
The Suprasegements or Speech Prosodies of English and Ukwuani

HAPPY DUMBI OMENOGOR, Ph.D,

Department of Languages

Faculty of Arts,

University of Delta, Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria.

Abstract

This work deals with the suprasegements of English and Ukwuani. It discussed intonation and its management in the two languages. Stress is also discussed, it is found out that while English uses stress, Ukwuani is a tone based language. Syllabic structure is also addressed. It is found that the two languages are about the exact opposite of each other with respect to the syllabic structure. While there are mostly closed syllables and few open ones, in English, Ukwuani has open syllables. The phonotactic possibilities in the languages are the exact opposites of each other. While English has CV, CCV, CCCV patterns at the word initial positions and a few VCV, VC patterns also in the word initial position, Ukwuani has VCV, VCVV etc and a few CV, CVV patterns also in the word initial position. This work among other advantages, provides relevant guide for English Language teachers teaching Ukwuani L₁ Learners of English as L₂ since their areas of difficulty have been discovered and appropriate recommendations have been made to solve such problems.

English is an international language. In fact, the most international of all languages. ‘It is a member of the Indo-European family of languages called West Germanic’, as Oyeleye (2003:1) recalled. Three major periods can be identified within the evolution and development of the English language: old English, middle English and modern English periods as Jowitt (2009:12) and Umera-Okeke (2009:31-33) observe.

There are three basic categories of English usage: as a native, foreign and second language. There are also circles of World Englishes. The ‘inner circle’, made up of the Anglo Englishes (older Englishes) which includes the U.K, the U.S.A, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The outer (extended) circle which contains the non-Anglo Englishes (NEs, New Englishes) is one of the categories. The expanding circle involves the countries that recognize the importance of English as an international language, though they were not colonized by the members of the inner circle. English has a very high degree of global importance. The importance of the English language will therefore be examined in the following section.

It is the official language of Britain, the U.S and most parts of the common wealth countries. Osakwe (2011:9) notes that ‘English is the mother-tongue of hundreds of millions of people in Britain, the U.S, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.’ The importance of a language is not only determined by the number of its speakers and the

size of its territory, it is also determined by the importance of its speakers. It is strongly believed among scholars that the following factors must have contributed to the growing importance of the English language.

- i. English is the unquestioned language of international business, trade and commerce.
- ii. English-speaking U.S.A emerged as the prominent country of influence and power in world affairs and
- iii. English is the dominant language of research and academic enterprise.

Osakwe (2011:10) affirms that:

English is superlatively outstanding: not by size of vocabulary (although large), or other linguistic or aesthetic criteria, but on political, economic and demographic realities.

It is the major lingua franca in Nigeria hence Osakwe (2005:12) asserts that:

Of all the items of merchandise that sailed in within the cultural cargo, the most important was the English language ... English ... became the living instrument and vehicle for conveying and preserving the cultures of both its home and host communities.

From the above facts about English, we can submit that it is of unparalleled relevance and inevitable to *Ukwuani* people who are among the many linguistic groups in Nigeria. It is worthwhile then to examine *Ukwuani*.

It is one of Nigeria's indigenous languages. *Ukwuani* is a member of the Benue Congo family of languages, i.e. the Kwa group (Osakwe (2010:12). Williamson (1990:139) describes *Ukwuani* as a language in its own right. According to her, 'Ukwuani is a minority language which forms a cluster with Igbo and other languages.' 'Ukwuani is also classified as a member of the Igboid languages. They include Igbo proper, Ikwerre, Ika, Izii-Ikwo-Ezza-MgboOgba and Ukwuani...' *Ukwuani* people share boundaries with the Isoko, the Urhobo, the Ika, the Igbo and the Ijaw people.

It is spoken as a mother tongue in Orogun, Delta State as well as in Ndoni, River State all the speakers understand one another, there are however, dialectical varieties indicative of the speakers' geographical locations.

Ukwuani plays some useful roles for its native speakers as it is part of their culture which is very important to mankind. This usefulness will therefore be examined in the next section.

