

An Assessment of The Differences of English Dialects in The Regions That Have English as Official Language Including The Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GAM)

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Abstract: English language, like every other language, has different dialects and accents. English dialects reflect different forms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation among speakers of English. In other words, speakers of the language do not have the same grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation; yet they communicate intelligibly. This work is an assessment of English dialects differences in the regions with English as official language and the Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (gam). Various literatures relating to the topic was reviewed. In particular, the America and British English language was reviewed. From the findings of the study, it was concluded that the varieties or dialects do not only exist in the regions where English is spoken as an official or second language, but also in the regions that have it as their first language or mother tongue. A lot of attention should be paid to “Accent Neutralization/Reduction” which is also known as accent modification. It is a systematic approach used in learning or adopting a new accent. The method used involves several steps which include among others: identifying deviations in the person’s current speech from the desired dialect (such as pronunciation, speech pattern and speech habits), changing the way one uses one’s mouth, teeth and tongue to form vowels and consonants, modifying one’s intonation and stress patterns, as well as changing one’s rhythm. It enables proficient English speakers speak with a more American or British dialect and accent reduction training that is available include; workshops, seminars, classroom, software, online software products, over the phone, over webcam, through books and recordings and on a one- on-one basis. Hence with accent neutralization/reduction, users of English can communicate effectively with each other notwithstanding their backgrounds were recommended.

Keywords: English Dialects Differences, regions With English, Official Language, Received Pronunciation (RP) And General American (GAM).

INTRODUCTION

Language is generally seen as a means of communication. There are many languages in the world today and some of them include: French, Italian, German, Chinese, Spanish, Greek, Latin, etc. In Nigeria, many languages exist such as Igbo, Hausa, uba, Efik, Ibibio, Tiv, etc. These languages have their dialects and accents which capture different races that exist in a given geographical location. For instance, the Italian language which is n in Italy has different dialects and accents that reflect its speaker.

Dialect is generally defined as the form of a language spoken ne area with grammar, words and pronunciation that may differ from other forms of the same language. Brook defines dialects as “sub-division of a language used by p of people who have some non-linguistic characteristics in common” [2]. This explains the fact that dialects are forms of a language shared by speakers of the same language. This

implies that in a language, there are various forms of communication that are familiar to the people using the language. The speakers of the age understand and communicate with one another withstanding the differences in grammar words and pronunciation. That is why French speakers understand one another despite different forms of French language. In Nigeria, the Igbo Language has different forms that are peculiar to Igbo That. is also why someone from Imo State (Igbo Speaking State) can communicate with another from Anambra (another Igbo speaking State) in spite of different forms of language.

Wikipedia captures dialects as “varieties of language differing in vocabulary and syntax, as well as pronunciation” and are “Usually spoken by a group united by geography or social status”. Thus, dialects of a language comprise all aspects of that language such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and even spelling.

Hence, we can identify American and British English differing in vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation [4].

Accents are different ways of pronouncing the words of that indicate which country or area a person comes from. The definition is very clear as it relates to different pronunciation patterns of Words of a language. Todd and Hancock accent as relating “to a person’s pronunciation”. According to “everyone who speaks has an accent”. That is why the issue clearest, most intelligible, best or even accent less arises” [1]. Accent manner of pronunciation of a language can be used with dialect and distinguishing them may be more: using However, Phonologists agree that spoken aspect of a greatly associated with its patterns of pronunciation, these patterns of pronunciation are synonymous with the accents of a language.

Accents as phonemic inventories and realizations of a given language capture different variations of segmental and suprasegmental features. In a language, one can differentiate one speaker from the other based on how words, sentences and ions are realized. For example, in Nigeria, an Igbo speaker Imo State may pronounce ‘otu’ (one); while another speaker Anambra State pronounces it as ‘ofu’ (one). Here, the consonants It, and /f/ differ, but they understand each other.

English language, like every other language, has different dialects and accents. English dialects reflect different forms of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation among speakers of English. In other words, speakers of the language do not have the same grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation; yet they communicate intelligibly. For instance, the sentences: “He did it” and “He did it” reflect different grammar of English; while the phrases: “we brain” and “small child” depict different vocabulary; yet they are easily understood by different speakers of the English language. English accents also reflect different ways of pronouncing English words. For instance, the difference in ‘bath’ with short // - t/ and ‘bath’ with a long /a:/ - /ba:t/ is solely a matter of accent. In the words of Daniel Jones “no two persons pronounce exactly alike, even the best speaker commonly uses more than one style” [3]. Hence, one can stress that English accents depict different individuals that speak the language. Also, in the words of Freeborn and Langford that “accent is a means of aligning oneself in groups of people and of distinguishing yourself from others” [7], it becomes obvious that non-native speakers of try as much as possible to master the accents of native of the language.

From the above analysis, it becomes obvious that the relationship between English dialects and accents is what I call theof “Inclusiveness and Separation” This view is supported by as he states that:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach to this study is mainly a comparative analysis off two standard dialects of English language: the Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (CAM). Books, journals and articles that discuss the similarities and differences of the segmental and suprasegmental features of the RP and CAM will be compared adequately. This will enable us determine the extent they are related to, and differ from each other for effective teaching of, and communication in the language. Also for a specific comparative analysis, Peter Roach’s work on Received Pronunciation and the latest work in Wikipedia on General America are the two models represented

Regional Phonology of English

As already observed, English dialects are varieties of English that differ in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation from other forms of the language; while English accents deal specifically with various ways English words are pronounced. Regions on the other hand are different geographical locations with peculiarities [2].

