

Interference of ‘Diachronisms’ In Nigerian English (NigE)

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Abstract

This paper examines the use of ‘diachronisms’ in Educated Nigerian English (ENE). Diachronisms is used here to denote old-fashioned words and expressions which come from old and past generation varieties of English and assume currency and ubiquity in (E)NE. The paper sets out to show the psychosociolinguistic causes of diachronisms in ENE, how they distinguish Nigerian English morphology and how they should be treated in the use, teaching, and description of Nigerian English variety. The paper is based on the concepts of ‘diachronic linguistic,’ and ‘interference.’ Observation and the recording of spontaneous speeches were used to gather examples which were further subjected to a nation-wide survey in a questionnaire to establish their currency and ubiquity in ENE, also Standard Nigerian English (SNE). The data were presented and analyzed in simple percentile and frequency tables and charts Results showed that diachronisms flourish in (E) NE, unlike in Standard British English (SBE) or Standard American English (SAE). The paper concludes that the use of diachronisms in Nigerian English (NigE) differentiates it from native English varieties. Since the diachronisms examined are institutionalised and widely accepted, and as they are not grammatical errors or embarrassing errors of interference, the paper argues that teachers of ESL and grammarians do not need to bother about them as they may worry about other egregious language infelicities.

Keywords: *Interference, diachronisms, ENE, diachronic linguistics, Nigerian English*

Introduction

Diachronisms are some of the features of Nigerian English morphology which distinguish it from other varieties of English. The term is used in this paper for old-fashioned or outdated words in SBE. Although old-fashioned words may be found in the dictionaries, native English varieties no longer use or hardly use them, hence they are tagged old-fashioned. However, they find current expression in Nigerian English (NigE).

NigE is often assessed against the features of Standards British English (SBE) or Standard American English (SAE). Region, formal education and (psycho)sociolinguistic parameters are usually used to classify NigE varieties (Jowitt, 2008; Surakat, 2010). Some regional varieties of NigE are *Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo, Efik, Urhobo, Ebira, Efik/Ibibio, Edo* varieties. Phonological variations mainly different regional varieties. Several classifications have been made with formal education and linguistic features. Banjo’s (1970, 1996) classification into Varieties I, II, III and IV is the most popular. Accordingly, *Variety I* is the lowest, which reflects vulgar errors of grammar and broken structures often used by primary school pupils and those with half-baked formal education. *Variety II*, an improvement on *Variety I*, is associated with secondary school students, school certificate holders, among many others. It is used by over 70% of those who use English in Nigeria. *Variety III*, which is similar but not identical to RP, is associated with highly educated Nigerians: graduates, teachers, lecturers, professors, writers, broadcasters, etc. Banjo proposes this model for Nigerian English. His *Variety III* is often referred to as Standard Nigerian English (SNE) or Educated Nigerian English (ENE). Lastly, *Variety IV* is like native English standard spoken by few Nigerians born in native English-speaking countries, or who have a parent of English origin and consequently acquired English as their first language (Banjo, 1996). However, this variety is seen as too foreign and affected in Nigeria.

Sociolinguistic parameters have equally been used to depict three ‘-lects’: *basilect*, *mesolect* and *acrolect* (Ogbulogo 2005). The *Mesolect* is analogous to Banjo’s *Variety I*. The *Basilect* is the most popular and widely used in Nigeria by junior *civil servants*, secondary school students and not-so-educated youths. The *Acrolect* is used by few very

highly educated Nigerians. It has the greatest prestige and international intelligibility. Banjo's *Variety III*, which is also the *acrolect* on the sociolinguistic pyramid, is often recommended or preferred as the Nigerian standard. Nevertheless, these classifications are not clear-cut, for there are overlaps. 'There can, in truth, never be any firm dividing lines' (Banjo, 1996, p.79). Diachronisms flourish in all the varieties of NigE. However, this paper concentrates on the cases in ENE, the leading model of NigE varieties.

The paper is an integral section of a major nation-wide doctoral thesis survey of the features of interference in ENE conducted from April 2005 to May 2013. The paper adopted the concept of interference to (1) show how and why diachronisms occur in NigE, (2) present cases of diachronic interference in NigE, (3) demonstrate that they differentiate NigE from native English varieties, and (4) propose how these features should be treated in describing, teaching and learning Nigerian ESL.