Though a local and a relatively minority language, *Ukwuani* is very important to the citizens of the Ndokwa nation. Through the language, their rich cultural heritage is preserved. It also serves as their mark of identity and distinction besides its communicative function which is highly important. With the aid of *Ukwuani* language, the Ndokwa nation is able to hand down its rich cultural heritage from generation to generation as well as preserve it.

The observation made by Agbedo (2007:151) on *Ukwuani* while discussing language wars in Nigeria' forms part of the related literature in it. He claims that *Ukwuani*, Ika and Enuani language communities in Delta state speak dialects of Igbo language. Following Emenanjo he states that:

Nigerian languages which hitherto had regional, local or limited significance have now been either demoted for [from] the regional languages or promoted from erstwhile local language to state importance.

Agbedo substantiates the above claim by pointing out that with the creation of South Eastern region in 1967 and Cross River State in 1976, Efik became a language of wider communication (LWC). The fortune of Efik dwindled as a result of the creation of AkwaIbom State in 1987 as Ibibio became the language of wider communication in the new state. Furthermore, the scholar in question states that: Igbo lost its status as the language of wider communication (LWC) in the old Eastern region and suffered what Emenanjo termed ‘linguistic balkanization or atomism since Ikwere and Echie, which are originally lects of Igbo were suddenly accorded major independent language status in Rivers State.

Similarly, Agbedo(2007:151) asserts that in Delta state:

The three lects of Igbo: Enuani, Ndokwa [Ukwuani] and Ika were recognized as discrete languages on their own just as Okpe, UvwieandOvwhianlects of Urhobo were being treated as languages different from Urhobo.

From the above claims, it would appear as if Ukwuani is actually a dialect of Igbo but this is not the fact. To start with, Williamson classifies Ukwuani as a minor language which forms a language cluster with Igbo and other languages.

Perhaps, the submission of Emenanjo (2006:45) on the determination of what language is will end the controversy on whether Ukwuani is a language or a dialect.

The word ‘language’ has indeed a very wide usage. But in a very special way, the word, ‘language has a political aspect to it.

It also has religious, ethnic ... and other non linguistic features which sometimes may hold the ace to the definition of what is a language.

2. Speech Prosodies

Speech prosodies are often referred to as ‘suprasegmental features’ (Atoye, 2003:11-23). The suprasegmentals are made up of tone, stress rhythm and intonation. Each of the above three prosodies i.e, tone, stress and intonation operates in a stretch of utterance that is larger than a minimal segment or phoneme. Each of them is consequently, a suprasegmental (more than a segment) feature of speech. The domains, that is the avenues of operation of the above speech prosodies (suprasegmentals) are: the syllable, the word and the sentence or any similar expressions. Lass (1984:244) supports the above fact on the domains of prosodic feature as he identifies the syllable, the word and clause of sentence as some of the domains over which the speech prosodies reside. Cruttenden (1986:1) equally gives credence to the facts in question when he stipulates that:

Prosodic features may extend over varying domain: sometimes, over relatively Short stretches of utterances, like one syllable, one morpheme or one word ... sometimes over relatively longer stretches of utterances like one phrase, or one clause or one sentence.

The application of the prosodic or suprasegmental features discussed in this section is one major area of difference between English and Ukwuani.

Intonation: This concerns the pitch of one's voice when speaking. At times, the pitch is high and at other times, it is low. Just as an alteration in stress could result in a change in meaning, so an alteration in intonation could occasion a change in meaning in English. According to Christophersen (1956:179), 'no words are differentiated merely by their intonation, as a matter of fact, any English word may have any intonation depending on the context of usage. Intonation is something which is usually added to the statement, whether a whole sentence or just a lexical item said by itself, to give it a special personal meaning. Normally, intonation in English is meant to affect the entire sentence and not just a word. An alteration in the intonation pattern of a sentence will add extra meaning to the basic meaning of the sentence. English intonation normally changes only on an accented syllable. A normal sentence would start on a high tune in the first accented syllable and move then gradually. An unaccented syllable usually takes the same tone as the accented syllable that come before it. Intonation in English can be falling or rising, and both are used in various types of sentences.

The falling tune is used in statements or in declarative sentences. e.g

The man saw me today. ↘

Angela is beautiful. ↘

The falling tune is also used for imperative statements (commands, instructions and orders) and WH questions.