Various ways English words are pronounced. Regions on the other hand are different geographical locations with peculiarities. The relationship between English dialects and accents confirms the fact that English accents emanated from English dialects. In other it is through the dialects of English that various English are realized. Thus, the regional dialects of English reveal the ways English words are pronounced across areas where language is spoken as a first or second/official language. These differences in pronunciation stem from different phoneme inventories of the local dialects of Standard English. Hence, it becomes a well-known fact that:

Among native English speakers, many different accents exist. Some regional accents are easily identified by certain characteristics [. .] each has distinct accents [. . .] yet in extreme cases is different enough to be noticed even by a non-local listener. There is also much room for misunderstanding between people from different regions, as the way one word is pronounced in one accent (for example, ‘petal’, in American English) will sound like a different word in another accent (for example, pearl in Scottish English). (Wikipedia)

As English language spread from one region to another, different varieties in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation came exist. Quirk and Greenbaum agree that “geographical dispersion is in fact the class’s basis for linguistic variation” [2]. They further point out that “regional variation seems to be realized predominantly in phonology” and that is why “we generally recognize a different dialect from a speaker’s pronunciation’ while “grammatical variation tends to be less extensive and certainly less obstructive” [2]. These shows a lot; the

importance of pronunciation (phonology) in relation to English.

Daniel Jones attributes the existence of dialects of English language to the liberty native speakers has in pronouncing English words. According to him:

The pronunciation of English words is not governed by a strict set of rules; most words have more than one pronunciation, and the speaker's choice of which to use depends on a wide range of factors. These include: the degree of formality; the amount of background noise, the speed of utterance, the speaker's perception of the listener and the frequency with which the speaker uses the word [12].

A survey of regional dialects of English language exposes a corpus of differences in the pronunciation of English words in the regions which have English as first or second/official language. In the words of Roach "differences between accents are two main sorts: phonetic and phonological" [5]. In other words, phonetic difference exists in situation where two accents have similar phoneme inventory, but are realized differently; while phonological is parity exists where the two accents have different number of phonemes and phonemic contrast. This obviously explains the fact that many different regional dialects of English have paved way to many different accents even among native speakers. That is why Quirk and Greenbaum state that "It is pointless to ask how many dialects of English there are: there are indefinitely many dependably society on how detailed we wish to be in our observations" [12].

Wells G. in *Accents of English* establishes different regional dialects of English language. According to him, the varieties of English used in Great Britain or the United Kingdom are these of England, Scotland and Wales, which have made many accents to exist in the United Kingdom, while in Ireland, the predominant accents are Ulster, Connacht, Leinster and Munster which are commonly known as 1-Iberno-English. There are two main sub of Ulster accent viz: Mid-Ulster English and Ulster Scots [14].

The Ulster accent has much in common with Scottish English based on influence from Ulster Scots. That is why it is often recognized as a variety of Scots. Connacht, Leinster and Munster accents are relatively similar and can only be distinguished by locals. Also in Ireland, Dublin and Cork accents differ from most Irish [13].

Wells further identifies different accents in North America, namely, Canada, the United States, West Indies and Bermuda. In Canada, three major dialect areas exist: Western/Central, the Maritimes, and Newfoundland which have resulted in three accents Canadian English. However, the pronunciation of

certain [20] words Canadian English has American and/or British influence. In the United States, American English which is also known as United States English or U.S. English is a set of dialects of the language used mostly in the United States. Hence, different accents of the language can be identified in the, United States [21].

The southern Hemisphere, according to him, comprises the Australian, New Zealand, Falkland Island and Saint Helena accents. There are three class based accents of Australian English: Broad Australian, General Australian and Cultivated Australian [17]. The New Zealand accent is distinguished from the Australian as the former resembles South African English. Scottish English influence is obvious in the Southern regions of New Zealand, especially Dunedin. In Falkland Islands, Falkland accent is stronger It resembles Australian, New Zealand, Norfolk (in England) English, and also has a number of Spanish loanwords. in Saint Helena Islands, their accent can be said to be similar to South Africa [17].

Australia and New Zealand. Charles Barber in *The English e: A Historical introduction* explains that the phonological systems of Australian, New Zealand [19] English are virtually the e as that of RP" [1]. He further clarifies that "New Zealand inundation is very similar to the Australian, but with minor differences [18]. Charles Barber in his analysis of Southern Hemisphere English and RP also establishes that the two have e differences "in the distribution of phonemes in lexica items, the differences are less great than those between RP and North American English" [8].

In Southern Africa there are South African, Zimbabwean and Namibian English. English is one of the eleven official languages in South Africa. According to Wells, J.C, the Afrikaners (Boers) descendants of mainly Dutch settlers pronounce English phonemes with a strong Afrikaans inflection, which is similar to Dutch. Native English speakers' accent resembles British RP with varying degrees of Germanic inflection, as well as elements of varying numbers of Afrikaans and Bantu loanwords; but the accents of native English speakers of Johannesburg differ. Charles Barber vividly states that "[19] South African English are virtually the same as that of RP [5], while Zimbabwean (native English speakers) and Namibian English are similar to South African.

