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**ACCENT AND SOCIAL EVALUATION: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC
ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND STEREOTYPES IN
UNIVERSITY SETTINGS IN NIGERIA**

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Accent and Social Evaluation: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Language Attitudes and
Stereotypes in University Settings in Nigeria

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2024

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

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ABOH Sopuruchi Christian

ABSTRACT

Nigeria, a multilingual and multicultural country in West Africa, is an underexplored context in sociolinguistics and therefore doing language research in this ‘new’ environment may yield interesting findings. Owing to its colonial legacy with Britain, English is the official language spoken by most Nigerians. Because different indigenous languages serve as many Nigerians’ L1, this L1 impacts their English language usage, resulting in different varieties of English being used in Nigeria. However, attitudes towards varieties of Nigerian English, specifically Hausa English (HE), Igbo English (IE) and Yoruba English (YE) spoken by the major ethnic groups in Nigeria, have not received much attention. To address this gap, the present study adopts a mixed methods research design comprising a verbal-guise experiment and a questionnaire focusing on Nigerian culture and identity, focus group discussions, and speech elicitation tasks to (1) elicit Nigerian students’ attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE; (2) explore the effects of gender, religion and ethnicity on language attitudes; (3) investigate the relationship between attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE and attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures; and (4) ascertain the relationship between participants’ actual language behaviour and their attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE.

Participants in the study were 406 undergraduate students drawn from three Nigerian universities, representing Igbo-, Hausa/Northern-, and Yoruba-speaking people. Critical discursive psychology, social identity theory, ethnolinguistic vitality theory, and language-culture consonance/discrepancy hypothesis informed the data analysis and the discussion of the findings of the study.

The findings from the first research objective, which elicited attitudes towards HE, IE and YE in a verbal-guise experiment, show that YE received more favourable ratings on status and quality of language dimensions than HE and IE. The findings also demonstrate that participants found it challenging to distinguish between speakers of Igbo and Yoruba Englishes, which points to the possibility of language change in progress in the speech of Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups in southern Nigeria. With respect to the effects of social variables on language attitudes, the findings from the verbal-guise experiment demonstrate that gender, religion, and ethnicity had significant impact on attitudes towards speakers of the three Nigerian Englishes. In the focus group discussions, participants’ discursive construction of gender identities in relation to language attitudes uncovered three themes: women were seen as more linguistically ‘sophisticated’ than men, socialisation was seen as an influence on men and women’s speech, and differences in men and women’s speech were seen as a

function of the anatomical differences of both genders. Three dominant themes emerged from the analysis of the construction of religion in discourse: Christians were positioned as more fluent in English than Muslims, Christians and Muslims' English usage was seen as a function of ethnic background, and no religious-based difference in English usage was identified.

Findings from the third research objective, which investigated whether there is a correlation between attitudes towards language and the culture of the group that speaks the language, show that there is no correlation between attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE varieties and Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba cultures. In terms of how these three ethnolinguistic groups were constructed in the focus groups, the dominant themes that emerged include: contradictory attitudes about the Hausa people and their language and promoting ingroup favouritism, social hierarchy and using personal experiences to support the evaluations of the cultural Other, and constructing positive ingroup distinctiveness and equilibrium between negative and positive representations. The last research objective explored the relationship between participants' attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents and their actual linguistic behaviour and found that linguistic behaviour was correlated with more positive attitudes.

Overall, the findings of this study allow for a better understanding of stereotype formation in educational settings and language-based stigma towards certain Nigerian Englishes. More importantly, the study provides a holistic account of the three components of language attitudes: affect, behaviour, and cognition. The findings have important implications for ethnolinguistic vitality theory, decoloniality of language and knowledge, language-in-education policies, and language and social justice in applied linguistics research.

PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE THESIS

Part of the content of this thesis has been published in four research articles and four manuscripts derived from the thesis are under review.

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<https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2024.2346135>.

Aboh, S. C. (2023). Attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes: Ethnic categorisation and underlying reasons for categorisation. *Lingua*, 295, 1-16,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2023.103608>

Aboh, S. C. (2023). Nigerian students' attitudes toward endonormative varieties of Nigerian English. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–14.
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Aboh, S. C. "They use English to cover their poverty": Social class and English language usage in Nigeria.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

(M)ANOVA	(Multiple) Analysis of Variance
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
DP	Discursive Psychology
ESUT	Enugu State University of Science and Technology
EVT	Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory
FGD(s)	Focus Group Discussion(s)
GEB	Good Educational Background
HE	Hausa English
IE	Igbo English
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
KSU	Kogi State University
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LASUED	Lagos State University of Education
MGT	Matched-Guise Technique
MoI	Medium of Instruction
NgE	Nigerian English
NPgE	Nigerian Pidgin English
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PEB	Poor Educational Background
RP	Received Pronunciation
SAE	Standardised American English
SET	Speech Elicitation Task
SIT	Social Identity Theory
VGE/T	Verbal-Guise Experiment/Technique
YE	Yoruba English

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter provides the background for the present study. It begins with the motivation for the study, followed by a description of Nigeria's linguistic landscape. Subsequently, the research gaps and research questions that guide the study are presented. Furthermore, this chapter explains the significance of the study and concludes with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Motivation for the study

In the 1980s, a renowned Nigerian musician, Bright Chimezie, released a song titled "Because of English", which became popular in Nigeria, especially among the Igbo people, because the music was rendered with a mixture of English and Igbo. In the song, Bright narrated how his teacher during his secondary school days (in Umuahia, an Igbo speech community) flogged him for speaking to his classmate in Igbo because he broke the rule prohibiting students from speaking in their mother tongue in the classroom. Bright concluded the song by saying, "Because of English, they want to kill my language. They want to kill my culture. Who will save Africa?"

Bright's experience is similar to mine and many other Nigerian primary and secondary school students in private and government schools. Despite growing up in an Igbo-speaking environment, speaking Igbo in the classroom was considered an offence. The only time students are allowed to speak Igbo was during Igbo classes. In my childhood, those who broke this rule were levied 10 naira (about 1 HKD), and failure to pay the fine resulted in punishment either through flogging or manually cutting the grass in the school field using a machete. Inasmuch as the reason for prohibiting the use of the mother tongue is to encourage English language learning and usage and provide students with access to global language and society (Davies, 2003), it made many students less outspoken and reduced their verbal participation during classes. In situations where they had to speak, they could barely make a complete sentence in English without codeswitching with Igbo. Students who were privileged to speak fluent English often ridiculed those who were not fluent. By way of an ego defence mechanism and constructing a positive face for themselves, the ridiculed used the phrase, "English is not our mother tongue" to engineer a radical shift from the importance placed on how English is spoken to the message being communicated.

As a result of the discrimination against those who could not speak English fluently, parents who can afford the tuition fees of private schools (which are exorbitantly higher than

government schools), where teaching and speaking in English are emphasised, began sending their children there. With many children graduating from these schools and the increase in the number of English-speaking students, the bias against those who could not speak English without codeswitching developed into discrimination against those who were perceived to speak English with phonological and syntactic deviations from the Received Pronunciation (RP) (Adebija, 1994). Interestingly, those who discriminate against others who speak with a Nigerian indigenous accent also use the same accent in their spoken English to a certain degree (Igboanusi, 2006). However, it appears that those with higher mother tongue interference often attract more negative bias than those with minimal mother tongue interference (Williams, 1983). The former is often negatively tagged ‘Igboti’ or ‘Aboki’.

‘Igboti’ is a derogatory term used to represent the Igbo who speak English with an Igbo accent. ‘Aboki’ is an Hausa word, which originally meant ‘friend’, but it has been semantically extended to mean ‘cobbler’. It has been given a pejorative meaning as a representation of people from northern Nigeria who, among other things, are perceived as nonfluent or incompetent in their command of spoken English (Tella, 2018). This negative stereotype towards individuals who are not fluent in Standard English because of mother tongue interference was one of the motivations for this study.

An incident that motivated me to study language attitudes in university settings in Nigeria was a statement made by an undergraduate student in one of my interactions with him in 2018. He demonstrated a listener bias against a lecturer teaching them ‘Phonetics of English’ at the time. He expressed dissatisfaction with the lecturer’s accent because he considered it a mismatch for a lecturer to claim to be teaching phonetics of English with a “heavy Igbo accent”. This evaluative reaction towards the lecturer’s accent motivated me to study the evaluation of Nigerian English accents in Nigerian university settings.

Based on these personal experiences of accent discrimination in Nigeria, I delved into the literature on language attitudes and accent discrimination and found that several studies in this area have been conducted mainly in Europe, North America, and parts of Asia. However, a closer look at the few studies in the African sociolinguistic context, specifically in Nigeria, showed that little is known about attitudes towards various Nigerian Englishes. This gap in the literature strengthened my motivation to embark on this research using a mixed methods approach comprising a verbal-guise experiment, a questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity, focus group discussions, and speech elicitation tasks. In the next section, I present Nigeria’s linguistic landscape.

1.2 Nigeria's linguistic landscape

Nigeria is a multilingual and multicultural country with an estimated population of more than 210 million (World Bank, 2022), 520 living languages, and over 250 ethnic groups (Eberhard et al., 2023). In light of this number of languages, Nigeria is the third-most linguistically diverse nation in the world, behind Papua New Guinea (839 languages) and Indonesia (with 707 languages) (Eberhard et al., 2023). The multiplicity of languages and ethnic groups characterising the Nigerian state is the aftermath of the merging of the Southern and Northern protectorates into a single administrative entity by the British colonial administration in 1914 (Falola et al., 2018). Of the 520 indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria, only Hausa (predominantly spoken in the north by 44 million people), Igbo (predominantly spoken in the southeast by 30 million people), and Yoruba (predominantly spoken in the southwest by 40 million people) are regarded as the major languages because they have a higher number of speakers than other languages (Ugwuanyi, 2021). They are also seen as major languages because of the political status of their speakers during the early years of Nigerian independence and during recent times.