E.g. Don't make a noise. ↘ Go away. ↘

Where is my novel? ↘ But the rising tune is used in polar or yes no questions which have inverted subjects and verbs. E.g:

Are you tired? ↗

Have you eaten? ↗

The rising tune is also used for sentences which express doubt or politeness. e.g

Can John be a thief? ↗ Wash the car, please ↗ etc.

Christophersen (1956:179-180) displays examples of how intonation can make a word have different meanings in English without necessarily changing the lexical meaning of the word. He points out that 'yes', when said with a falling tune, expresses a definite affirmative, which means that there is no doubt or uncertainty on the part of the speaker, but if the speaker uses the rising tune in saying the 'yes', it could mean 'hesitation or reservation'

But Ụkwụanị is a tone language. If 'yes' were an Ụkwụanị word, it could have different meanings in different tones and not just reflect the attitude of the speaker. The following Ụkwụanị words drive home the point made above.

Ụwa/ʊ`wá/	'World'
Ụwa/ʊ`wá/	'No'
Ụka/ʊ`ká/	'Church'
Ụka/ʊ`ká/	'Corner'
ìkpa/ɪ`Bà/	'Corn pudding'
ìkpa/ɪ`Bá/	'Blow'/blòu/ etc.

In Ukwuani, irrespective of where a word occurs in a sentence, it must take its tone pattern. This could be low, high, low+low, Low + high, high + low + high etc, depending on the word. Ukwuani also uses a falling tune and a rising tune for a whole sentence to determine meaning as English does. The suprasegmentals are essential part of English language that should be mastered if effective communication is to be achieved in the language. Let us then give attention to another aspect of the suprasegmental features namely, ‘stress’.

Stress: This is another area of difficulty for learners of English as L₂. In tone, every syllable is stressed at least to some significant degree. A syllable may have a high tone or a low tone, but all are stressed, that is given prominence. But in English, not all syllables are stressed as the language has a system of stressed and unstressed syllables which gives English its peculiar rhythm. As a matter of fact, ‘stress’ is very important in English. Tiffen (1969:22-32) gives credence to the above fact when he submits that: They [stress and intonation] are more important than the pronunciation of individual sounds because a person whose pronunciation is correct but whose stress and intonation are faulty is more unintelligible than a person whose pronunciation is incorrect but whose stress and intonation are not faulty.

The second language learners whose languages stress every syllable because it is a tone language need to study the stress timed nature of English language before they can produce an acceptable spoken English. Such L₂ learners must, understand and apply all the rules for stress placement in English which are explained below. They should understand that:

- Stress is not distributed in monosyllabic words,
- Bisyllabic, trisyllabic and multisyllabic words have just one primary stress each.
- That only content words are stressed in connected speech according to the normal sentence stress.
- Syllables that contain the shuai.e /ə/ are weak and are consequently not stressed.
- English spoken with only strong forms or all stressed syllables as is done in Ukwuani sounds incorrect and that the usage of weak forms alongside the strong forms is an essential part of spoken English.
- There are some words in English which should have the weak forms
- There is a difference between word stress and sentence as well as contrastive or emphatic stress.
- Any word, whether content or grammatical, can be stressed if the speaker uses a contrastive or an emphatic stress.
- There are various linguistic conventions observed during stress placement in bisyllabic, trisyllabic and multisyllabic or polysyllabic words. E.g polysyllabic words that end in” –ion, -ity, -ic, -ial, -ian usually have the primary stress on the second syllable from the end of the word e.g

Examination/ igzæmi’neiʃn/

Education / edʒ u’keiʃn/

Magician/mə’dʒ iʃn/ etc

Another of such conventions is placing the primary stress on the third syllable from the end of any word that ends in –ate –ty Eg

Excommunicate / ekskə'dʒu:nikeit/
 Stupidity /stju:'pidɪti/ and
 Communicate/kə'dʒu:nikeit/

Yet, another convention is that stress placement on bisyllabic words may depend on word class. For instance nouns and adjectives are stressed on the first syllable while verbs are stressed on the second syllable. E.g.