In Asia continent, English is spoken officially in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. Hence, different accents can be identified. In Hong Kong, the accent of English is mainly British with strong influence from Cantonese. ntly, Canadian and Australian influences are gaining ground as a result of returnees who migrated to Canada and Australia. Indian English is close to that spoken in Singapore, Malaysia, and The Singaporean and Malaysian accents are somewhat and the differences between them can be

likened to those American and Canadian accents. Wikipedia states that “Singaporean and Malaysian accents appear to be a melding of Chinese and Malay influences”. Philippine English is heavily: ed by American English, as well as Tagalog and other me languages, It is a regarded as a rhotic accent.

Charles Barber illustrates that “reduction in the number of vowel - phonemes is characteristic of most varieties of African English [9]. According to him the reduction of number of festures features prominently in Nigeria English. For instance, “There is only one phoneme corresponding to RP /i/ and /i:/, so that ‘bid’ and ‘bead’ are both /bid/; only one corresponding to /ae/ and /a:/, so that ‘hat’ and ‘heart’ are both /ht/ [3,4].” Charles Barber further explains that English spoken in Nigeria, South Asia, Singapore and other sub-Sahara Africa are syllable-timed. Unlike the RP and General America which are stress—timed. The above opinions of some authors on regional dialects of English language prove the fact that many dialects of the language ecist. Quirk and Greenbaurn agree as they note that dialects of English are “[3] more obviously numerous in the long-settled Eritain than in the North America or in the still more recently settled Australia and New Zealand [2]”.

The British Dialects of English

The British dialects of English clearly H lustrate different pronunciation patterns of English words in the United Kingdom. Scot Shay in The History of English traces the origin of English Language. According to him:

English is a West Germanic language that originated from the Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain by Germanic settlers and Roman auxiliary troops from various parts of what is now northwest Germany and the Northern Netherlands. (Wikipedia)

He adds that “English developed into a borrowing language of great flexibility resulting in an enormously varied and large vocabulary” (Wikipedia). This accounts for different accents of English in the United Kingdom and beyond. In Great Britain, three varieties of English language feature prominently namely: English English, Scottish English and Welsh English. They represent the varieties of accents in Britain. Also, these varieties have other varieties that depict various counties in England, Scotland and Wales and one can identify a mixture of rhotic and non-rhotic accents [1].

England no doubt occupies a lofty position as the capital of teat Britain. The variety of English language spoken is known as English English. As Trudgili puts it “there are many different accents and dialects throughout England and people are often very proud of their local accent or dialect [. . .]” (6). In other words, communicating in one’s accent in England is

something to be proud of and that is why different accents of English language cannot seize to exist. Wells in Accents of English discusses some general features of English English which include but not limited to:

- Most versions of the dialect have non-rhbtic pronunciation, that /r/ is pronounced only if it is followed by a vowel. Areas with rhoic accents, that is, /r/ is pronounced in all the positions it appears in words are the far north, the West Country, Lancashire accept Manchester Area) and the town of Corby (where there was large Scottish influence).
- Northern versions of the dialect often lack the “foot-strut” split, that there is no distinction between /ɪ5/ and /A/ making ‘Put’ ‘putt’ homophones as /PU/
- In the southern variety, words like ‘bāth’, ‘cast’, ‘dance ‘fast’; ‘castle’, ‘grass’, etc. are pronounced with the long vowel find in ‘calm!. /a:/ or a similar vowel, while in the midlands and tern varieties they are pronounced with the same vowel as p’ or ‘cat’, usually [6].
- Many varieties undergo h-dropping, making ‘harm’ and ‘arm’ homophones; but accents of Northumberland, Tyneside and ‘parts Norfolk are exceptions.
- Most varieties have the “horse-hoarse” merger. However, some northern accents retain the distinction, pronouncing pairs of words: like ‘/for/four’, ‘horse/hoarse’ and ‘morning’/mourning’ differently.
- The consonant clusters /s//, /z/ I, and /lj 7Th ‘suit’, ‘zeus’ and te’ are preserved by some.
- Many southern have the “bad-lad” split, so that ‘bad’ /bd/ and ‘lad’ /ld/ do not rhyme.
- Most areas of England (notably RP speakers) have non-rhotic cents, while West Country, Corby, most of Lancashire and some of Yorkshire has rhotic accents.
- The distinction between /w/and /m/ in ‘wine’ and ‘whine’ i in most varieties.

However, there are three major divisions of dialects of gush in England which obviously depict three major accents. They include: “Southern English, Midland English and Northern gush dialects” (Wikipedia). Trudgil, Peter in Language in the in the British Isles as captured in Wikipedia discusses major accents of gush English. In the southern English accent, three main historical influences can be noticed: the London accent, Received ‘pronunciation and Southern Rural accents. Generally, Southern English accents are distinguished from Northern English accents primarily by not using the short in words such as ‘bath’. In the south-east, the “broad A” is normally used before /f/, /s/ or /θ/: words such as ‘cast’ and ‘bath’ are pronounced /ka:st/ and /ba:t/, the than /kst/ and /bθ/. English spoken in the south-west has many varied accents, while in the East Anglia, the Norfolk dialect is spoken. It is very

important to note that accents fly from the upper-class speech of the London—Oxford - Cambridge triangle are particular notable as the basis for Received Pronunciation [1].