Methodology

The paper is a part of a wider national survey carried out in Nigeria, a leading ESL country at present, from 2005 to May 2013. Nigerians in the continuum of National Diploma (ND) minimum to Ph.D./Professor are considered educated. Subjects were between 19 and 70 years, comprising lecturers and final year students in English and Literature, Linguistics, and International Studies and Diplomacy, Mass Communication, Theatre Arts Departments and other departments in ten government-owned universities and other schools in five of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria: the South-West, the multi-lingual South-South, the North Central, the South-East and the multilingual Middle-Belt.

The universities and institutions visited are Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Bayero University, Kano (North); University of Lagos, Lagos, Federal University of Technology, Akure (West); University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (East); University of Ilorin, Ilorin, University of Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (Middle-Belt); University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, and the University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt (South-South).

Thirty words tagged old-fashioned in SBE were first observed in Nigerian usage and later written down to be tested in a questionnaire distributed to 30,000 educated Nigerians. 20,000 of the responses were collated and analysed. The percentage of users for each case tested is indicated in front of each example. Below 30% is tagged 'isolated.' 30-39% is tagged 'emerging trend,' which means that the variant is not popular in ENE; 40-49% is tagged 'variant' or 'free variant,' 50-59% is 'common,' 60-79% is tagged 'widespread' and 80-100% is tagged 'entrenched' or 'institutionalised'. The methods of analysis are qualitative and quantitative. The diachronisms were presented in simple percentile, frequency tables and charts, and also described and discussed in line with the paper's objectives.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The paper is based on the concept of interference. Ekundayo (2014b) traces the use of the term to several independent works. First is Barry Hale (2000), an Australian video artist, who applies the term 'interference mirror' to denote a simple video feedback loop which he manipulates to create evolving images in real time (www.barryhale.interferencemirrors). William Croft (2000, 2003) applied the term as Ekundayo (2006, 2014a) later conceptualised it. Croft (2000, 2003) says that "different elements of the same language can interfere with each other if they share enough linguistic substance", and that interference occurs when language items are affected by different dialects, sociolinguistic variants or other structures of the same language (Croft, 2000, pp. 111-165).

Ekundayo's (2006) interference arises from a lexicalisation of the concepts of interlingual interference (Richards and Sampson, 1984), the overgeneralisation of linguistic features (Selinker, 1984), and Labov's (1994) internal principles of linguistic change. Ekundayo says interference is 'the habit of transferring the rules and dynamics of a language from a section where they have been established and where they acceptably operate to another section within the language where they hitherto used not to operate. Since such a transfer is within the language, it is better tagged interference, which is the reverse of interference' (p.20). Ekundayo (2014a) mentions 'psycho-sociolinguistic' and 'linguistic' factors as affecting the competence and performance of (second) language users.

The psycho-sociolinguistic refers to the cognitive, memory, mindset and competence as well as social knowledge, context, setting and performance. Competence is the underlying innate linguistic knowledge of a speaker while performance is the practical, measurable use of language in a given situation. Both native and nonnative speakers possess some competences, but nonnative speakers' competences are not on a par with native speakers' competences. Yet, both speakers must inevitably deploy their competences. Different competences generate different instances of use and performances.

The linguistic factor generates the five major types of interference: phonological, graphological or orthographic, morphemic or morphological, morpho-syntactic and lexico-semantic, which Ekundayo's 2005 to 2013 survey of ENE has documented. The diachronic type is a subset of the morphemic or morphological set. They are best treated as 'intraferring' because they are being redeployed from another variety, an old variety, of the same language to a modern nonnative variety. Interference features emanate from competence and show in performance. It is the reassignment and redeployment of a language items and rules that (non)native speakers/writers have in their competences to hitherto new areas and contexts where they used not to operate. This includes the transfer of words from other varieties, such as Americanisms, creative neologisms, the redeployment and mixture of orthographic signs in sms and email, etc.

The diachronic type is a subset of the morphemic/morphological type Diachronisms are borrowings from previous varieties of English, not from local Nigerian languages and mother tongues; hence they are treated as interference features, not interference. Saussure introduced two major perspectives of language study: diachronic and synchronic linguistics. Synchronic linguistics is the study of the present-day features and dynamics of a language while diachronic linguistics, also called 'historical linguistic,' 'linguistic diachrony' and formerly 'comparative philology,' studies the historical development of a language to establish the changes that have taken place and how features of the old variety of a language have been transferred to its modern-day variety at all the levels of linguistic organisation (Crystal, 2009; Saussure, 1966; Beaugrande, 1991).