Word	Nouns	Verbs
Convict	/'kɒnnvɪkt/	/kə'nvɪkt/
Protest	/'prɒtɪst/	/prə'test/ See Appendix C ₁₅ &C ₁₆
Export	/'eksɜ:t/	/'ɪksɜ:t/
Word	Adjectives	Verbs
Absent	/'æbsɪnt/	/æb'sent/
Present	/'preznt/	/pri'zent /
Frequent	/'fri:kwɪnt/	/frikwent/

etc.

- If the second syllable in a disyllabic verb contains the weak vowel that is schwa /ə/, the first syllable is usually stressed. E.g.
 Enter / 'entə (r)/
 Open/'əpən/ (adj. noun and verb)
- The above linguistic convention also affects bisyllabic adjectives e.g
 Lovely /'lʌvli/
 Alive /ə'laɪv/
- /ə/ is not the only weak vowel in English. /ɪ/ is also almost articulated as a weak sound in words. Nevertheless, if /ɪ/ and /ə/ occur in a disyllabic word, the syllable with /ɪ/ is stressed. Eg.
 River /'rɪvə (r) /
 Figure /'fɪgə(r)/
- Often, 'i' is not stressed in a word, particularly where it combines in a syllable with another vowel in a disyllabic word. E.g
 Funny/'fʌni/
 Rainy/'reɪni/ etc.
- Prefixes and suffixes are not normally stressed. It is the roots of the words that are stressed. Eg,
 Unknown /'ʌn'nəʊn/
 Unpaid /'ʌn'peɪd/
 Helpful/'helpfl/ etc.

All the above rules or linguistic conventions about stress must be learnt, understood and applied by second language learners if their spoken English is to be appropriate. Besides, they must learn to use the weak and strong forms of grammatical words correctly. Equally, this set of L₂ users of English must understand that word stress, sentence stress and contrastive or emphatic stress are different from one another. A syllable or a word may be stressed in isolation but if such a syllable or word is in a sentence, a different a rule altogether comes in because of the influence of adjacent

sounds. For instance, the manner the typical or average L2 speakers of English reads the following sentence is different from the manner a native speaker of English or a linguistically well informed user of English RP reads it as observed by this researcher. ‘Mary has written to the doctor.’

While the average L2 speakers stress every word in the sentence using nine syllables, the native speaker of English or an educated RP speaker of English stresses the following parts of the sentence as shown below.

MARy has WRITten to the DOCTOR.

A transcription of the above sentence displaying the primary stress is /'meðrihðz 'ritntu ði 'dɔktə/

Closely related to the concepts of ‘tone’, intonation and ‘stress’ is the concept of ‘syllabic structure’. Let us therefore examine this in the languages.

Syllabic Structure: This is another major area of difference between English and Ukwuani English language has a syllabic structure that the average Ukwuani speakers and learners of English find difficult to produce. A good number of English words begin with consonants. In some cases, they begin with consonant clusters as in:

Stream /stri:m /

Strict /strikt /

Spring /sprinʃ/

Treasure/'treʒ ə/

Price /praɪs/ etc.

The vowel is usually the peak of the syllables in the above words while they also end in consonants. Consonant clusters are also often found at the terminal position as in:

Sixths/siksθs/, mingle/'miŋgl/. Tumble 'tʌmbl/ etc.

In Ukwuani, many words (mostly nouns) begin with vowel sounds and end with vowel sounds as observed in

Ose/ðs`e/ ‘pepper’/

Igwe/I g`we/ ‘Bicycle’/ and

Une/^un`e/ ‘plantain’ . Some words (mostly verbs and adjectives), begin with consonant sounds and end with vowel sounds as in: bia/bi`a/ ‘come’ri/ɔi/ ‘eat’, nu/ n`u/ ‘Push’(verb) and gbam/ɓam/ ‘strong’/ kwem/kw`em/ ‘strong’ (adjectives). A good number of Ukwuani words begin and end in vowels while some others begin with consonants and end in vowels also as shown above. Only a very few words (that belong to different word classes) in Ukwuani end in consonants as observed by this researcher. E.gEtum /`etu`m/ `dust`. A list of such words is displayed in the literature review of this study, that is chapter two.