The Midland English generally does not use a “broad A” so ‘cast’ is pronounced /kaest/ instead of the /ka:st/ pronunciation of most southern accents. It also uses widely the northern U, so that ‘putt’ is pronounced the same as ‘put’: Birmingham and the Black Country accents are best known in the West Midlands. It is also necessary to note that Birmingham and Coventry accents are quite distinct, even though cities are only 19 miles/30km apart. The /g/ sound in F west midlands may be emphatically pronounced where it occurs in the combination of ‘ng’ in words such as ‘ringing’ and ‘fang’. Herefordshire and parts of Worcestershire and Shropshire have arhotic accent close to the West Country [16].

In the East Midlands as the study indicates, the “U vowel” of a word like ‘strut’ is often [U], with no distinction between ‘Putt’ and ‘put’; and its accents are generally non-rhotic. The town of y in northern Northamptonshire has an accent with some Originally Scottish features. In Leicester, words with short vowels such as ‘up’ and ‘last’ have a northern pronunciation, whereas words with vowels such as ‘down’ and ‘road’ sound more like a south-eastern accent.

The Northern England accents according to Wells in Accents English have some general features. They include:

- The “short a” vowel of ‘cat’, ‘trap’ is normally pronounced [a] ‘rather than [oe] that. is found in traditional Received Pronunciation in many forms of American English.
- The accents do not use /a:/. That is why ‘cast’ is pronounced [kast] rather than the [ka:st] pronunciation of most southern accents.
- They do not have /ʌ/ (as in ‘strut’, ‘but etc.) as a separate vowel. Most words that have this vowel in RP are pronounced with /u/, so that ‘put’ and ‘putt’ are homophonous as /put/. But some words with /U/ in RP on have /u/ in the more conservative Northern accents, so that a pair like ‘look’ and ‘luck’ may be distinguished as /lUk/ and /luok/.
- The vowel in ‘dress’, ‘test’, ‘pet’, etc. is slight more open and transcribed as /E/ rather than /e/
- The Received Pronunciation Phonemes 1eV as in ‘face’ and in ‘goat’ are often pronounced as monothongs such as /e

Also in the Northern English, other varieties of accent’s are easily noticeable. They are Liverpool (Scouse), Yorkshire, Middlesbrough, Lancashire, Cumbria, County Durham and Northumberland. The study further reveals that a feature of the East accent shared with Scots and Irish English, is the pronunciation

of the consonant cluster /Im/ in coda position, e.g. ‘film’ is pronounced as /filam/ [19].

English or Scottish Standard English is the variety of English spoken in Scotland. The spelling and pronunciation patterns of Scottish English do not differ much from other British dialects English. Abercrombie, D in “The accents of standards English in Scotland” Outlines some general feature of Scottish they are:

- It is a rhotic accent which means that in is pronounced in the syllable coda.
- There is a distinction between /w/ and /m/ (also analyzed as /hw/ in word pairs such as ‘witch and which’)
- The phoneme /X/ is common in names and in Scottish Standard English’s many Gaelic and Scots borrowings.
- /I/ is usually until recently (e.g. Durnfries and Galloway), valorization may be absent.
- Vowel valorized, but in areas where Scottish Gaelic was spoken length is generally regarded as non-phonemic, although as non-phonemic, although a distinction part of Scottish English is the Scots vowel length rule. retain words that have sounds such as /f/, /u/, and /ae/ are generally long, but are shortened before nasals and voiced osives. But it does not occur across morpheme boundaries, so that ‘crude’ contrast with ‘crewed’, ‘need’ with ‘kneed’ and “side’ with ‘sighed’
- It has no /U/, but Scots’ /u/. Phonetically, this vowel may be ore front, being pronounced as /u/ or even [yj. Thus, ‘pull’ and ‘pool’ are homophones.
- As in some other dialects, ‘cot’ and ‘caught’ are not differenced.
- In most varieties, there is no //and /0:7 distinctions, hence bath! ‘trap’. and ‘palm’ have the same vowel; while ‘cat’ and ‘cart’ are distinguished only by means of the /r/, as ‘marry’ rhymes with ‘starry’
- /θs / is often used in plural nouns where southern English has /oz/ (e.g., baths, youths, etc.); while ‘with’ and ‘booth’ are pronounced with /θ/.
- In colloquial speech (especially among young males), the glottal stop may be an allophone of /t/ after a vowel, as in [cb^er]. These same speakers may drop the ‘g’ in the sufflx-’ing’ and debuccalize [θ] to [h] ’in certain contexts [16].

Welsh English, also known as Anglo-Welsh or Wenglish captures the dialects of English spoken in Wales. The dialects are prominently influenced by Welsh grammar and there is a variety of accents found across Wales from south Wales’s valleys to Monmouthshire to West Wales. Wikipedis’s article on “Welsh English” reveals certain general characteristics of accents in Wales [12].

They include the following

- The accent is often characterized as “sing-song” because of the distinctive intonation differences

which includes a rising intonation at the end of statements

- Lengthening of all vowels is common in strong valleys accent.
- The vowel in English words such as ‘but’ is not that of Standard English, but that of the obscure sound of the letter ‘y’ in Welsh. Thus, in Welsh English, the vowel sounds in ‘bus’ and ‘the’ are identical.
- In some areas, pronouncing {i} as [E], e.g. ‘edit’ and ‘benefit’ as It ‘edet’ and ‘benefet’
- There is a strong tendency shared with Scottish English towards an alveolar trill [r] (i.e., a “rolled r”) in place of an approximant [r] (i.e.; the ‘r’ used in most accents in English).
- ‘Yod-dropping’ is rare after any consonant, so that ‘rude’ and ‘threw’ and ‘through’, ‘chews and ‘choose’, ‘chute’ and ‘short’ are distinct.