In English, for example, the history with the development of the English language is divided into three main periods: Old English (700 AD-1100 AD), Middle English (1100-1500) and Modern English subdivided into Early Modern (1500-1800), and Late Modern (1800 to date). However, Modern English from the 20th Century (1914 till date) belongs to another epoch that may be tagged 'Expanding Modern English' because English has undergone radical expansion and changes in morphology and lexico-semantics, experienced the inflow of vocabulary from different languages of the world and domains of knowledge: science, technology, sports, music, ICT, etc, and widened its areas of use and function during this period.

Words, rules and phrases either die out of use or pour from Old English to Middle English and onward to Modern English (Baugh and Cable, 1978; Kpolugbo, 2006; Ekundayo, 2014a). A careful study of late Modern English usage and dictionaries published

from 1900 to 2016 show that many words have receded to the background of usage. Some have changed meanings or currently carry additional meanings that were not in previous usage and earlier dictionaries. Although the purpose of this paper is not to do a historical study of English, it examines how words from previous varieties of English, which have gone out of use in native English, particularly SBE, are still in use in Nigerian English, a linguistic phenomenon tagged diachronic interference or diachronism in this paper.

According to Ekundayo (2014b), “an interesting type of interference in ESL is the inflow and currency of words old-fashioned or outdated in native varieties to NigE. Many ‘diachronisms’ are used daily in ENE. Diachronism invokes the sense of anachronism. The two terms are similar and also different. While anachronism refers to anything, person, idea, etc which is out of tune with time and thus more embracing, diachronism is more specific of the transfer of outdated words from an old English variety to a new variety. Diachronism may be subsumed under anachronism. Diachronic interference manifests in two ways. First, it shows in the retention of meanings that have faded from words still in circulation in both NigE and BrE; and, second, in the use of words and expressions downright old-fashioned in SBE but yet in use and popular in NigE. These, in addition to other morphological features, differentiate Nigerian English morphology from SBE or SAE morphology.

Data Presentation

The words identified and the responses elicited re-presented in the table, charts and annotation below.

Diachronic Interference

Thirty [30] examples were used in a questionnaire. Respondents were asked to tick (A) YES if they used the words regularly, or (B) if they used them at times or (C) if they did not use them at all. Below are the questions and table of responses:

1. <i>ado</i> (excitement, action)	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
2. <i>amongst</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
3. <i>apparel</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
4. <i>betwixt and between</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
5. <i>bothersome</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
6. <i>brethren</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
7. <i>carnal knowledge</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
8. <i>damsel</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
9. <i>doxology</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
10. <i>drunkard</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
11. <i>fisticuffs</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
12. <i>haberdasher</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
13. <i>harlot</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
14. <i>hither and thither</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
15. <i>Impudent</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
16. <i>issue(for children)</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
17. <i>jalopy</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
18. <i>jerrycan.</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
19. <i>lunatic asylum.</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
20. <i>my paddy</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
21. <i>natty</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
22. <i>paradventure.</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
23. <i>parley.</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
24. <i>parlour</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
25. <i>pomade</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.
26. <i>swine (pigs)</i>	(A) I use it regularly	(B) Sometimes.	(C) I do not use it.

27. *varsity*. (A) I use it regularly (B) Sometimes. (C) I do not use it.
 28. *venereal disease*. (A) I use it regularly (B) Sometimes. (C) I do not use it.
 29. *vex(ation)* (A) I use it regularly (B) Sometimes. (C) I do not use it.
 30. *yuletide* (A) I use it regularly (B) Sometimes. (C) I do not use it.