Since the permissible sound combinations in words for English and Ukwuani differ significantly, it is then not unexpected that the uneducated and linguistically not well informed Ukwuani English speakers find it very difficult to articulate many English words correctly. In fact, the field experience of this researcher indicates that this set of L₂ speakers of English produce the following non RP compliant pronunciations because of the differences in the phonotactics of English and Ukwuani.

RP standard	UE
i. Chemical /'kemɪkl/	* /kemika/
ii. Journal /'dʒ 3:nl/	* /dʒ ɔna/
iii. Fatal /'feɪtl/	* /'fæta/
iv. Angle /'æŋgl/	* /angʊ/
v. Article /'ɑ:tɪkl/	* /atiku/
vi. Principle /'prɪnsɪpl/	* /'prɪnspu/
vii. Careful /'keəfl/	* /'kefu/
viii. Beautiful /'bjʊ:tɪfl/	* /bitifu/
ix. Title /taɪtl/	* /taɪtu/
x. Teacher /'ti:tʃə(r)/	* /titʃa/
xi. Nation /'neɪʃn/	* /neɪʃn/
xii. Fashion /'fæʃn/	* /fæʃn/
xiii. Purse /pɜ:s/	* /pɜs/
xiv. Politics /pə'lɪtɪks/	* /pɒlɪtis/
xv. Physics /'fɪzɪks/	* /fɪzɪs/
xvi. Electricity /'ɪlek'trɪsɪtɪ/	* /eletrɪsɪtɪ/
xvii. Lecture /'lektʃə(r)/	* /letʃ/
xviii. Lecturer /lektʃərə(r) /	* /letʃərə/

The above non RP compliant pronunciations are instances of epenthesis, substitution and deletion in the phonology of English. Epenthesis is the linguistic mistake of inserting an extra unwanted phoneme in a particular phonological environment. Epenthesis are usually of two types namely ‘prosthesis’ and ‘anaptyxis’. Prosthesis refers to the type of epenthesis whereby an extra phoneme is inserted at the word initial position. E.g

Latin ‘Spiritus’ ⇒ French esprit

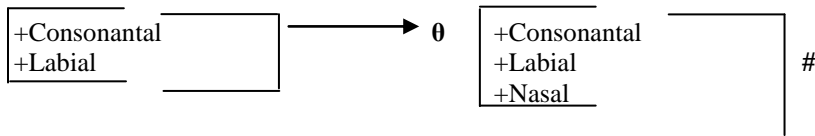
Prothetic sounds are common in historical change of words as shown above with Latin and French. Such sounds are not found in the above RP non compliant pronunciations. The second type of epenthesis is ‘anaptyxis’. This is the type of epenthesis in which an extra sound particularly a vowel is inserted between two consonants. All the Ukwani English pronunciations in Roman figures i to ix above are instances of anaptyctic epenthesis. Ukwani speakers of English (some of them), insert anaptyctic vowels (which are also called parasite or svarabhakti vowels) because the phonotactics of their language (Ukwani) does not permit consonant clusters. They insert parasite vowels as a way of domesticating the English words and eventually suit the phonotactics of Ukwani.

The Ukwani English pronunciations displayed, above for ‘teacher’, ‘purse’, ‘lecture’ and ‘lecturer’ are instances of substitution in phonology. Substitution as a linguistic term, is the process or result of replacing one item with another at a particular place in a structure.

In ‘teacher’, /ə/ is used instead of /ɪ/ because /ɪ/ which is a central vowel is not in Ukwani vowel inventory. /ɪ/ is used in the place of /ɜ:/ for the same reason as for using /æ/ in the place of /ɪ/ in ‘teacher’. Similarly, /æ/ is substituted for /ɪ/ in ‘lecturer’ while /ɪ/ is substituted for /ə/ in ‘lecture’ because Ukwani does not have central

The Suprasegements or Speech Prosodies of English and Ukwuani – **Happy Dumbi Omenogor, Ph.D**
 vowels. The observed Ukwuani English pronunciations for politics, electricity, 'physics', lecture and 'lecturer' are instances of 'deletion'. Deletion as a term in phonology refers to a situation whereby some segments are removed from certain phonetic contexts. Eg. The pronunciation of fifths as (fifs).