The study further shows a wide range of regional accents in Wales. The regions in Wales are Cardiff, South. Wales, North Wales and Western Wales. The Cardiff accent is a little bit native. The most important distinguishing features are the pronunciation of /a:/ as /oe/ and /i/ as /E/. There is also the use of glottal stop instead of /t/, e.g. ‘water’ is pronounced ‘wa’er. The accent is so strong and broad that ‘here’ is pronounced as ‘yur’, and ‘all, right’ as ‘orraye’, etc.

The South Wales accent is associated with the “sing – song” Welsh accent that familiar to many English people. Similarly, the accent of Newport is also quite distinctive and quite different from that of nearby Cardiff and some of the influence of rural Monmouth.

The North East Wales’ accent sounds like those of Cheshire and Merseyside. Towns that are near the border or with substantial populations tend to have Scouse – like accent, due to preference of the urban youth and Liverpoolians that live there, as well as the population of families that move there form the Liverpoolian. Also more “sing – songs” accents are often found in Welsh speakers in the Northeast.

In Western Wales, the accent of the south of Pembrokeshire is similar in some respects with Cornish speech patterns. Due to high number of English migrants to the area, South Pembrokeshire is sometimes claimed to have an almost English accents; but there is a distance south Pembrokeshire accent and terminology used (now obscure). It is important to note that accents in Wales vary even over relatively short distances. The Neath’s accent is different; while there is a noticeable difference among the Liahelli and Ammanford accents. The South-Walian accent is constantly related to social class, with the pronunciation educated speakers often closer to RP, just like in many areas of Britain [21].

The American Dialects of English

It is a well-known fact that, the Great Britain colonized and Canada (i.e., the countries that clearly represent the North American accents of English). Thus, English languages become an inherited language form the United Kingdom or the States and most parts of Canada. It is necessary to note that:

The first wave of English speaking settlers arrived in North America in the 17th century. During that time, there were also speakers in North America of Spanish, French, Dutch, German, Norwegian, Swedish, Scots, Welsh, Irish, Scottish Gaelic, Finnish, Russian (Alaska) and numerous Native American languages (Wikipedia).

This of course underscores by implication the varieties of English in North America. However, most of these accents by 17th are identified as rhotic which was further supported by English and Scottish English. But some American accents are non-rhotic such as Boston accent.

Kerr and Alderman explain that, it is difficult to have one standard accent in the U.S.A which every American will adhere to. According to them “the country is too big, the population too, regional traditions too strong and few people are willing to let an outsider dictate the way they should talk” [13]. They also establish features of pronunciation in the United States which can be grouped into three main dialects namely “New England, the Southern and General American” (104). But they add that the classification is not “sufficiently exact” [17]. Hence; they recognize seven dialects in the United States which obviously depict different accents:

- Eastern New English. There are different varieties, but the general characteristics are the retention of a rounded vowel in words like ‘hot’ and ‘top’; the use of a shortened form of the ‘a’ in father!; the use of the broad ‘a’ in “fast”, ‘path’, ‘grass’ etc., and the loss of the ‘r’ in ‘car’, ‘hard’ etc., (except before vowels like in ‘carry’ and ‘tory’)
- New York City. Most times considered a part of the Eastern New English dialect, its speech and that of adjacent counties are generally different. For instance, the ‘r’ has been lost and ‘cot’ and ‘caught’ are phonemically contrasted [kat, kɔt] since the ‘a’ in words like ‘cot’ and ‘top’, before voiceless stops is: almost always unrounded.
- Middle Atlantic. This preserves the ‘r’ in all positions, has the unrounded vowel in ‘forest’, as well in ‘hot’, and always pronounces [oe] in ‘fast’, ‘ask’, ‘grass’, etc.
- Western Pennsylvania. Generally, it belongs to General American with the ‘r’ always pronounced and with [æ] in ‘ask’, ‘path’, etc, while ‘cot’ and ‘caught’ are generally homonyms [kɔt].
- Southern Mountain. The speech of this dialect shows mixed character. Thus, ‘r’ is sounded as

Midland, but {ar} is generally pronounced [æ] or in the southern part of the area [aə, a] as in many parts of the south [16].

- Southern. It covers a large area and agrees with Eastern New England in the loss of 'r' finally and before consonants, as in 'car' and 'hard'. It equally goes further to omit the 'r' before a word beginning with a vowel, as in 'far away' [fo: ə'we]. It does not have the rounded vowel in words like 'top' and 'hot' or "broad α" in 'grass', and 'dance'. Another important feature is the treatment of the diphthong in 'out' instead of the usual [aU]. It begins the diphthong with [æ] before voiced consonants.
- General America, This is characterized by the flat 'α' (in 'fast' 'path', etc.), the unrounded vowel in 'hot', top; etc, the retention of a strong 'r' in all positions, and less tendency than British English to introduce a glide after the vowels [e] and [o] in 'late' and 'note'. The diphthong heard in the Southern British pronunciation of words like 'note', and 'go' [əU] is absent from most parts of General American. Many regions except Eastern New England, Metropolitan New York, and Southern are regarded as General American. It covers over two thirds of the area of the United States and contains two third of the total population, as well as regarded "the most distinctive American manner of speaking" [11].