Table 1: Some Diachronisms in ENE

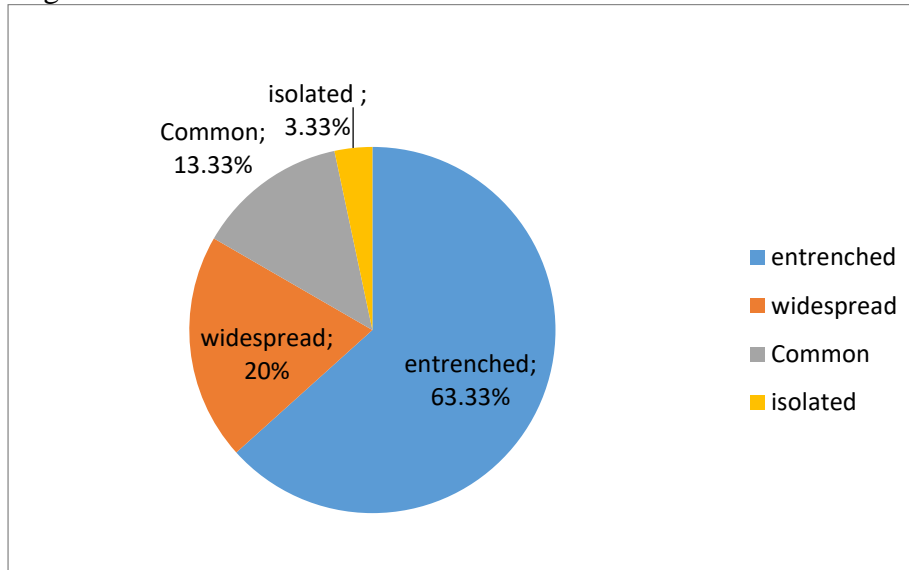
S/N	SBE Old-fashioned Words	New SBE Words of the Same Meaning	A (YES) Used Regularly	B(Yes) Used at times	C (NO) Not Used at all	Comment
1	(without) ado	without delay	17,000/85%	2,000/10%	1,000/5%	entrenched
2	amongst	Among	12,000/60%	8,000/40%	-----	widespread
3	apparel (also apparels*)	cloths/clothes	15,000/75%/	4,000/20%	1,000/5%	entrenched
4	betwixt and between	(in-)between	13,000/65%	5,000/25%	2,000/10%	widespread
5	bothersome	Worrisome	17,000/85%	2,000/10%	1,000/5%	entrenched
6	brethren	Brothers	16,000/80%/	4,000/0%	-----	entrenched
7	carnal knowledge, e.g. to have carnal knowledge of a girl)	sexual intercourse	15,000/75%	3,000/15%	2,000/10%	widespread
8	damsel	belle, girl	16,000/80%	4,000/20%	-----	entrenched
9	doxology	praise word	10,000/50%	5,000/25%	5,000/25%	common
10	drunkard	drunk, drinker	17,000/85%	3,000/15%	-----	entrenched
11	fisticuffs	Fight	15,000/75%	2,000/10%	3,000/15%	widespread
12	haberdasher	seller/hawker	1,200/6%	5,000/25%	13,800/74%	isolated
13	harlot	Prostitute	18,000/90%	2,000/10%	-----	entrenched
14	hither and thither	here and there	5,000/50%	6,000/30%	4,000/20%	common
15	impudent	Rude	18,000/90%	2,000/10%	-----	entrenched
16	issue	kids, children	17,000/85%	3,000/15%	-----	entrenched
17	jalopy	rickety car	18,000/90%	2,000/10%	-----	entrenched
18	jerrycan	can, container	20,000/100%	-----	-----	entrenched
19	lunatic asylum	psychiatric hospital	16,000/80%	4,000/20%	-----	entrenched
20	my paddy	(paddy, sparingly used)	18,000/90%	2,000/10%	-----	entrenched
21	natty	clean, neat	10,000/50 %	5,000/25%	5,000/25%	common
22	paradventure	perhaps, may be	18,000/90%	-----	2,000/10%	entrenched
23	parley	Resolve	20,000/100%	-----	-----	entrenched
24	parlour (as in 'room and parlour')	living room	20,000/100%	-----	-----	entrenched
25	pomade (cream)	(hair)cream	20,000/100%	-----	-----	entrenched
26	swine	Pigs	10,000/50%	7,000/35%	3,000/15%	common
27	varsity	University	20,000/100%	-----	-----	entrenched
28	venereal disease	sexually transmitted disease (std)	12,000/60%	5,000/25%	3,000/15%	widespread
29	vex(ation)	angry, anger	16,000/80%/	4,000/0%	-----	entrenched
30	yuletide	Christmas period	13,000/65%	5,000/25%	2,000/10%	widespread

Other examples not tested but observed to be entrenched or widespread in ENE are *brainy*, *bravo*, *brimstone*, *chaste*, *chattel*, *cobbler*, *complaisant*, etc. Table 2 below shows the frequency and percentage of degree of spread.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution for the Diachronisms in Table 1

S/N	Range	Degree of Spread	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
1	80-100%	entrenched	19	63.33%	1.57
2	60-79%	widespread	6	20%	5
3	50-59%	common	4	13.33%	7.5
4	40-49%	variant	0	0%	0
5	30-39%	emerging	0	0%	0
6	30-0%	isolated	1	3.33%	30
	Total		30	100%	37.85

Figure 1 below is a chart that shows graphically how widespread each set is in Nigeria English.