Other indigenous languages have been classified into 'the major-minors' comprising 11 languages (Berom, Epira, Edo, Efik, Ibibio, Igala, Ijo, Kanuri, Fulfulde, Nupe, and Tiv) spoken by at least 1 million people each, and 'the minors' comprising 504 languages (e.g. Itsekiri, Kalabari, and Jukun) and spoken by less than one million people each (Eberhard et al., 2023; Jowitt, 2019). Nigerian Pidgin English (also known as Naija) is spoken by around 110 million people and serves as the L1 of many children in the South-South geopolitical zone. It is a form of English previously associated with nonliterate people (Faraclas, 2021). However, Nigerian Pidgin English is currently perceived as a variety of English that embodies Nigerian identity and is being used in the media, such as BBC News Pidgin and Nollywood movies (Oyebola & Ugwuanyi, 2023). Only 60 of these 520 indigenous languages have a standardised orthography (Emenanjo, 1991). The major indigenous languages were compulsory subjects for students in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) until recently when they were made optional by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). Figure 1.1 shows a map of the major and major-minor languages in Nigeria obtained from Toyinbo (2018, p. 11).

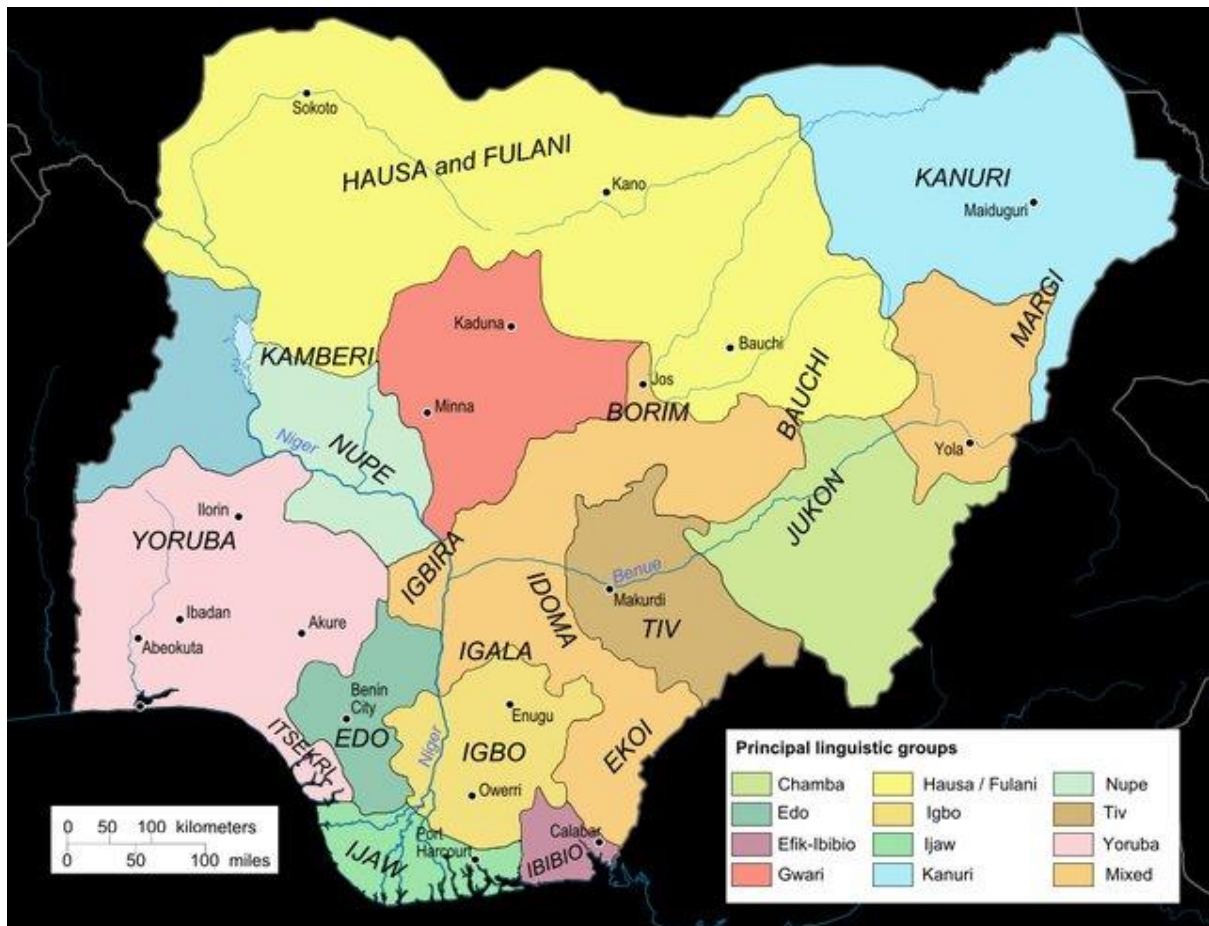


Figure 1.1 Major and major-minor languages in Nigeria

Apart from these 520 indigenous languages, three nonindigenous languages – Arabic, English, and French – have found their way into Nigeria’s linguistic landscape. With about 53.5% of the Nigerian population being Muslim (Central Intelligence Agency, 2023), and because of the association between Arabic and Islam, Arabic mainly performs religious (Islamic) functions and has found its way into national monuments such as the Nigerian 1,000 naira note and the Army logo (Igboanusi, 2008; Ndiribe & Aboh, 2022). French was recognised as Nigeria’s second official language after English in 1996 by the then Head of State, General Sani Abacha, to foster communication and economic ties with Francophone African countries (Ugwuanyi, 2021) and it is taught at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. However, aside from being taught in schools, French is rarely used in other official domains of Nigeria. The number of L2 French speakers in Nigeria remains unknown.

The mutual unintelligibility of these multiple indigenous languages poses a challenge to interethnic communication, justifying the adoption of Standard Nigerian English as a lingua franca. English is the country’s *de facto* official language and lingua franca. Its status as the

lingua franca is contested in northern Nigeria, where many Hausa-Muslims prioritise Arabic. As such, English has been described as a Foreign Language to many Northerners (Ugwuanyi, 2021). Despite the vitality of Arabic and Hausa in the North, many literate Hausa people use English as a medium of communication with Southerners. It is spoken by an estimated 105 million people in Nigeria (Pinon & Haydon, 2010) and is considered the language needed for upward social mobility. The functional load of English in Nigeria has endangered indigenous languages, as many children born in urban areas such as Lagos and Abuja acquire only English at the expense of their mother tongue. Of all the languages in Nigeria, English enjoys more vitality because of the favourable attitudes towards it (Adegbija, 1994; Igboanusi & Peter, 2016).

1.3 Research gaps and research questions

Several studies have shown that people are discriminated against because of their accents (Garrett, 2010; Kircher & Zipp, 2022). Orelus (2023) argues that those who belong to a higher social class in any society are seen as people who speak a prestigious or standardised form of language. He conceptualises this association between elitism and linguistic prestige as ‘linguoelitism’, defined as a “dominant linguistic ideology that privileges socially constructed standard languages and accents over others that are portrayed and treated as subaltern” (p. 74). Conversely, individuals belonging to the lower class are consciously or unconsciously discriminated against. Their personalities are often judged based on their speech/accent and how they are evaluated in the community.

There is consensus among language attitude scholars that accent discrimination exists in several aspects of human endeavours, such as courtrooms (Cantone et al., 2019; Wood, 2018), hospitals (Gonzalez et al., 2010), job interviews (Huang et al., 2013; Segrest Purkiss et al., 2006), helpline interactions (Wang et al., 2013), and education (Freynet et al., 2018; Kang & Yaw, 2024; Ladegaard, 2000; Lindemann, 2005; Shah, 2019). Findings from these studies reveal that individuals and groups are discriminated against and denied equal opportunities because of their accents. Based on the research on accent bias in educational institutions, researchers have found discrimination against African-American speakers in the USA (Baugh, 2018; Cantone et al., 2019) and Latina/o speakers in the USA (Lindemann, 2005; Shah, 2019). Studies have also been conducted on accent discrimination in Denmark (Ladegaard, 2000), Canada (Freynet et al., 2018; Rodrigo-Tamarit & Loureiro-Rodríguez, 2023), China (Dai & Gardner, 2024) and Hong Kong (Hansen Edwards, 2019b; Ladegaard &

Chan, 2023; Shum et al., 2023). Negative attitudes towards certain British (Sharma et al., 2019) and American accents (Hansen Edwards, 2016; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006) have also been explored. This scholarship illustrates how standardised varieties and their speakers are evaluated more favourably than nonstandardised varieties.

Despite this burgeoning research, the study of attitudes towards varieties of Nigerian English (hereafter, NgE) has not received as much attention in the language attitude literature. NgE varieties have been discussed from two main dimensions: ethnic/regional and educational. The ethnic dimension identifies varieties of English based on the ethnic groups of speakers. The varieties often reported in the literature are Hausa English, Igbo English, and Yoruba English, corresponding to speakers of the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba languages. The educational dimension is represented in terms of basilectal, mesolectal, and acrolectal varieties of English, but there is a dearth of studies on Nigerians' attitudes towards Hausa English (HE), Igbo English (IE), and Yoruba English (YE). Related language attitude studies have only included one of these varieties, or the Standardised NgE together with other varieties spoken in the Inner Circle, such as Standard American and British Englishes, and non-Inner Circle varieties such as Ghanaian, Indian, and Jamaican Englishes (Acheme, 2018; Obanya et al., 1979; Olatoye, 2022; Oyebola, 2020; Ugwuanyi & Oyebola, 2022; Williams, 1983). For instance, Acheme (2018) explored attitudes towards Standardised American English (SAE), Indian-accented English, and Nigerian-accented English at Cleveland State University, USA, and she reported that the Indian and Nigerian accents were rated higher on solidarity than the SAE.