Some consonant sound segments are deleted in a cluster. For example the /b/ is deleted in the word 'lamb'. This can be represented as follows:



Lekan 2009:33

The above case of deletion in English phonology is usually legitimate as it is a recognized linguistic convention. The deletions observed by this investigator in UE are however not legitimate and are therefore not acceptable. Such deletions occur because the phonotactics of Ukwuani does not permit any consonant cluster. As shown in UE pronunciations of 'politics', electricity, 'physics', 'lecture' and 'lecturer', /k/ is illegitimately deleted in them. This is done by the UE speakers in the course of adapting the words to suit the phonotactics of their language (Ukwuani). The following diagrams show the phonotactic possibilities of sounds in word initial positions in English and Ukwuani. The diagrams illustrate the differences between English and Ukwuani in this regard. In English, words can begin with consonant clusters and end with them while this is not so in Ukwuani as it does not permit consonant clusters in any position.

Table 1: Some Consonant Vowel Patterns of Phonotactic Possibilities of English Words in Word Initial Positions

	/i:/	/i/	/e/	.	/a:	/ /	/ :/	/u/	/u:/	/ʌ	/ɜ:/	.	/ei/	/əw/	/ai/	/au/	/i/	/iə/	/eə/	/uə/	/eiə/	/əuə/	/aiə/	/auə/	/iə/
/p/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-
/b/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
/t/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-
/d/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+
/k/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-
/g/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
/f/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+
/v/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
/s/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
/z/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
□/	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-
/ð/	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
/ʃ/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-
...	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
/h/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-
/tʃ/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
/dʒ/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+
/l/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+
/j/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
/w/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
/r/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+
/m/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
/n/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-

International Journal of Research Development

x x x x x x x X x x x

Explanation on table

‘+’ indicates permissible combination between the consonant and the vowel involved. For instance, /p/ which is number one above can be combined with /i:/ at the initial position to form a word as ‘peal’.

‘-’ indicates a non permissible combination between the consonant and the vowel involved. E.g. /ɜ / cannot be combined with /i/ at the initial position of English words.

‘x’ indicates that ‘/ J/’ does not appear in the initial position of English words.

Table 2: Some Vowel Consonant Patterns of Phonotactic Possibilities of Ukwunji Words in Word Initial Positions

	/p	/f	/b	/m	/g	/t	/d	/k	/z	/s	/v	/ɔ	/ʃ	/ʌ	/h	/l	/t	/B	/	/gw	/s /	/dɔ	/k ^w	/m	/	/ʌ ^w	/j/	/w/	/ʌ	
/i/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
/I/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
/e/	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
/ɛ/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
/a/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
/ /	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
/O/	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
/U/	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	-
/u/	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+

Explanation on Table

i) The above table shows that /v/ is scarcely used in Ukwuani. It does not occur in the initial position. It appears in 'terminal position as observed by this investigator. It is found in "Idemevuu"/i`de`m`ev`U/ 'crayfish'/kreifiʃ/. Similarly, the above table indicates that the vowels that have '+' sign between them.

And some consonants in the table can be combined to form words. E.g. /l/ which is number one can be combined with /f/ in the initial position to form words in Ukwuani. For instance, Ife /i`f`e/ 'moon'.

ii) /J/ This syllabic consonant actually occurs in the initial position but it usually occurs first while other sounds combine with it. It precedes sounds at the initial position. /J/ is not preceded by other phonemes in the initial position. E.g.

Ngbo /`JB`o/ or /B`o/ 'pond'

Nma/J`m`a/'beauty'

The above phonotactic possibilities show that many English words begin with consonants and equally end with consonants Eg. Plant /plænt/ while many Ukwuani words begin with vowels and end with vowels. E.g. Egbe/ e`B`e/ 'gun'. Many other Ukwuani words (which are mostly verbs) also begin with consonants but they end in vowels. In fact, this researcher finds out that only very few Ukwuani words end in consonants and the consonant is usually the nasal /m/. No other consonant phonemes

end words in Ukwuani. The list of such Ukwuani words is already stated in an earlier part of this study i.e., in the literature review. The discovered facts about the syllabic structures of the two languages clearly show that English has MOSTLY a closed syllabic structure since most of its syllables end in consonants. A syllable that ends in a consonant such as CVC as observed in 'Pot' /pɒt/ is called a closed syllable while the one that ends in a vowel such as CVV as observed in the Ukwuani word /bia/ 'come' /kæAm/ is called an open syllable. English, however, has some words with open syllables such as: energy /`enɒdʒɪ/ ⇒ VCVCV/ umbrella /ʌm`brelə/ ⇒ VCCCVCV/ go/gəu/ ⇒ CV, pay /pei/ ⇒ CV etc.