Discussion

The tables and chart show that the interference of some old-fashioned words in ESL/ ENE is entrenched, widespread and common. The interference occurs in two ways: (i) change of meaning or the retention of a meaning that has faded off the word in SBE. Two very good examples are *parley* and *issue*. *Parley* in informal ENE is used in the sense of *relate* or *interact with someone, to be in good terms with someone*; for example: “We still parley very well.” “That guy is my parley” (my friend). In old SBE use, *parley* means a talk between enemies or some persons who disagree in order to find a solution to a challenge. However, this meaning is not retained in its use in Nigerian English. Rather it is used in the positive sense of relating with someone. The same thing applies to *Paddy*, which in SBE is used derogatorily to describe someone from Ireland. Even though it is now rarely used in SBE because it is offensive, it, however, flourishes in ENE where *Paddy* means ‘a friend, ally, mate,’ etc. A third example is *issue*. Although *issue* is still current in SBE, its use to denote children has become old-fashioned. But in ENE, this sense is still very much popular, in addition to its other meanings; for example, “I have four issues” (SBE: “...four children”), “They have not had any issue of the womb” (SBE: “...any child”).

‘Ado’ is also a fine case. In old use, it denotes excitement, a flurry of activities, confusion, hysteria, trouble, etc. Educated Nigerians are familiar with the Shakespearian classic *Much Ado about Nothing* (*MAaN*). The old usage meaning of *ado*, as in *MAaN*, still ‘intrafere’ with the sense in which it is used in NigE even though in modern dictionaries and SBE this meaning has thinned out of the word. It is now mainly used in the idiom

without further/more ado, which means ‘without further delay, quickly.’ (See *Longman Contemporary Dictionary* and *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*). Still in NigE are popular expressions like “What is all this ado about?” “I don’t want to create any ado. That is why I am quiet.”

Another case is *doxology*, which used to be at its peak of currency and ubiquity in the 1970s, 80s, 90s and still common in NigE. Most secondary school (and even some higher school) students could not write a letter to someone without using *doxology* and *ditto*: “How are you? I hope this missive of mine from my golden pen of love will meet you in good atmospheric condition of health. If so, doxology and ditto with me!” *Doxology* is a tag for a word, expression or song of praise, e.g. *hallelujah* is an example of doxology. Therefore, the statement is or was often deployed to mean “if so, glory be to God,” or “if so, we thank God!” or “if so hallelujah!” *Ditto* is usually used to mean ‘same, same thing with me.’

The other manifestation of diachronic interference is the continuing use of words that have become old-fashioned in SBE, or at least tagged so in the dictionary, for which SBE now has new words and expressions. Bulk of the words in the table are in this category; for example ‘venereal disease’ (VD) for sexual transmitted infections/diseases (STIs/STDs), ‘parlour’ for SBE ‘sitting room’ (as in NigE ‘room and parlour,’ which is much like a self-contained apartment, without a toilet and kitchen attached); ‘paradventure’ for SBE ‘may be’, or ‘perhaps.’ As the table also shows, the old-fashioned words are used alongside the new SBE variants in ENE. So, no matter how institutionalised a variant may be, one still hears some Nigerians use the SBE variants. The question is, why do diachronisms go out of SBE and other native English varieties, perhaps, but find current expression in NigE?

3.3 Psycho-Sociolinguistic Causes/Sources of Diachronic Interference in NigE

A mixture of factors constrains educated Nigerians to use diachronisms. One of the factors is environment with the mode of learning English. Most Nigerians learn English formally in organised official settings, depending more on textbook English unlike their much more lucky counterparts born in native English communities like the UK, US, Canada, etc, who acquire English seamlessly in informal settings and then augment their perfect spoken competence with the learning of the written form in both formal and informal settings. Contrarily, the Nigerian learners depend more on their teachers, whose competences are limited, and textbooks, particularly the dictionary, while the native speakers enjoy the animation and immediacy of the spoken form from experienced native speakers whose competences are not in doubt, a natural inherent characteristic of a language in its native setting which no dictionary or textbook, no matter how well composed, can perfectly capture and convey to readers.