In her study of attitudes of educated Nigerians towards RP, Scottish accented English, American English, Acrolectal NgE, Mesolectal NgE, and Ivorian English accents, Olatoye (2022) found that Standard American English (SAE), Acrolectal NgE and Received Pronunciation (hereafter, RP) were rated more positively than the other accents in terms of status. Nevertheless, little is known about which of these NgE varieties is the most, or the least, favourably evaluated accent, and this is a gap that the present study addresses. Examining attitudes towards these NgE varieties may substantiate or refute the claim that some nonstandardised varieties of different languages can possess covert prestige and thus occupy a higher status in the communities in which they are spoken (Giles et al., 2006; Marlow & Giles, 2008).

It has been argued that attitudes towards varieties of language correspond to attitudes towards the speakers of these varieties (Holmes & Wilson, 2022; Peterson, 2020). However,

there is a need to extend this body of research to also consider the correlation between attitudes towards varieties of language and the culture of the speakers of these varieties, especially in non-Western contexts. Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006) explored attitudes towards five varieties of English (RP, Cockney, Scottish, Australian, and Standardised American) from the perspective of ethnolinguistic vitality and the appreciation of ‘culture’ (see Section 2.4.1 for a definition of culture). The findings of the study resulted in two hypotheses: the language-culture consonance hypothesis, which argues that if one has positive attitudes towards a particular culture, one will also show positive attitudes towards the language spoken by ‘owners’ of that culture; and the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis, which argues that positive attitudes towards a culture do not necessarily correlate with positive attitudes towards the language spoken in that cultural context. The findings of Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006) study supported the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis: i.e., there is no correlation between language attitudes and culture. To my knowledge, these hypotheses have not been applied in other contexts. In light of this, the present study explores the relationship between attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE and the attitudes people display towards cultures of their speakers. The findings would provide insights into the association between language and cultural attitudes and potentially chart a course for future research on Nigeria’s sociolinguistic landscape and beyond.

With the call to include a question asking participants to state where they think speakers in the verbal-guise experiment are from (Garrett et al., 2003; Preston, 1989), except for a few studies (e.g., Ladegaard, 2001; McKenzie, 2008), not many studies have paid attention to the ethnolinguistic groups of speakers in matched- or verbal-guise experiments and thus, not been able to establish a link between language attitudes and regional stereotypes. This neglect has blurred the understanding of the association between ethnic categorisations and regional or ethnic stereotypes. Insights gained in this regard have the potential to advance language attitude research with respect to the association between ethnic categorisation and reasons for categorisation. Exploring this association provides insights into the factors influencing language attitudes and sociopsychological processes underlying linguistic discrimination.

It is generally agreed among scholars that there are three components of (language) attitude: a cognitive, an affective, and a behavioural dimension, but several language attitude studies focus more on the cognitive and affective aspects, with little attention paid to the behavioural component (Garrett, 2010). However, some studies have examined all three components (Hansen Edwards, 2016; Ladegaard, 2000; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006).

Therefore, as the first large-scale study on attitudes towards NgE varieties, the data were triangulated to account for all three components of language attitudes through a verbal-guise experiment (cognition and affect), a questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity and focus group discussions (cognition and affect), and speech elicitation tasks (behaviour). Such data triangulation is essential as it gives a more comprehensive picture of language attitudes and social consequences.

Language attitude studies that have examined the impact of gender and ethnicity on language attitudes have mainly been conducted in the US, Britain, Canada, Europe, and some parts of Asia (Chien, 2018; Freynet et al., 2018; Ladegaard, 1998a; Skachkova, 2007). With very few studies in the Nigerian context (e.g., Ugwuanyi & Oyebola, 2022), it is pertinent to study the impact of social variables such as gender and ethnicity on language attitudes. Rarely explored in language attitude research is the impact of religion on language attitudes. As an openly religious country, it is important to study whether religion plays a role in language attitudes in Nigeria. The inclusion of religion as a variable of interest may lead to new theoretical insights into the evaluation of varieties as it has been found to be critical in appraising speakers' linguistic choices (Yaeger-Dror, 2015).

Given these research gaps, this study aims to examine language attitudes and stereotypes towards HE, IE, and YE in university settings in Nigeria. Accordingly, the following research questions were developed to guide this study.

- 1a What are the attitudes of Nigerian university students towards HE, IE, and YE accents?
- 1b What association (if any) exists between ethnic categorisation of speakers and reasons for categorising a speaker into a particular ethnic group?
2. What effects, if any, do gender, religion, and ethnicity have on attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE?
3. Do attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures correlate with attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents?
4. To what extent do participants' actual language behaviour correlate with their reported attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE?

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings of this study are significant in understanding language attitudes and stereotypes in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context. Adebija (1994) argues that even in sub-Saharan Africa's multilingual and multicultural situation, there is a paucity of research on language attitudes in the area. As shown in the preceding section, most previous language attitude research has focused on Europe, America, and some parts of Asia, including Hong Kong and Singapore. By studying an under-researched population, the present study provides a critical perspective on accent evaluation and stereotypes in West Africa, specifically Nigeria. In addition, previous research has concentrated on evaluative reactions towards RP, SAE, Australian English, and other regional or social varieties of English, but varieties of NgE are relatively unexplored. Examining attitudes towards varieties of NgE offers insights into the dynamics of attitudes towards non-Inner Circle varieties.

With the rather peculiar sociolinguistic features of Nigeria, where English is seen as a foreign language for some, especially in the northern part of Nigeria, and the first language of many in southern Nigeria, this study contributes to the discourse on the reconceptualisation of 'native speaker', which can be seen as the basis for linguistic discrimination (Hansen Edwards, 2019b; Slavkov et al., 2022). Based on the classification of varieties of English along ethnic lines (such as HE, IE, and YE), this study argues for the adoption of the term "Nigerian Englishes" to refer to different varieties of English in Nigeria because of the apparent supra(segmental) differences among them (Igboanusi, 2006; Jowitt, 2019).

The mixed methods approach adopted in this study for the triangulation of data has some methodological implications. Several language attitude studies have used only verbal-guise questionnaires to elicit attitudes. One disadvantage of using a single instrument to elicit language attitudes is that it usually does not capture all three components of an attitude: cognition, affect, and behaviour (Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006). This is a major limitation, as each component provides unique insights into individuals' attitudes towards a language variety. For example, the cognitive component informs us about individuals' beliefs and knowledge of a variety, whereas the affective component measures their emotional response. The behavioural component examines how individuals speak a language, i.e., how they use it. Measuring all three components of language attitudes is crucial to gaining a comprehensive understanding of individuals' and groups' perception of a language variety. For instance, the verbal-guise questionnaire can be used to elicit the cognitive component by including accent recognition and speaker characterisation items. It can also be used to measure affective

components through participant evaluations of speakers' personality traits. Speech elicitation tasks can measure participant behaviour by examining participants' linguistic features (Ladegaard, 2000). Focus group discussions further assess the variability in language attitudes and how these attitudes are constructed in discourse. Therefore, adopting a mixed methods approach, through a verbal-guise questionnaire, a questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity, focus group discussions, and speech elicitation tasks, this study will provide an overview of Nigerians' attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes and advance our understanding of research methods in New Englishes (Wilson & Westphal, 2023). The combination of the verbal-guise and Nigerian culture questionnaires provides insight into if and to what extent attitudes towards accents are informed by attitudes towards speakers of the accents in question (Holmes & Wilson, 2022; Peterson, 2020).

This study has several educational implications. It contributes to understanding the importance of English in educational settings in postcolonial Africa, a project still in its infancy. This study can also help us reflect on the importance of language in general and regional varieties of NgE, particularly for understanding stereotype formation in educational settings. Since there tends to be a mismatch between the endonormative norms that students use in day-to-day interactions and exonormative norms that are only taught in the classroom, the present study also discusses a possible paradigm shift in the assessment of English tests and examinations in Nigeria's educational settings.

The findings of this study have both practical and social significance. Mufwene (1997) maintains that all varieties of English are of the same parent; however, while some (such as SAE) are perceived as legitimate offspring, others (such as NgE) are treated as illegitimate offspring because of their less desirable social status and value in the linguistic marketplace. In addition, language attitudes have been found to be a "proxy for racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and elitism" (Peterson, 2020, p. 34). This study creates awareness of the importance of linguistic tolerance as a potential strategy for avoiding intergroup conflicts and promoting equity and inclusion (Orelus, 2023). With the marketisation and valorisation of English in Nigeria, many Nigerians may ridicule those perceived to deviate from RP or Standardised NgE norms. The findings of this study may aid in combating linguistic imperialism by questioning British and American standardised English language ideologies (Phillipson, 1992) and dehierarchising the imbalance between varieties of English (Tupas & Salonga, 2016).

1.5 Thesis outline and structure

This thesis comprises six chapters. Following this introductory chapter that provides the background to the study, Chapter Two begins with an overview of language attitude research and it subsequently discusses the similarities and differences between language ideologies and attitudes. The chapter also presents a review of attitude-behaviour relations, followed by a discussion of language attitudes in Africa in general, and in Nigeria specifically. The second section of Chapter Two provides a detailed review of the power of English in Nigeria and an overview of NgE accents. This section is followed by a review of language attitudes in relation to social variables such as gender, religion and ethnicity. The chapter ends with a review of cultural identity and stereotypes.

The third chapter introduces the theoretical framework of this study. The multifaceted framework considers multiple perspectives and factors that influence language attitudes based on the tenets of the language-culture consonance/discrepancy hypothesis, social identity theory, discursive psychology, and ethnolinguistic vitality. This theoretical framework highlights the interaction between social identity, stereotypes in interaction, language vitality, and attitudes towards language and culture in conceptualising language attitudes.