Irrespective of the above syllabic structures in English and Ukwuani, the present investigator finds out that English has mostly words with closed syllables. Words with open syllables are mostly observed in Ukwuani. The syllabic structures of the two languages are exact opposites of each other. Little wonder then that the average and typical Ukwuani L₁ speakers of English as L₂ find it rather impossible to pronounce English words correctly. This is why they often insert phonemes in phonological environments that they are not required.

Orthography: This refers to the spelling system in a language. The sounds of spoken language are called the letters of the alphabet. In a perfect or an ideal alphabet, every letter would be a phonetic symbol representing ONE speech sound while each speech sound would have its specific symbol. Assessed by the above criteria, the orthography of English is clearly defective. It would appear as if English does not have enough symbols to represent all its phonemes. This is why a particular letter is often used to represent different phonemes in different words. For instance, 'a' in cat /kæt/; hall /hɔ:l /; many /`meni/ etc.

‘0’ in pot /pɒt/, women /ˈwɪmɪn/, son/sʌn/ etc.

Besides the above fact, the same phoneme is often represented with various symbols, that is letters. Eg. Pit /pit/, nymph /nɪmf/, busy /ˈbɪzi/, women /ˈwɪmɪn/ etc.

All the above words have the phoneme /i/ represented with different letters as underlined above.

Some letters of English are superfluous Eg.

‘q’ (qu may be written kw, ‘x’ (= ‘ks’ or ‘gs’),
C’ (= ‘k’ or ‘s’).

The above illustrations show that English spelling is not phonetic as it does not accurately and consistently represent the sounds. It is therefore unpredictable, irregular and complex. Several factors have been adduced for the irregularity between the orthography and phonology of English. The mixed nature of English vocabulary is one of such factors. The English language has been enormously enriched by its borrowing from other languages. It surpasses most other languages in its wealth of synonymous words and hence in its ability to draw precise and subtle distinctions. Very often, the English language user has a choice between a native English word and a synonym of Latin or French origin. Eg.

<i>International Journal of Research Development</i>	almighty	omnipotent
	blessing	benediction
	bloom	flower
	calling	vocation
	manly	virile
	womanly	feminine

The languages whose vocabularies have influenced that of English include Latin, Scandinavian, French and Greek. Furthermore, the modern English spelling became rather chaotic because of attempts to make the spellings of certain words in English language indicate their etymology. Pink and Thomas (1970) point out that: The Norman – French words ‘dette’ and ‘doute’ for example, retained this spelling, when they were first introduced. They were later written ‘debt’ and ‘doubt’ in order to show their connection with Latin. The ‘b’ has never been pronounced.

From the above revelations, it is now clear that some non native English words that found their way into English went into English with their various phonetic, phonological and morphological features, hence the sharp irregularity in the phonology of English. Ụkwụanị on the other hand has what may be described as a near perfect orthography as most of its words are pronounced as spelt. Each Ụkwụanị phoneme has a specific symbol unlike what is observed in English. It is now obvious that there is a striking difference between the orthography of English and that of Ụkwụanị. The orthography of English gives problem to the average and uneducated Ụkwụanị L₁ learner or speaker of English as L₂ as this researcher observes. This problem occurs because of the unpredictability, irregularity and complexity of the orthography as well as the inconsistency between the orthography and the phonology of English. This difficulty experienced by the L₂ speakers of English in question often result in their embarking on

spelling pronunciations which does not often work out well with English and eventually result in some non RP compliant pronunciations as shown below.