Melvyn in his analysis of the adventures of English states that English accents in the USA, Canada "{. . .}" developed from the combinations of different accents and languages in various societies" [10]. He goes on to assert that "North American accents remain more distant either as a result of time or of external or 'foreign' linguistic interaction" [10]. Hence, one can say that like other regional accents of English language, the interaction of people from many ethnic backgrounds contributed to the formation of different varieties of North American accents.

The study of North American English dialects exposes variations in the pronunciation of spoken English by the inhabitants of various parts of North America. It is necessary to emphasize that North American English has highly developed and distinct regional varieties in the United States and is related to Canadian English. Hence, "American English (the USA) and Canadian English (Canada) are said to have more in common with each other than other varieties outside North American" (Wikipedia).

William, Ash and Boberg in their Atlas of North American English identify and describe regional dialects in North America. These regional dialects are quite many but the study gives a significant representation of North American dialects of English. The Midland is divided into North and South dialect areas. The major feature of the two accents is that they have a distinctly frontier realization of the /oU/

phoneme (as in 'boat') than any other American accent, especially in the North where the phoneme is most times realized with a central nucleus that reflects (əU).

Also, /aU/ has a fronter nucleus than /ai/, which approximates [æu]. The North Midland comprises Southern Ohio, Central Indiana, Central Illinois, Iowa, Northern Missouri, Nebraska and Northern Kansas. The major cities are Columbus, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis. The significant feature of the North Midland dialect is the merger of the "short o and /a/" (as in 'cot') and "aw and /ɔ/" (as in caught) phonemes. The South Midland consists of Kentucky, Southern Indiana, Southern Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Southern Kansas, and Oklahoma (west of Mississippi river). The obvious feature is the smoothing of the diphthong /ai/ to [a:] [11].

St Louis Missouri is one of the several North Midland cities, it has some unique features which differentiate it from the rest the Midland. The following can suffice:

- The Merger of the phonemes /ɔ/ (as in 'for') and /aɪ/ (as in 'far'), but leaves /oɪ/ (as in 'four').
- Some speakers, mostly older ones have /ei/ instead of Standard /e/ before /ʒ/. Hence, 'measure' is pronounced /meiʒ.ə/, while 'wash' which has /ɪ/, becomes /wɔɪʃ/ (warsh).
- The diphthong /ɔi/ in Standard English becomes more like [a:l]. That is why words such as 'oil' and 'joint' are commonly pronounced 'awɪul' and 'jawɪnt'
- The phoneme [ɹ] is usually replaced with [d], mostly among the white working-class urban populace
- There are features of Northern Cities Vowel Shift (NCVS), which among others raises and tenses vowel /æ/. Hence, words like 'cat' /kæt/ becomes more like [kæət).

The Western Pennsylvania, an eastern extension of North Midland has features of Midland, which is the fronting of /oU/ and /aU/. Also in Western Pennsylvania, the city of Pittsburgh has a sound change that is unique in North American, that is , the monophthongization of /aU/ to [a:]. The city also has an unusually low allophone of /ʌ/ (as in 'cut'). The North of Pennsylvania is distinguished from the Midland based on the former's phonological and phonetic Isoglosses. Some of the features of Isoglosses are the furthering of the nucleus of /aU/ back than that of /ai/, while /oU/ remains a back vowel; the allophone of /u:/ after non-coronal consonants remain back; /θ/ is used in 'on', while the Midland uses /ɔ/ (as in 'dawn') in 'on. There is also the use of a raised allophone such as [ʌi] or [əi] for /ai/ before voiceless consonants [7].

The study of Atlas of North American English also reveals the Inland North accent, The Inland North

as a region comprises the following: the east, central and western New York State (including Syracuse, Binghamton, Rochester and Buffalo), Michigan's Lower Peninsula (Detroit and Grand Rapids), Cleveland, Chicago, Gray and Southeastern Wisconsin (Milwaukee and Racine). The main feature of inland North accent is the Northern Cities Vowel Shift. The following 'chain shift' characterize NCVS:

- The raising, tensing and diphthongization of // towards [a], which makes words like 'cat' to be pronounced as 'kyat'.
- The fronting of /a/ to [a:] in such a way that /0/ phoneme can be mistaken for // by speakers of other dialects. Hence, 'block' is close to the way other dialects pronounce 'black'
- /ɔ/ lowers towards [a], causing 'stalk' to sound like other dialects' 'stock'.
- The backing and sometimes lowering of (ɛ) towards either [ə] or [æ].
- /ʌ/ is backed towards [ɔ], so that 'stuck' sounds like 'stalk' in dialects that maintain [ɔ] sound in the word 'stalk'
- /I/ is lowered and backed, but it is kept distinct from [ɛ] in all contexts, so that the "pin-pen" merger does not occur.

The North central are Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Northern Minnesota, North Dakota and Eastern Montana. The accent of this region has the following features.

- The "cot-caught" merger is significant.
- It is associated with a "sing-song" intonation which is said to be derived from the pitch accent pattern of the Scandinavian languages.
- Older speakers may merge /w/ and /v/, which makes 'well' and 'veil' to sound alike.
- Older and rural speakers may also merge /8/ into /d/ and /θ/ into /t/. These are quite prominent because languages do not possess /w/, /8/, or /0/ phonemes [7].