Chapter four provides a detailed description of the methodology used in this study. It opens with the research design and outlines the hypotheses of the study. Thereafter, it presents the research instruments used in the study, beginning with the verbal-guise experiment. Next, the sociolinguistic background of the speakers, voice stimuli elicitation paragraph, contents and parts of the verbal-guise questionnaire, and information about the participants are presented. The chapter also presents the questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity, the speech elicitation paragraph, and the rationale behind the questions that served as prompts during the focus group discussions. It summarises the results of the pilot study. The data collection procedures and how the research sites were accessed are also provided. Finally, this chapter describes the data cleaning, coding process, and methods used for data analysis.

The fifth chapter presents the findings of the four broad research questions. It presents the results of the verbal-guise experiment, questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity, focus group discussions, and speech elicitation tasks. A discussion of the findings follows the results of each research question. Chapter six concludes the study by summarising the findings of this study and continues by highlighting the theoretical, methodological,

pedagogical, and social implications of the findings. Finally, the limitations of this study are outlined, followed by a presentation of future research directions.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section focuses on language attitude research. It begins with an overview of language attitudes and then explores previous classifications of language attitude research. It then proceeds to discuss language attitudes and ideologies followed by a review of attitude-behaviour relations. The section concludes with a review of language attitudes in Africa and language attitude research in Nigeria. The second section of the chapter outlines perspectives on English language in Nigeria, with particular attention to the power of English in Nigeria. It also provides an overview of NgE. The third section relates language attitudes to social factors such as gender, religion, education, and ethnic categorisation. The final section discusses language and cultural identity as well as stereotypes. These reviews will situate the present study in existing research and provide a justification for studying the issues that have been identified for this thesis.

2.1 Language attitude research

This section of the literature review explains language attitude, its classification and relationship with language ideology. It presents critical issues in the attitude-behaviour relations literature and provides a detailed review of language attitudes in Africa, and in Nigeria in particular.

2.1.1 Language attitude: an overview

Since the 1960s, during the early period of research on language attitudes (Kircher & Zipp, 2022), it was argued that as individuals communicate, their “competence, intelligence, friendliness, trustworthiness, social status, group memberships and so on” (Garrett, 2010, p. 1), they are evaluated by individuals who are within their visual and aural range as well as (un)imagined audiences. Such evaluations are known as language attitudes. One of the classic definitions of attitude is that it is “a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event” (Ajzen, 1988, p. 4). This implies that attitudes may be positive or negative.

The study of language attitudes can be approached from various perspectives. One way of viewing it is from overt (behaviourist) and covert (psychological or mentalist) and perspectives. As a behavioural phenomenon, language attitude is perceived as being learned during one’s socialisation process, that is, “in the process of becoming a member of a family,

a member of a group, and of society that makes him react to his social world in a *consistent and characteristic* way, instead of a transitory and haphazard way” (Sherif, 1967, p. 2, emphasis in original). This view suggests a difference in the attitudes of different ethnic, regional, and social groups and explains why individuals from the same ethnic group who grew up in different communities tend to behave differently. This is because they are likely to act as members of the community where they were nurtured. Garrett (2010) argues that personal experiences and social environment are two important sources of attitudes. In line with the stimulus, response, reinforcement, and repetition stages of learning behaviour, one can argue that reacting in a certain way to a language variety is one of the dispositions of human beings. The reinforcement of certain reactions to a language by parents and other members of society entrenches the formation of attitudes. In addition, the media (such as movies and music) are platforms on which attitudes can be observed. The consequential aspect of language attitudes dwells on the perceived or experienced benefits or detriments of reacting positively or negatively to a language or variety (Garrett, 2010). As children grow and advance in their education, they discover that a particular language, accent, or dialect provides more rewards (Day, 1982). Conversely, the language variety that appears to be less valuable in the linguistic marketplace (Bourdieu, 1991) becomes that which individuals do not generally desire to learn because of its low social attractiveness.

As a psychological construct, language attitude is seen as cognitive and consists of abstraction, which refers to a concealed element of the psyche that cannot be perceived directly. It manifests directly or indirectly through more conspicuous processes, such as beliefs, verbal expressions or reactions, stereotypes, opinions, selective memory recall, or emotions, such as anger or satisfaction, across various behavioural facets (Oppenheim, 1982). However, a more comprehensive definition of language attitudes is needed to mediate behavioural and psychological orientations. Such a definition would see language attitudes as an evaluative reaction to a social object, consisting of three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioural (Kircher & Zipp, 2022).

The cognitive, affective, and behavioural components comprise the attitude structure. The cognitive aspect focuses on knowledge about a language variety based on experience and “durable mental constructs” (Liang, 2015, p. 38). The affective component dwells on the feelings one has towards a language, and it serves as a gauge of positivity or negativity, indicating the degree to which one endorses or opposes the attitude object, whether with great or less intensity (Garrett, 2010). The manifestation of cognitive and affective components

through actions forms the bedrock of the behavioural component of language attitude. To situate these components of language attitude in context for better understanding, a Nigerian parent may think that her mother tongue (in this case, a Nigerian indigenous language such as Igbo or Kanuri) would not support her goal of achieving upward mobility in Nigeria because of the universality of English and the localness of her mother tongue (the cognitive component). Thus, she shows enthusiasm to read texts written in English (the affective component), and to make sure that her children acquire English at an early age, she decides to speak only English to her children, bars them from speaking any word in their mother tongue, and prohibits them from taking it as a subject in school (the behavioural component). Inasmuch as there is a relationship between the three components of an attitude (Festinger, 1957), they also operate independently (Breckler, 1984). This is because an individual who has no knowledge of a language variety, and has not heard it before, may also evaluate whether it is pleasant or not (Giles et al., 1974; van Bezooijen, 1994). This phenomenon is captured in Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action, which argues that individuals have certain normative beliefs about the perceived pleasantness or ugliness of a speech form that may vary depending on the complexity of the domains of language use.

Another critical issue discussed in language attitude research is the role that standardisation and vitality play in influencing language attitudes. There is consensus that standardised varieties (often prestigious) receive more favourable ratings than nonstandardised varieties (often less prestigious) (Kircher & Zipp, 2022). Labov's (1984) concept of 'overt' and 'covert' prestige is important in understanding the role of standardisation in language evaluation. Overt prestige is a situation where standardised varieties of speech, which signal prestige and social status are considered openly prestigious. In contrast, covert prestige is related to the favourable connotations (out of solidarity) of low-prestige varieties, such as Cockney in the UK. In Hong Kong, for example, Hansen Edwards (2019b) notes that individuals may choose to use features of Hong Kong English to express a Hong Kong identity to their peers for solidarity reasons even though they recognise the features as nonstandardised (Ladegaard & Chan, 2023). In what they called the "imposed norm hypothesis", Giles et al. (1974) argue that nothing in a language variety makes it inherently prestigious. Instead, the prestige it enjoys as the most pleasing form of a given language is because of the status of the social group who happens by chance speak in that way since "a general rule seems to be that when social stratification is associated with the linguistic variation, arguments will be made for the grammatical, lexical or phonological

superiority of the variety used by those in power” (Edwards, 2009, p. 68). Given the status and demography of the speakers of standardised varieties and the institutional support they receive, they tend to have high vitality (see Section 3.3 for more detail on this), resulting in more favourable evaluations than varieties with low vitality (Bourhis et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 1982).

One remaining issue pertains to the dialectical relationship between a language variety and its speakers with respect to their attitudes. The attitudes individuals have towards a language variety may influence their attitude towards the speakers of that variety. This means, on the one hand, a positive attitude towards a group’s language may result in the elevation of the speakers in that group to a higher status. On the other hand, attitudes towards individuals may also influence attitudes towards the language variety they speak. Studies within the African context have revealed that attitudes towards individuals correlate with attitudes towards their language. Adegbija (2000) argues that the overdependence of Sub-Saharan Africa on past colonial rulers has influenced their attitudes towards their languages, making Africans prefer colonial languages, such as English, French, and Portuguese, to indigenous languages. A third position indicates that one can show a positive attitude towards a variety and then demonstrate negative attitudes towards the speakers of that variety or favourably evaluate the speakers of the language and discriminate against their language. This phenomenon has been nuanced as the language-culture discrepancy and language-culture consonance hypothesis (see Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006). The relationship between attitude towards a language and its speakers suggests that when one has a positive stereotype towards a language or variety, it goes beyond the issue of language to include the positionality of the evaluators towards the speakers, which is conditioned by their knowledge, experience, and feelings. However, Hansen Edwards (2019b) argues that it is not always the case that attitudes towards a variety aligns with attitudes towards speakers of the variety in question, given that attitudes are context-bound.

2.1.2 Classifications of language attitude research

Language attitude research has been categorised based on its approaches to data collection and analysis (Garrett, 2010; Liang, 2015; Rodgers, 2017) and core research foci (Dragojevic et al., 2021). Garrett (2010) classifies approaches to language attitude research into direct, indirect, and societal treatment studies. The direct approach, such as the use of questionnaires, invites participants to “articulate explicitly what their attitudes to various

language phenomena are” (Garrett, 2010, p. 39). In this approach, participants know what the researcher wants to arrive at, unlike in the indirect approach or “conceptual approach” (Bishop et al., 2005, p. 131), which uses matched or verbal guises to elicit language attitudes. In this method, participants are unaware of the exact phenomenon that the researcher is testing. The societal treatment studies, which focus on how language is evaluated in print media, on social media and in spoken interactions, obtain insights “into the social meanings and stereotypical associations of languages and language varieties” as they occur naturally in society through the use of “prescriptive texts, language policy documents, media texts and various kinds of analysis” (Garrett, 2010, p. 51).