<u>RP</u>	<u>UE</u>
Architect /'a:kitekt/	*/atʃɪtet/
Dwarf /dwɔ:f/	*/dwaf/
Visitor /'vɪzɪtə/	*/vɪsɪtɔ/ See Appendice C ₂₃ &
C ₂₄	
Listen /'lɪsn/	*/lɪstɪn/
Wanted /'wɒntɪd/	*/wɒnted/ etc/.

In ‘architect’/’a:kitekt/, many Ụkwụanị L₁ speakers of English as L₂ pronounce ‘ch’ /tʃ/ because that is how it is pronounced in Ụkwụanị orthography. The /k/ before /t/ at the terminal position is deleted because Ụkwụanị syllabic structure does not permit any consonant cluster. In ‘dwarf’ /dwɔ:f/, this same set of L₂ speakers being discussed, pronounce ‘a’ /æ/ in tune with the way they pronounce ‘a’ in their orthography. These L₂ speakers of English are not aware of any linguistic convention whereby a letter such as ‘a’ will stand for different speech sounds. Moreso, there are no long vowels in Ụkwụanị. The same explanation goes for Ụkwụanị English pronunciation of visitor /’vɪzɪtə/. Furthermore, /ɔ/ is placed at the terminal position of ‘visitor’ in Ụkwụanị English pronunciation even if /ɔ/ does not end a word in English (as this researcher observed) because /ɔ/, which is a central vowel does not exist in Ụkwụanị. Hence /’lɪsn/ is pronounced ‘/lɪstɪn/’ in Ụkwụanị English because the uneducated and the average Ụkwụanị speaker of English is ignorant of any word where silent letters are used. To such a language user, every letter is pronounced as it is done in his or her language, that is Ụkwụanị language. Lastly, wanted /wɒntɪd/ is pronounced */wɒnted/ in U.E. because many of the set of L₂ speakers of English under discussion are ignorant of the phonological principle of the pronunciation of the past tense indicator which stipulates that the past tense indicator should be pronounced /ɪd/ if the sound that precedes it is /t/ or /d/ Eg. Mended /’mended/ wanted /’wɒntɪd/, waited /’weɪtɪd/ etc.

To conclude this paper, it is hereby reiterated that it has described the examined the distribution of the phonemes in both languages, and this paper also examined and contrasted the suprasegmentals of English and Ụkwụanị as well as some phonotactic possibilities and the orthographies of both languages. A lot of structural differences at the phonetic and phonological levels of language between English and Ụkwụanị have been discovered. The consequences of the above differences in the spoken English of many Ụkwụanị L₁ speakers and learners of English as L₂ have also been explained in microscopic details.

References

Agbedo, C.U. (2000). *General Linguistics*, Nsuka: A C E Resources Konsult.

Atoye, R. O (2003). ‘The Nature of Prosodic Analysis’ *Readings in Language and Literature* Oyeleye .L. and Olateju M. (Eds), Ife Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 11-23.

- Christophersen, P. (1956). *An English Phonetics Course*, London: Longman Ltd.
- Cruttenden, A (1986). *Intonation*. Cambridge: The University Press.
- Emenanjo, E.N. (2006). *Language and Communication*. Aba: E-Frontier Publishers, Nig. Ltd.
- Jowitt, D. (2009) *English Language and Literature in Historical Context*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Lass, R. (1984) *Phonology: An Introduction to Basic Concepts*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Lekan, D. (2003). Transformational Generative Phonology and the English Language. *Readings in Language and Literature*. (Eds.) Oyeleye. L. and Olateju, M, Ile/Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 25-34.
- Osakwe, M. (2005). Welcome English... and How Long English in Nigeria West Delta. *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association*. Vol ii, No. 1 (11-23).
International Journal of Research Development
- Osakwe, M. (2010). Communication as Energy for Processing Garbage to Gold for Women of Africa, O.D. *Abraka Humanities Review*1,3, (1) 1-13).
- Osakwe, M. (2011). Tending, Bending and Breaking Vagabond English for Global Needs. An Inaugural Lecture, (the 24th in the Series) Presented at Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.
- Oyeleye, O. The Earliest History of the English Language. (Eds.) Oyeleye L. and Olateju, M. *Readings in Language and Literature*, Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 1-9.