant form of the sentence is– I told you. Older men do not last long in bed.

**Excerpts from *Royal Challenge***

- 1) \*Bundle her out. The gods has exposed her. 46:41

**Part 2**

- 2) \*Outer beauty does not count. What count is spiritual make- up. 2:24
- 3) \*Children are the inheritance of the lord, and the fruit of the womb are his reward. 18:00

**Analysis**

**Excerpt 1**

\*Bundle her out. The gods has exposed her.

This sentence is an error. ‘The gods’ is a plural subject; therefore it should take a plural verb. The correct sentence is – bundle her out. The gods have exposed her.

**Excerpt 2**

\*Outer beauty does not count. What count is spiritual make-up.

The second part of this sentence does not follow the subject verb agreement rule of concord. The subject of the verb and the verb do not agree. The sentenceshould read: Outer beauty does not count. What counts is spiritual make-up.

Concord errors were committed, to a considerable extent, in both Rosy my Tailor and Royal Challenge. These errors stem from over – generalisation of certain patterns, and they have been fossilized by the users. These errors deceive the viewers of these movies, because they watch and imbibe these wrong uses of English. Second language learners of English that are yet to grasp the grammar of the target language are confused by the sentences in these movies. Little wonder many viewers of these movies complain that one’s IQ declines due to a continuous viewing of some of these Nollywood movies.

### **Findings**

The English language is a global language. It is used by native and non-native speakers of the language. English has more non-native speakers of the language than native speakers. These non – native speakers of English falter on their quest to learn the English Language. Errors are committed as learning takes place. Nigeria is one of the places where English is spoken as a non – native language. Here, English is spoken as a second language. The actors/script writers/producers/directors, in the movie industry are part of the people that speak English as a second language in Nigeria.

In the course of movie making, grammatical blunders are committed, and viewers tend to adopt these blunders. Put succinctly, the English Language use in Nollywood is below average. The film makers do not make a conscious effort to adapt to the rules of the grammar of English in their movies. Nollywood movies are breeding grounds for fossilized errors.

### **Conclusion**

Language is indispensable in film making. Film makers cannot function without language, a means of communication and entertainment. English language use in movies is recommended as it avails film makers the opportunity to harness the rich/artistic/aesthetic language. It also takes their works of art beyond borders. But the English language has to be correctly used in order to the above listed and more. For these Nollywood movies to be appreciated, the use of English has to be impeccable. If their use of the English language is replete with errors, reviews will be bad and people will withdraw their patronage. Actors should hone their skills by improving their knowledge of English. Also, producers should show that they know their onion by churning out movies whose conversations are error free.

### **Recommendation**

Movies are meant to be educative therefore film makers that employ English in their films have to make sure that people learn a lot about English by viewing their movies. Indulging in movies is one of the recommended methods of vocabulary development, so vocabularies ought to improve by watching Nollywood movies. Professional script writers and editors should always be hired to make sure that the movie scripts are bereft of errors. Editors should always be at movie sets to guide the cast and crew on the use of English Language. This is quite important because if a particular movie industry or a certain branch of the industry, keeps producing movies whose conversations are error filled, competent users of English would not touch their movies. These movies would be black listed.



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