Liang (2015) classifies approaches to language attitude research into cognitivist and discursive. The cognitivist model is based on the affective, cognitive, and behavioural aspects of language attitudes (Cargile et al., 1994) and interprets attitudes as “durable mental constructs” (Liang, 2015, p. 38), and uses direct or indirect methods. The discursive approach to language attitudes sees attitudes “as products of interactions of all relevant interpersonal, contextual, ideological, and social factors,” which can change over time (Liang, 2015, p. 43). For Liang, attitudes are identified through discourse analysis of spoken interaction and he argues that the open-ended items in language attitude questionnaires, societal treatment studies, or “public treatment” (Cargile et al., 1994, p. 212) do not qualify as a discursive approach. Instead, interactions are at the heart of the discursive approach because they are situated discourses and tools for constructing social meanings. Studies that follow the discursive approach have been classified into “topic-oriented, linguistic, cognitive, interactional, and rhetorical” (Rodgers, 2017, p. 56) based on their different foci of analyses.

Dragojevic et al. (2021, p. 60) classify language attitudes into five distinctive but interrelated areas based on their research foci: “documentation, explanation, development, consequences, and change”. This classification is based on the notion that previous research on language attitudes for about a century has documented people’s attitudes towards different languages and varieties and towards those who speak these varieties. Research on language attitudes has shown that social stereotypes are at the heart of attitude formation (Ladegaard, 2020). Research also exists on the developmental processes involved in acquiring or developing language attitudes and the consequences of language attitudes on linguistic and nonlinguistic behaviours. Finally, language attitude research has explored how governmental actions and language policies influence language attitudes over time (Dragojevic et al., 2021).

These classifications of language attitude research aid us in understanding the approaches and thematic areas in which language attitude studies have been anchored. For instance, Garrett (2010) reviews research that has adopted these approaches and finds that in societal treatment studies, researchers infer attitudes from different observed behaviours, whereas in the (in)direct approach, the respondents infer and report their own attitudes. The direct method of eliciting language attitudes has been criticised because it is prone to social desirability and acquiescence biases (Garrett, 2010). The matched-guise technique, on the other hand, is criticised for its potential inauthenticity in one person producing different varieties; hence, the introduction of the verbal-guise technique, which involves different L1 speakers producing the varieties to be evaluated (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022b). Finally, social treatment studies have been criticised for lacking generalisability, as is often seen in textual studies (Bellamy, 2022). In light of these limitations, the present study adopts a triangulation of the verbal-guise technique, spoken interactions, and speech elicitation tasks to increase the reliability and robustness of the findings.

2.1.3 Language attitudes and ideology

There is a close relationship between language attitude and ideology because ideology is “the systems of beliefs that maintains, triggers and directs [linguistic] discrimination” (Garrett, 2010, p. 33). Myers-Scotton (2007, p. 110) distinguishes between attitudes and ideologies by describing the former as “more unconscious assessments” and the latter as “more constructed assessments.” It has been suggested that “attitudes are shaped by pervading ideologies in any given society or community of practice” (Dyers & Abongdia, 2010, p. 119). Hansen Edwards (2019b) argues along similar lines that the development of language attitudes from social psychology and language ideologies from linguistic anthropology resulted in both concepts being understood as related but distinct in their research traditions and approaches for interpreting the ideas individuals have about varieties. Table 2.1 presents the differences between language ideologies and attitudes.

Table 2.1 Differences between language ideologies and language attitudes

Language ideologies	Language attitudes
Group/community beliefs	Individual thoughts, feelings, reactions
Develops in interests of powerful groups	Possessed by individuals
Shaped by sociohistorical events	Rooted in individual experience
Long-term, deeply rooted and resistant to change	Can be short- and long-term, but more mutable than ideologies
Strong effect on language learning and motivation	May affect language learning and motivation but not always
Play a central role in language policies and their successful implementation	May play a role in the creation of language policies, but not their implementation
Conscious, overt assessment of languages and their speakers	Often unconscious, covert assessments; sometimes distinguish between languages and speakers of those languages

From Dyers and Abongdia (2010, p. 132)

Dyers and Abongdia (2010) offer what could be seen as a ‘neat’ distinction between language ideologies and attitudes at the surface. However, a closer look at the characteristics of language attitudes raises more questions than answers. First, they claim that language attitudes have to do with “individual thoughts, feelings, reactions.” However, studies on language attitudes and identity do not report language attitudes in a given speech community at an individual level but rather at the group level because it has been argued that the attitudes individuals have towards a language or variety stem from “ingroup favouritism” or stereotypes, on the one hand, and culture on the other hand (Edwards, 2009). Second, Dyers and Abongdia (2010, p. 132) also claim that language ideologies are “shaped by sociohistorical events”, whereas language attitudes are “rooted in individual experience”. As much as this distinction seems valid, one might argue that sociohistorical events could also shape attitudes towards a language or variety. Adegbija (1994) argues that the ethnic tension among the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, as well as the Nigeria-Biafra War experience (1967-1970), where more than three million people lost their lives (Madiebo, 1980), contributed to the negative evaluations people from these ethnic groups have of others’ languages. However, this does not imply that every member of an ethnic group has the same attitude. The claim here is that a dominant attitude can be attributed to socio-historical events. Attributing the successful implementation of language policies to the centrality of language

ideology needs to be done with caution. Inasmuch as language ideologies contribute to language policy implementation, it is the socioeconomic and political power wielded by the group whose language is elevated in status that drives language planning, policy, and implementation (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2018).

It can be argued that ideology influences attitudes towards an object. Often, a particular social or cultural group may have a similar ideology, which forms the basis of social categorisation and how members of the ingroup and outgroup are constructed (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In most cases, each group sees their linguistic form as more favourable, aesthetic, and comprehensive than others. Nevertheless, speakers of a less prestigious indigenous language often subscribe to English because English is seen as a language of emancipation, as can be seen in Namibia, where Afrikaans is seen as the language of the oppressors (Adegbija, 1994; Stell, 2022c). Owing to the strong positive attitude towards English globally, it can function as a tool used by those who claim to be ‘native speakers’ to maintain their prestige since their native speakerness is an explicit sign of their perceived status and linguistic correctness (Anchimbe, 2006b; Peterson, 2020).

One sociocultural factor that influences the formation and expression of language ideology and attitude is standardised language. The term standardised language is the form of a language that often receives more positive attitudes on status and competence dimensions due to the belief, shared by many, that it is needed for upward social mobility (Cushing, 2022). Standardised language increases the prestige of a particular variety and then labels other varieties as nonstandardised. This is achieved by three groups, “the *moral entrepreneurs* who create the problem; next, there are the *social enforcers* who follow the new policies as public-minded civil servants; and finally, there are the victims to whom the social system is addressed” (St. Clair, 1982, p. 167). The ideology surrounding Standardised English has given rise to the “three circles model of English” namely: Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle (Kachru, 1992). The Inner Circle, with about 380 million people, is seen as the ‘native speakers’ of English with citizenship in the US, Australia, South Africa, Canada, New Zealand, Britain, and Ireland (in no particular order), i.e., people who have English as their first language.

The Outer Circle includes countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, India, Kenya, Singapore, and other former British colonies. English in these areas is often the second language and is “used in multilingual settings, which leads to fascinating outcomes in terms of everyday use and

how which features from which languages show up in the uses of English” (Peterson, 2020, p. 117). Within the Outer Circle, owing to the influence of different varieties of indigenous languages, there are also varieties of English spoken there, which a speaker from the Inner Circle may not easily understand. These varieties of English are not seen as fully fledged languages; instead, they are given a blended name comprising the local language and English, such as *Singlish*, or are identified with the country’s name *NgE*, *Ghanaian English*, or *Indian English*. In some cases, they are regarded as pidgin (as in the case of Nigerian Pidgin English), creole (such as Krio in Sierra Leone, Kreyol in Liberia), or patois (Jamaican Patois). These varieties often have English as the superstrate language with several indigenous languages as substrates, and usually attract positive attitudes from their speakers out of solidarity.

Based on responses to questionnaires and interviews, Akande and Salami (2010) report that Nigerians showed positive attitudes towards Nigerian Pidgin English. The reasons for this positive attitude are not far from clear. Unlike in the past, when pidgin was seen as the nonliterate variety of a language (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2018), currently Nigerian Pidgin has been described and standardised (Faraclas, 2021). It has gained status in Nigeria because of its usage for “public inter-lingual communication, enlightenment campaigns, sitcoms, commercial advertising, radio and television programmes, stand-up comedies, home movies, popular/religious music, as well as conducting business transactions across the country” (Agbedo, 2019, p. 52). The improved status of pidgin resulted in the establishment of BBC Pidgin, where interviews on TV were conducted, and news articles and op-eds were written in pidgin. It also serves as a linguistic variety which nonliterate Nigerians use to circumvent the discrimination they may face when they make mistakes while trying to speak Standardised NgE. Pidgin also serves as a linguistic form that indexes the ‘we-code’ used for interpersonal communication in informal contexts in Nigeria.

The varieties of English in Outer and Expanding Circles are influenced by geographical isolation, social isolation, contact with other languages or varieties, and group solidarity or identity (Peterson, 2020). Geographical differences are one factor responsible for linguistic variations (Chambers & Trudgill, 2004), as speech communities far from English-speaking native lands would deviate significantly from how L1 speakers use English. Social isolation results from different social relationships between speakers in the Outer and Expanding Circles and those in the Inner Circle, given that ethnicity is at the heart of linguistic variation (Peterson, 2020). The contact English had with other languages, such as French, during the

Middle Ages and Renaissance resulted in some French expressions or anglicised French expressions in the English lexicon, such as *denouement*, *economics*, and *depot*. The contact of English with other languages in Outer and Expanding Circles also contributes to world Englishes, as seen in *Singlish* and *Chinglish*, among others. More so, giving up one's linguistic identity to embrace English either coercively or voluntarily, as seen in Australia among immigrants from Africa and Asia (Piller, 2016), or what has been described as "hard power" (effecting change by force) or "soft power" (effecting change by manipulation using rhetorical strategies) (Nye, 2004), could also be a cause of language variation as individuals do not come as a *tabula rasa* to learn the new language, but rather bring their heritage language, which impacts their use of the target language.