The Western New England is made up of most of Connecticut, Western Massachusetts, and Vermont. The accent is described as rhotic and possesses the "mary-marry-merry" merger and not subjected to the "caught-cot" merger. Also, Connecticut and Western Massachusetts particularly depict the same general phonological system as the Inland North and some speakers reflect NCVS. The Northeastern major cities have distinctive accents that cover smaller regions. The unusual features of the accents in these major cities are non-rhoticity or a split of /æ/ into separate phonemes. But they share features which are ant to the "mary-marry-merry" merger and retention of historical short 'a' and long 'o' before intervocalic /ɪ/, Which makes words such as 'orange', 'Florida' and 'horrible' to have a different stressed vowel than 'story' and 'chorus' [9].

The Eastern New England dialect covers Maine, New Hampshire and eastern Massachusetts (which includes greater Boston). Its accent shares the same features with North such as Canadian rising of /ai/ and minimal fronting of /aU/ and /oU/. It had more contact with British varieties of English because of its mess to the Atlantic Coast. That is why it has most of British rents such as the non-rhotic and not having the "father-bother" merger, but retains "cot-caught" merger that is common in North America [3].

The Rhode Island and New York City share some similar features with Eastern New England dialect region, such as the traditional non-rhoticity. The major difference among the three is that Rhoda Island is subject to "father-bother" merger and not "cot-caught" merger, while "cot-caught" separation is quite different from Rhoda Island's. Hence 'caught' is /kɔ:t/ in New York, while /a/ represents 'caught' in Rhoda Island. The original ancestor of General American is the accent of Philadelphia and nearby parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. However some changes in modern Philadelphia speech which differentiate it from General American include:

- The pronunciation of 'water' with the vowel of 'wood' as in /wUdɔ-/
- Words such as 'orange', horrible, etc. are pronounced with [-a].
- 'On' is pronounced [ɔʌ], which makes it to rhyme with 'dawn' rather than 'don'.
- The [oU] in 'goat' and 'boat' is fronted which makes it to be pronounced [əU].
- The phoneme [æ] undergoes "-tensing" in some words.

The Atlas of North American English goes further to illustrate that the accent of Charleston has some elements of British and America southern English, as well as "French Huguenot" influences. The distinctive features include including of long mid vowels, such as the raising of /ay/ and /aw/. The New Orleans accent is related to New York City and northern New Jersey. The most distinctive accent of New Orleans is nicknamed 'yat', which features the splitting of the historic "short-a" class into tense [ea] and lax [æ] versions and the pronunciation of 'cat' and 'caught' as [kat] and [kɔt] [1].

The Central and South Florida include: Orlando and Miami. Many residents in Orlando speak with General American, while others speak with a Northeast accent (particularly New York-New Jersey English) or Spanish speakers' accent. A unique accent known as the 'Miami accent' is widely spoken in Miami. It is very similar to accents in the Northeast, but much influenced by Spanish [1].

California English is distinctive as a result of several phonological processes it has undergone. These

phonological processes are represented in a new chain vowel shift known as the California Vowel Shift. They include among others:

- Before /ɪ/, /I/ is raised to [i], so that 'king' shares the same vowel with 'keen' instead of 'kin'.
- /æ/ is raised and diphthongized to [ea] or [ia] before 'nasal consonants. Hence 'ban' is pronounced 'bay — uhn'.
- /U/ moves towards [A], so as to make 'put' sound more like 'putt'.
- /ʌ/ moves towards [E], so as to make 'putt' sound slightly similar to 'pet'.
- /a/ moves towards [c], which makes 'cot' and 'caught' to be closer to General American 'caught'.

Utah has Utah English which is humorously referred to as 'Utahnics'. It has influences, from Scottish to Mexican Spanish. The following features can be identified:

- The merger of /oU/ and / to [U] before /I/, which makes parts like 'bowl' and 'bull' to be pronounced the same.
- Further diphthongization of [ɛ] as [eɪ], so that 'egg' and 'leg' are pronounced 'ayg' and "iayg"; while 'leisure' and 'pleasure' are pronounced 'iayzur' and 'piayzhur' respectively.
- The merger of /ar/ and /or/, so that 'born' may be pronounced 'barn' and the town of 'American fork' becomes 'American fark'

The Pacific North West English is similar to Californian English and West/Canadian English. For instance, the accent of Southern Oregon shares several features of Californian English (including the Californian vowel shift), while Northern Washington has some features similar to West/Central Canadian English (including the Canadian vowel shift). The following examples can suffice:

- [ɛ] and sometimes [æ] as [ei] before (g), such that 'leg' and 'lag' are pronounced [eig].
- /æ/ is raised and diphthongized to [ea] or [ie] before nasals by some speakers.
- /æ/ is lowered in the direction of [a] by some speaker.

As already noted, Canadian English used in Canada. its accents are very similar to those of the Western and Midlands regions of the United States. However, the most distinctive features are the Canadian raising and the Canadian Vowel Shift. An important feature of rising is the raising of the nucleus of the diphthongs /ai/ and /au/ before voiceless consonants. In other words, when a diphthong is followed by the voiceless consonants such as /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, etc, the starting point of the diphthong raises from an open central vowel to a mid-one. For instance 'ride' is pronounced [raid), while 'write' is pronounced [reit]. Canadian Vowel Shift on the other hand is mostly found in Ontario, English-speaking Montreal and further west.