Closely related to this factor is the mindset with which nonnative speakers consult the dictionary. In a typical ESL setting like Nigeria, the dictionary is seen as the final arbiter on doubts and arguments about usage, meaning and correct pronunciation. Whatever the dictionary says in this regard is taken as final. Second, most ESL users of English often consult the dictionary for two reasons; namely, to see if the word they are searching for is in the dictionary at all, and to read the meaning of the word and then start using it thereafter. Most of them do not invariably take the pains to examine the context of use, the nuances, the pronunciation, whether it is derogatory, vulgar, literary, colloquial, restricted or old-fashioned. Consequently, one reads and hears words and expressions used out of context, derogatory words used when the users do not really mean to be derogatory, using a colloquial expression where a literary or formal word would be more suitable. In the same vein, Nigerian ESL users pick old-fashioned words and use them freely without getting the point that the label ‘old-fashioned’ in the dictionary means that the word is no longer in vogue.

On the sociolinguistic plane, the institutionalisation of certain expressions ensures that such lexical items thus entrenched flow from one generation of speakers to another, ably documented and spread by the standard bearers of the language like famous writers, lecturers, professors and renowned orators. Some good diachronisms thus institutionalised are ‘peradventure,’ ‘parlour,’ ‘impudent,’ ‘harlot,’ ‘ado,’ ‘vex,’ ‘my paddy,’ ‘jalopy,’ ‘jerrycan,’ among many others, as in these examples from NigE:

‘Peradventure, government will pay salary tomorrow.’
‘Room and *parlour* for rent.’
‘She is a *harlot*’
‘Please, help me to lift these *jerrycans* of water.’
‘Judith still *parleys* with that her *paddy*.’
‘His smoky *jalopy* can take us there.’

In addition, some social realities and experiences that have died out in native settings are yet happening daily in the Nigerian ESL setting; for example, the jerrycan phenomenon which is real in Nigeria: jerrycan for fetching and keeping water, kerosene, petrol, diesel and other oils. Two other instances are the prevalence of *jalopies* and *fisticuffs* in the Nigerian society. There are more jalopies on the Nigerian roads than posh and sleek cars, and the incidence of ‘two-fighting’ and exchanging blows in public is a more prevalent daily phenomenon on Nigerian streets, markets and motor parks than in advanced native English-speaking countries. So, the so-called out-dated words are yet relevant in Nigeria.

Conclusion and pedagogic implications

The paper examined the linguistic habit of borrowing words tagged old-fashioned for use in NigE and conceptualised it as diachronic interference, arguing that environment, mode of learning, institutionalised variants, dictionary-consulting mind set and the far-flung distance between native English-speaking communities and the peculiarities of non-native ESL setting form the backgrounds in which diachronisms interfere in NigE.

So, what are the implications of diachronisms for the description and teaching of ESL? Interference of diachronisms does not hamper teaching good written and spoken English though some prescriptive grammarians, who often insist that educated Nigerians should speak and write as native British speakers do, may want to argue that the words are outdated and so should not be used. However, they should not be seen as errors to be corrected simply because they are no longer current in SBE. Although they have gone out of use in SBE, they are popular in NigE. Diachronism is a form of borrowing from one variety of the language, an old variety, to a modern ESL variety. Borrowing is a permissible linguistic habit. It is natural for words to die out of and again return to use in the history of languages that have vibrant spoken and written forms. ESL speakers happily and effectively communicate with diachronisms. Further studies may reveal that the linguistic habit also flourishes in some native English and other ESL varieties. Therefore, classroom teaching and learning may not categorise them as errors so long as standard bearers use, understand and accept them. It may be stressed in teaching that in native English varieties, the words are old-fashioned so that educated Nigerians who emigrate to native English-speaking countries can avoid using them there in order to sound current and communicate competently.

Diachronisms, and some other morphological features of interference in Ekundayo (2014), combine to give NigE morphology its peculiarities and flavour. Teachers of ESL do not need to bother about them as they worry about other egregious errors of grammar and language infelicities because some of them are so deeply institutionalised that any attempt

to begin to aver that they are old-fashioned and so should not be used will sound pedantic and time-wasting. In so far as they are widespread, acceptable to educated Nigerian users and they do not impede mutual intelligibility within and outside Nigeria, they should be seen as Nigerian ESL variants.

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