The Expanding Circle includes countries such as Mexico, China, Germany, Finland, and Japan, where English is considered a foreign language. In English as a Second Language (ESL) or as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, it has been found that students, because of their exposure to English at different stages of their development, come with preconceived notions about English, such as that speakers of dialects are not smart or that everyone should speak Standardised English at all times (Peterson, 2020), which they may not be consciously aware of (McKenzie & Carrie, 2018).

2.1.4 Attitude-behaviour relations

The relationship between attitude and behaviour has been described as a complex phenomenon as reflected in the debates surrounding the influence of attitudes on behaviour and the strength of the link between the two constructs (Augoustinos et al., 2014; Baker, 1992; Ladegaard, 2000). The commonly accepted view in the social psychology of attitude-behaviour relations is that attitude predicts behaviour (Cohen, 1964; Glasman & Albarracín, 2006). In other words, how an individual behaves towards an object depends on their attitude towards the given object. However, Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance suggests that behaviour predicts attitudes. He argues that if an individual holds two cognitions that are psychologically (must not be logically) discrepant, dissonance is undesired, which motivates the individual to reduce dissonance. This reduction can be achieved by changing one or both cognitions or introducing a new one. For instance, if a student does not study and knows that not studying will not improve his/her grades, the student ought to experience dissonance because these two cognitions are psychologically discrepant. Thus, as one of the consistency theories, cognitive dissonance theory states that

individuals strive to maintain consistency and balance between their attitudes and behaviours. Situating this principle of cognitive dissonance theory to attitude-behaviour relations, people are likely to change their attitudes to correspond to their behaviour (Augoustinos et al., 2014).

Several experiments on attitude-behaviour relations have provided contradictory findings with respect to the extent of correlation between the two phenomena. While Glasman and Albarracín (2006), in their meta-analyses of the studies on attitude-behaviour relations, found a strong positive and consistent correlation (up to .73), Wicker (1969) found that the correlations in 32 different studies rarely exceeded +.3. On the one hand, studies that found a link between attitude and behaviour maintain that several variables may influence the strength of the link. First, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) argue that there is a strong correlation when attitude is stable rather than unstable. In other words, there is a strong correlation when measurements of attitude and behaviour occur within the same period and are in agreement. Measuring attitude and behaviour at two disparate temporal points may provide a weak or no correlation because the stability of attitudes hinges on the continuing relevance of attitudinal information or objects when the behaviour is performed. Second, participants who are made self-aware (by placing a mirror before them when they complete attitude questionnaires) tend to show stronger attitude-behaviour consistency than participants who are not made self-aware (e.g., Gibbons, 1978). Third, there is a strong association between attitudes and behaviour when the behaviour requires minimal effort (Bagozzi et al., 1990). Fourth, attitudes that are easily remembered correlate more strongly with behaviour than those that are difficult to remember (e.g., Fazio & Williams, 1986). Fifth, attitudes formed through direct personal experience exhibit a more robust correlation with behaviour than those derived from indirect experience (Kraus, 1995).

However, LaPiere (1934) provided empirical evidence of attitude-behaviour inconsistency in his study, which found that, during a time with strong anti-Chinese sentiments in the USA, while hotel managers asserted that they would never serve or accommodate a Chinese couple when surveyed, they did serve and accommodate them when they showed up on their doorstep. This suggests that other variables may be more importance for decision making than attitudes (such as money, see also (Afghani et al., 2023). Wicker (1969) classified factors accountable for attitude-behaviour inconsistency or noncorrelation into personal and situational. Components of personal factors include competing motives; verbal, intellectual, and social skills; and activity levels. Wicker (1969) notes that attitude-behaviour inconsistency may be attributed to failing to consider other (un)related attitudes. For instance,

an individual may have a positive attitude towards social activism but may not participate in it because of a more favourable attitude towards working multiple jobs to cater to the family. Additionally, participants' inability to comprehend researchers' instructions or questions, poor reading skills, and inability to make appropriate verbal responses may contribute to attitude-behaviour inconsistency. Regarding level at which an individual engages in an activity, Wicker (1969) remarks that a highly active individual is likely to engage in more activities than an apathetic one.

Situational factors include issues bordering on the presence of other people, available alternative behaviours, specificity of attitude objects, and consequences of behaviour. When participants complete attitudinal scales confidentially, and their behavioural responses are assessed in the presence of others, the latter is more likely to be influenced by social desirability bias, thus resulting in inconsistency. For instance, participants who expressed high prejudice towards a racial group in a questionnaire might act favourably towards the racial group in question in the presence of people. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) note that attitudes do not predict behaviours but behavioural intentions based on individuals' subjective norms, given that individuals act based on how others expect them to act. Wicker (1969) maintains that the absence of an alternative behaviour can also promote attitude-behaviour inconsistency. He cites the instance of an individual who may express a negative attitude towards a newspaper and yet subscribes to it because it is the only newspaper published in the locality. Inconsistency also occurs when attitude responses are general, whereas the stimulus in the behavioural response is specific. As (Baker, 1992, p. 17) posits, "Human behaviour is mostly consistent, patterned and congruent in terms of attitudes and action, so long as the same levels of generality are used." Finally, overt behavioural responses may differ from reported attitudes because of an individual's perceived consequences of overtly expressing his/her behaviour. Not only do these factors highlight the variables that may influence attitude-behaviour (in)consistency, but they also reflect the complexity of the relationship between attitude and behaviour. Thus, it is insufficient to conclude that a particular attitude predicts behaviour, or vice versa, without considering other potential influencing factors.

Reviews of studies on the relationship between attitude and behaviour indicate a predominant emphasis on attitudes and behaviour towards work performance and resignations, providing public accommodations, hiring an African-American, agreeing to be photographed, signing a petition, gun control, time and money spent on activities, and

cheating on examinations (see Ajzen et al., 2019; Glasman & Albarracín, 2006; Wicker, 1969). There have been limited studies on the relationship between reported language attitudes and actual linguistic behaviour. In the social psychology of language, the few studies that have explored the behavioural component of language attitudes can be classified as receptive and productive. Receptive studies (Fishman, 1969; Gaertner & Bickman, 1971; Giles et al., 1975; Kristiansen & Giles, 1992), which often use an indirect means of assessing behaviour, analyse participants' behaviour towards particular linguistic forms and styles. For instance, if participants respond to requests given in a particular variety, it is concluded that their behaviour indicates a positive attitude. Using the 'wrong number technique' (where participants receive a phone call from a wrong number in New York), Gaertner and Bickman (1971) found that, although the callers identified themselves with the same name, participants were more likely to help a White (standard-speaking) caller than a Black (nonstandard-speaking) caller. Similarly, Kristiansen and Giles (1992) found that audiences in a Danish cinema, when requested to assist in planning future performances using different varieties, complied more when the requester used the standardised variety. This receptive approach to studying the behavioural aspect of language attitude has been criticised for its reductionist perspective in studying behaviour. Ladegaard (2000) questions whether complying with specific requests in a standardised variety necessarily indicates positive attitudes, given the limited behavioural options provided in these studies. Another notable shortcoming of these studies is that they failed to assess participants' attitudes towards the varieties in which the requests were given and correlate them with their linguistic behaviour.

Productive studies (Hansen Edwards, 2016; Ladegaard, 2000; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006; Lawson & Sachdev, 2000) explore the relationship between attitude and behaviour by assessing participants' actual language use. Hansen Edwards (2016) surveyed 68 Hong Kong students' preferences for American, British and Hong Kong Englishes and found that a greater percentage of the participants preferred American (62%) and British (65%) Englishes to Hong Kong English (2%). When their linguistic behaviour, elicited through a reading task and analysed based their production of postvocalic /r/, intervocalic /t/ and the LOT /ɒ/ and BATH [a] lexical sets vowels, the results showed that the participants preferences for an American or British accents were associated with the number of American and British variants they used. The study demonstrates an association between attitude and behaviour.

In the Tunisian context, Lawson and Sachdev (2000) found that, whereas participants negatively evaluated codeswitching compared to Modern Standard Arabic, Tunisian Arabic,

English, and French in a matched-guise experiment, their actual linguistic behaviour, as measured by asking for directions in the street using different language guises, was characterised by a high occurrence of codeswitching, especially in informal ingroup interactions. Lawson and Sachdev (2000) attributed this inconsistency to the formal context of the university where the matched-guise experiment was conducted, which emphasised the use of standardised language compared to the language behaviour. This inconsistency highlights the importance of ensuring context similarity when assessing attitude-behaviour relations. As (Ajzen, 1988, p. 45) argues, “Every particular instance of human action is, in this way, determined by a unique set of factors. Any change in circumstances, be it ever so slight, might produce a different reaction.” Similarly, Ladegaard (2000) and Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006) assessed Danish participants’ attitudes towards local vernaculars of Danish and Standard Danish in one study, as well as British and American accents in another. Both studies found no significant correlation between participants’ attitudes towards a particular variety and their linguistic behaviour.