Its features involve the front lax vowels /æ/, /ɛ/ and /i/. Here the /æ/ of 'bat' is retracted to [a] (except before nasals), while /ɛ/ and /i/ are lowered in the direction of [ɪ] and [ɛ] and/or retracted.

Charles Barber in his account of North American dialects of English illustrates that "the English of North America was separated from British English rather early, and has a somewhat different system" (243). He supports the views of others that "the speech of the vast majority of Americans and Canadians is rhotic", and "one consequence of this is that the centering diphthong /iə/, /eə/, and /Uə/ do not exist in their system" 243. He further supports the existence of varieties of dialects/accents in America. These varieties according to him comprise slightly different inventories of vowel phonemes in different areas [21].

CONCLUSION

English language occupies an enviable position as one of the few languages spoken by many people from different countries of the world. It is one of the official languages of the United Nations and a good number of countries of the world have adopted it as their Lingua Franca. The development of English language has led to different varieties or dialects. These varieties or dialects do not only exist in the regions where English is spoken as an official or second language, but also in the regions that have it as their first language or mother tongue. In the analysis, it was discovered that many dialects exist in the regions where English language is spoken as first or official/second language. In other words, as English spread from one region to another, different varieties in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation came to exist. In Great Britain, there are dialects of English in England, Scotland and Wales. Ireland has Ulster, Connacht, Leinster and Munster, while in North America there are different dialects in USA and Canada.

The analysis also shows different dialects of English spoken in Australia, New Zealand, Helena, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. The Asian continent is not left out in these variations as different dialects of English are identified in Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. Nigeria and other African countries have different dialects of the language. That is why for instance, in Nigeria, the /i/ sound is used for both /i/ and /I:/ as in 'sit' and 'see'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is a fact that language does not consist of letters, but of sounds and until this fact has been brought home to us, our study of W will be little better than an exercise of memory. Based on the above words and the findings discussed, that the following recommendations are made in order to facilitate effective teaching of and communication in English language:

- Developing countries like Nigeria which have English as an official language do not have adequate facilities in their citadels of learning for effective teaching and learning of the language. To this end, enough language laboratories and standard oral English textbooks should be provided from the crèche School to the higher institutions. More attention should be paid to English language learning in crèche, primary and secondary schools because they serve as the basic foundations.
- The native and non-native English teachers should be adequately exposed to the various phonological differences of English dialects and more importantly the two standard dialects: the RP and GAM. It is very clear that many English language teachers are not conversant with different dialects of English and particularly the similarities and differences of the RP and GAM. If they are well knowledgeable of them, they will be able to reflect them in classes. This will obviously improve communication as learners/speakers of the language are made to practice them continuously during classes. For instance, knowing that /ɔɪ/ in American dialect (GAM) is /oʊ/ in British dialect (RP) an American accent speaker will be able to understand 'go' /gəʊ/ as /goʊ/. Also, native speakers will be able to understand non-native speakers like Nigerians who may pronounce 'see' /si:/ as /si/ because of the existence of only short /ɪ/ in Nigerian English for /ɪ/ and /i:/ in the RP and GAM.
- A lot of attention should be paid to "Accent Neutralization/Reduction" which is also known as accent modification. It is a systematic approach used in learning or adopting a new accent. The method used involves several steps which include among others: identifying deviations in the person's current speech from the desired dialect (such as pronunciation, speech pattern and speech habits), changing the way one uses one's mouth, teeth and tongue to form vowels and consonants, modifying one's intonation and stress patterns, as well as changing one's rhythm. It enables proficient English speakers speak with a more American or British dialect.
- Accent reduction training that is available include; workshops, seminars, classroom, software, online software products, over the phone, over webcam, through books and recordings and on a one-on-one basis. Hence with accent neutralization/reduction, users of English can communicate effectively with each other notwithstanding their backgrounds.
- Similarly as a result of the global market place expansions which made outsourcing (i.e. the transfer of components of large segments of an organization's internal infrastructure, staff processes or applications to an external resources where its work can be done at lower cost to the company) to be inevitable, there is need for accent neutralization/reduction in order to enable native speakers from the parent company communicate with non-native speakers where the company has been outsourced for customer satisfaction.
- In countries like Nigeria where English is studied from the crèche to the higher institutions, there should be a course or lessons on "English Accents" (this is a very important recommendation that should be given adequate consideration and implementation). This course is offered in the higher institutions in the UK as one of the core courses of English language (B.A Linguistics). The course enables English language learners to be familiar with different dialects of English language, while more attention is given to some particular dialects such as Cockney, Scouse, General American, Australian, British, American, the RP, Scottish, Caribbean, Northern Ireland and South Africa. This of course will help all speakers/learners of English language to master these dialects for effective teaching of, and communication in the language.
- There should be, adequate exchange programmes for students and teachers of English language at all levels. Although this practice is on even in Nigeria, it should be expanded and taken seriously. The exchange programmes will enable both students and teachers of English language to master different accents of the language spoken around the world. Hence, they should not be limited to Britain and the USA as often the case, but should include other continents such as Asia, southern Hemisphere, Africa, Europe and the Caribbean,
- Although this analysis focused on the phonological differences of the RP and GAM which represent widely the British and American dialects respectively, as well as dialects taught to non-native learners of English language, there should be a further research that will specifically identify the phonological differences of all or a good number of English dialects (P.H.D Thesis possibly). This will greatly facilitate communication in other dialects (apart from British and American), since the world is fast becoming a global village.

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