It is noticeable that there have only been a few studies that included the behavioural component of attitude in language attitude studies. Although these studies highlighted the (in)consistency of the relationship between linguistic attitude and behaviour, most of them were Eurocentric in scope. Little is known about the attitude-behaviour construct in Africa, especially concerning endonormative Nigerian Englishes. Examining this underexplored area of research may offer insights into how this attitude-behaviour construct manifests itself in a non-Western context and contributes to the decolonisation of language attitude research. Additionally, evaluating participants’ linguistic behaviour (especially in productive studies) is largely perceptual. There is a need to include an acoustic analysis of participants’ linguistic productions to arrive at more comprehensive conclusions regarding the features of participants’ language behaviour. Thus, by examining the relationship between Nigerian students’ attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes and their actual linguistic behaviour assessed through their realisations of schwa (see Section 4.10.4 for an explanation of why schwa was selected), this study may illuminate on the complexity of attitude-behaviour relations and the acoustic features of schwa based on participants’ ethnolinguistic groups.

2.1.5 Language attitudes in Africa

Colonialism contributed to Africa’s multilingual nature, given the influx of English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish during the colonial period. The high status accorded to these

European languages resulted in the scenarios of language endangerment and death that characterise the indigenous languages of many African countries. The endangerment of African languages is caused by a lack of proper status planning for indigenous languages. African languages, such as Yoruba in Nigeria and Zulu in South Africa are seen as having less power to operate in official domains; as such, although they are designated as the medium of instruction in the first three years of primary education, they are seldom used (Adegbija, 1994). In recent times, due to the lack of institutional support for the policy and inadequate facilities in government educational institutions, parents increasingly send their children to private institutions, where English is the medium of instruction and taught as a subject. The prestige English and other European languages such as French and Portuguese enjoy in Africa tends to make them favourably evaluated and desired more than indigenous languages.

In the Cameroonian context, Kouega (2008) studied the attitudes of educated Cameroonians towards their indigenous languages. The number of indigenous languages in Cameroon is not certain; whereas some estimate it to be over 250 (Anchimbe, 2006a; Eberhard et al., 2023), others claim it is under 250 (Chia, 1983; Kouega, 2007). Notwithstanding the discrepancy in the number of indigenous languages, the common ground is that there are over 100 indigenous languages and that the country is highly multilingual with English and French as the official languages. Kouega (2008) recruited 153 first-year French and English major students at the University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. The participants were asked to respond to a 36-item questionnaire that sought to ascertain the use of their mother tongues within the household, local community, educational institutions, and places of religious practice, and their attitudes towards them. The study found that using English and French in official settings did not affect the use of indigenous languages at home. Although the vast majority of participants (81.05%) stated that they were unable to read or write in their native languages and that these languages are not utilised in any educational context throughout the country, they showed loyalty to their indigenous language by suggesting that it be adopted as the national language and also advocated the continuation of the official use of French and English since they are the common languages Francophone and Anglophone Cameroonians who speak different indigenous languages use when they come together (Kouega, 2008). Nkwetisama (2017) argues that the dominance of English in education is an obstacle to the intellectual and educational advancement of Cameroonians and, therefore, calls for a rethink and the reconfiguration of English language education in

Cameroon to avert linguicide. Similarly, Anchimbe (2006a) calls for a functional revitalisation of indigenous languages in Cameroon, which can be achieved by creating attractive domains where these languages can be used.

In Southern Africa, Stell (2020a, p. 63) reported that Afrikaans serves as the lingua franca in Windhoek, Namibia, before their independence in 1990. However, Afrikaans became a “low-status lingua franca” after independence because English has expanded as a high-function language. The elevation of English as an official language is a policy meant to diminish the influence of the previously dominant White Afrikaans-speaking minority on its linguistic marketplace, while simultaneously providing symbolic empowerment to the Black majority (Stell, 2020b). The dominance of English has also resulted in a decline in the use of indigenous Namibian languages for interethnic communication. Instead, such communication relies primarily on the English language, or hybrid linguistic repertoires that incorporate both ‘Coloured Afrikaans’ and English (Stell, 2016).

Although English appears to be accepted with an open mind in Southern and Western Africa, it seems to be rejected in Northern Africa. France colonised Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia which resulted in French becoming its official language. After Algeria’s independence in 1962 and following the “Arabisation” project, the Arabic language was imposed on schools, which later resulted in poor academic performance where “80% of first-year students fail their final exams because of linguistic incompetence [in French]” because they were “schooled through Literary/Classical Arabic only and are hence weak in French, the language of instruction in scientific disciplines” (Benrabah, 2007, p. 226). The Arabisation policy was enacted to keep Algeria a pure Islamic country and free from French cultural and linguistic imperialism (Daoudi, 2018). In light of this, Blyden (1994) argues that in this region of Africa, English and other European languages are commonly perceived among locals as being linked with debauchery, exploitation, and brutality, devoid of any spiritual connotation. Conversely, Arabic is viewed as a language of religious devotion, piety, and prayer associated with spirituality.

Individuals who advocated adopting bilingual education (Arabic-French) were seen as the enemies of Islam and the Arabic language on the one hand, and supporters of forced Westernisation of Algerians on the other (Benrabah, 2007). In 1979, English was introduced as a second mandatory foreign language after French in Algeria. In the early 1990s, students could choose to study English or French in Grade Four but the number of students who chose

English was insignificant (Queffélec et al., 2002). This scenario shows that the introduction of English as a rival to French in the primary education system was unsuccessful in the 1990s (Benrabah, 2007). According to Benrabah (2007), the failure to recognise linguistic pluralism in Algeria is because planners did not consider the complete intricacy of the nation's sociolinguistic makeup, and the public's sentiments regarding the various languages competing within the country. They pitted Literary Arabic against French (or French against English) in a systematic manner, creating a competitive environment between them although the two languages are complementary. This is in addition to the idea that implementing Arabisation as an educational policy that excludes other languages does not foster social equity, as most of Algeria's young population is prevented from participating in the country's socio-economic activities (Benrabah, 2007).

In terms of adopting an endoglossic policy in Algeria, Benrabah (2007) reports disagreements over the adopted Tamazight, a Berber language, as the official language. Tamazight holds significant symbolic value as a language that shapes the cognitive realm of Berber speakers and defines their cultural identity as collective (Boukous, 1995). In August 2005, the Prime Minister agreed to make Tamazight an official language, but the President, Bouteflika, opposed it stating: "Arabic will remain the only official language of Algeria. No country in the world has two official languages [sic], and it will never be the case in Algeria, where the only official language recognised by the Constitution is Arabic. I cannot accept things that work against Algeria's interests" (Benrabah, 2007, p. 247). The issue here is not the number of official languages that can exist in a country because South Africa has eleven official languages; what is at play is the ideology of "Arabisation", which seeks to promote only Arabic because of religious reasons. Opting for an exoglossic language policy over an endoglossic one is also observable in Kenya, where Gikuyu and other Kenyan indigenous languages were banned on radio stations in 2000 because then President, Arap Moi, claimed that they were promoting tribal chauvinism (Namwaya, 2000).

The Arabisation project, which appears to be strong in Algeria, seems not to be tightly upheld in Morocco, another North African country. Chakrani (2013) conducted a language attitude study of 454 students from four colleges in Morocco. Since socioeconomic status was a variable in the study, participants were drawn from the upper, middle, and lower classes. Although Morocco is a former French colony, "the introduction of English changes language loyalties and allegiances [...] and has been viewed favourably by Moroccan youth" (Chakrani, 2013, p. 434). The respondents used in the study demonstrated more positive

attitudes towards English than Moroccan Arabic (MA), Standardised Arabic (SA), and Berber. (Chakrani, 2013, p. 434) concluded: “The language practices of the elite are characterised by the daily use of French, as upper-class respondents report that the elite use 80.0% French, 15.0% MA, 10.0% each SA, English and MA”. Errihani (2007, pp. 60–61) agrees that French in Morocco is a language that characterises members of the upper class and is regarded as the language that represents progress and social advancement, giving it a sense of prestige and elevated standing.

The reason for the growth of French and English in Morocco, Marley (2004) argues, is the failure of the Arabisation project because it did not acknowledge the fact that the country is multilingual and disregards its citizens’ eagerness to engage with the outside world, particularly Western Europe, which is facilitated by the use of the French language as well as English. As a result of the failure of the Arabisation project, the Charter for Educational Reform in 2000 published a new policy that allowed other languages, such as French and English, to be used in teaching science and technology. To ascertain the attitudes of students towards the new language policy, Marley (2004, p. 38) distributed questionnaires to 159 secondary school students between 14-19 years old and found that 80% of the participants agreed with the statement “it is always an advantage to speak two languages”, while many of them “saw French as a vital language in Morocco and useful for science and technology [and] believed that English is more important internationally.” The study also revealed that teachers supported the new policy, stating that rushing to implement Arabisation and imposing monolingualism has markedly deteriorated students’ academic performance and the standard of instruction provided (Marley, 2004).

Sixteen years after Marley’s study, Bouziane (2020) conducted a similar study involving 1,477 Moroccan university and high school students. The study sought to discover respondents’ use of Amazigh, Standard Arabic (SA), Moroccan Arabic (MA), French, and English, as well as the motivation for their use. The study showed that 88.8% of participants responded that Moroccan Arabic is the language they always use at home. Notwithstanding that the percentages of English and French usage at home were 5.8 and 6.2, the students agreed that French (55.83%) and English (51.42%) are vital because they know that French is “the language of instruction in the streams they are likely to choose at university” and English is essential “for further studies or to consult references in their scientific or technical university streams” (p. 308). The study also showed that students reported that they will always use MA (50.4%), French (47.5%), SA (38.7%), English (35.5%), and Amazigh

(10.5%) with their children in the future. The findings show that MA has more linguistic vitality than SA and Amazigh in Morocco. It can also be inferred that Moroccans are open to improving their competence in French and English because of their instrumental and integrative functions.

Adegbija (1994, p. 5) summarises the linguistic situation in the 49 African countries that make up the sub-Saharan regions into six points: dense multilingualism and multiculturalism, the dominance of ex-colonial languages, neglect of indigenous languages, overdependence of Africa on past colonial rulers, socio-political dynamics in relation to language problems and wars, and the advocacy and emergence of pan-African languages. Multilingualism and multiculturalism characterise the whole of Africa, not just sub-Saharan Africa, being a multilingual continent with over 2,000 languages (Heine & Nurse, 2000).

The dominance of English and French in former British and French colonies in Africa has negatively impacted the continent's sociolinguistic situation. Phillipson (1992) argues that the fact that French and English still hold a prominent position in postcolonial African nations suggests that these countries have inherited a similar legacy. He further notes that this legacy is characterised by linguicism, whereby the colonised population has assimilated the language and many of the beliefs of their colonisers, particularly their views on dominant language and subordinate languages.

In Africa, virtually everyone aims to learn English, French, or Portuguese because they believe they are the languages that will aid them in achieving upward social mobility since those who cannot speak any of these languages are sidelined in sites of power such as politics and media (Adegbija, 1994). In one of his famous novels, *Arrow of God*, Nigerian poet and novelist Chinua (Achebe, 1964) captures the importance people place on learning a European language when the chief priest, Ezeulu, who is the custodian of his community's tradition, decides to send one of his sons, Oduche, to learn the colonial ruler's way of life:

I have sent you to be my eyes there. Do not listen to what people say—people who do not know their right from their left. No man speaks a lie to his son; I have told you that before. If anyone asks you why you should be sent to learn these new things, tell him that a man must dance the dance prevalent in his time.

The submission of Ezeulu implies that he acknowledges that colonial culture and language have come to stay and that the best thing to do is to learn them. Although he may not be in the right position to learn them directly, one of his sons should learn them so that a member

of his family will partake in the prestige, position, and power that characterise someone with mastery of English.

The official use of English and French in Anglophone and Francophone African countries has resulted in the neglect of indigenous languages. The preference for a language appears to correlate with the dislike of another language. The “unsevered colonial umbilical cord” between Africa and their former colonial rulers has inhibited the development of indigenous languages because of the inferiority complex bedeviling Africans to the point that “an idea formulated or product made in England tends to attract greater worth and attention than an indigenous equivalent” (Adegbija, 1994, p. 22). One might argue that this situation is not just true for Africa but for most countries following the logic of the country-of-origin effects (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995). The policy stipulating that students must pass English in the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) before gaining admission into tertiary education also contributes to positive attitudes towards English, given that the language of education in Nigeria is English.

As stated earlier, the dominance of foreign languages in Africa has led to a neglect of indigenous languages. Mohr and Ochieng (2017) collected questionnaire data from 45 Tanzanian participants from different walks of life, such as teaching and banking. Of the participants, 73.3% agreed that Kiswahili is their home language. Discussions among parents and grandparents are often done in Kiswahili, while discussions among siblings and between parents and siblings involved codeswitching between Kiswahili and English. In education in Tanzania, Mohr and Ochieng (2017) found that 41.9% of the participants agreed that they communicate with their fellow students in Kiswahili, 32.5% reported that they code-switched Kiswahili and English, and 25.6% indicated that they only used English. Notwithstanding that the participants’ responses show that Kiswahili is the dominant home language, and the language often used by them in their day-to-day communication, 76.7% preferred English as a medium of instruction in schools.

However, previous findings have shown that Tanzanian students recorded poor academic performance when English is the medium of instruction (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir, 2004). The study provides evidence of the prestige given to English because of its role in upward social mobility, socioeconomic progression, and its dominance in Africa. These findings align with Mazrui (2014), who explored language attitudes and language shift in Zanzibar, Tanzania. He found a shift towards English in educational domains, although Tanzania is

seen as a country that has advocated and implemented mother tongue education in African languages (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998). Ochieng (2015, p. 30) maintains that English has come to stay since promoting and developing the Kiswahili language in Tanzania will not diminish the dominance of English in the country's present-day context. The same can also be said for most African countries and many other countries around the world, including some that do not have a colonial history with the UK, such as Rwanda and Liberia.

The scenario in which English dominates at the expense of indigenous languages has also been reported in Rwanda. After Rwanda gained independence in 1962, the language-in-education policy stipulated that an indigenous language, Kinyarwanda, would serve as a medium of instruction (MoI) for the first three years of primary education, while French, which is the language spoken by the former colonial rulers (Belgium), would serve as MoI in all other levels of education. However, as reported by Pearson (2014), the government in October 2008 ordered that English should serve as the MoI across all educational levels, notwithstanding the fact that Kinyarwanda is the major language used in daily communication, especially in rural regions, by about 90% of Rwandans (LeClerc, 2012). However, following agitation and rebuttals, Kinyarwanda was restored as the MoI for the first three years of primary education (Pearson, 2014). Although the reasons for the "sudden" and "abrupt" policy (Rosen, 2010; Rosendal, 2010) may be political and economic, it goes a long way to show the subtle force of English as an international language, which many countries would want their citizens to learn so as not to be sidelined in international affairs. To corroborate this position, even though teachers in Rwanda expressed their lack of preparation to embark on a "policy without a plan" based on their ideology about English, they expressed optimism by stating: "We are happy to teach in English. And because, for example, if you compare where we have started and where we are now, there is a big difference. And we hope that in, for example, ten years after – so there will be no problem about the English" (Pearson, 2014, p. 54).

Luis (2022) studied teachers' attitudes towards bilingualism in classrooms in postcolonial Mozambique (Eastern Africa) and found that the respondents preferred using Portuguese as the MoI compared to their mother tongues. Of the 201 teachers used in the study, 93% agreed that the colonial language, Portuguese, should be taught to students because of its economic, educational, and social impact. One of the respondents remarked, "As a parent, I would like my kid to learn Portuguese because it is easy for the kid to learn faster than those who use the local language as the medium of instruction" (Luis, 2022, p. 89). The study suggested raising

awareness of the educational and cultural importance of using Mozambican indigenous languages as MoI in schools, such as accommodating students with limited proficiency in Portuguese.

Negative attitudes towards indigenous languages are also observed in Uganda, where Christians see Swahili as an Islamic language because of borrowed Arabic words in the Swahili lexicon. Luganda, which is a major language in Uganda, has been disfavoured because other ethnic groups perceive it as a strategy by the Baganda people to dominate them. Because of these ethno-religious problems characterising Uganda's indigenous languages, English was picked as the official language (Ssentanda & Nakayiza, 2017). Besides these ethno-religious considerations, English was favoured as the MoI in schools because of the linguistic diversity of students, and because little or no reading material is available in many Ugandan indigenous languages (Lasebikan et al., 1964). Ssentanda and Nakayiza (2017) found that children who are not fluent in English are ridiculed by their peers and are regarded by society as people without a future. They also noted that students who are unable to communicate effectively in English within educational institutions are subjected to disciplinary measures, such as physical punishment, forced to wear unsightly clothing, and forced to perform menial tasks. English is commonly associated with academic achievement in schools, whereas native languages are devalued and regarded as the cause of poor academic performance (Ssentanda & Nakayiza, 2017). Ssentanda and Nakayiza (2017) reported that teachers consider the three years of mother tongue education as wasted years.

Another language scenario that characterises sub-Saharan Africa, as identified by Adegbija (1994), is socio-politically related. Understanding Africa's social history and the relationships among African countries is crucial to offer insights into the dynamics of language attitudes in Africa. St. Clair (1982, p. 164) remarks that to understand the formation of language attitudes, it may be essential to explore the historical, social and political factors that have influenced a nation's evolution. Social tags and stereotypes of different ethnic groups within the same country and across sub-Saharan Africa contribute to linguistic problems. This affects language planning and policy, as it is difficult to accept a language to serve as a national language when one is not seen as favourably disposed to those who speak it.

On the one hand, the proposal to adopt Swahili as an African national language did not receive the desired response, as many Africans believe that there is no need to waste

resources promoting an African language as a national language that will be spoken and understood by Africans since English is already doing the work. According to Adegbija (1994), several Africans did not key into such an idea because they conceived it as another form of African linguistic imperialism that would lead to stereotypes. For instance, in Nigeria, the Hausa are seen as a threat whose greed to occupy political power has made them push for successive Northern presidency; the Yoruba are perceived as cunning, while the Igbo are constructed as ethnocentric and undesired (Aboh, 2019; Adegbija, 1994). These stereotypes support the claim that “we are confronted with the nation split within itself, articulating the heterogeneity of its population” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 148). On the other hand, Swahili has been widely accepted in Tanzania and Kenya, which are seen as success stories in language planning (Holmes & Wilson, 2022).

In summary, several studies have indicated that colonial languages are preferred as MoIs over indigenous languages. This is because the functions of indigenous languages have been reduced to cultural transfer and home language. This trend could be attributed to the perceived functions of foreign languages like English and French in upward social mobility. Following this review of the linguistic situation and language attitudes in Africa, the next section outlines and discusses language attitudes in Nigeria, the geographical research area of the present study.

2.1.6 Language attitudes in Nigeria

Very few studies have examined Nigerians’ attitudes towards NgE and other varieties of English. One of the earliest studies was by Obanya et al. (1979), who studied 58 Nigerians’ attitudes towards Yoruba English (YE), Igbo English (IE), near RP, and RP. The study revealed that RP and near RP received consistently higher ratings than YE and IE because they were perceived as ‘better’ English varieties. A later related study, Williams (1983), examined attitudes towards three different Nigerian accent categories: near-Standard British English (Type I), accented Nigerian (Type II) and heavily accented Nigerian (Type III) and one ‘native’ accent category comprising L1 speakers of British, American and Canadian English speakers. The type I accent, which is close to RP, were produced by three Nigerians (two males, one female), while Type II (characterised by little mother tongue interference) and Type III (with high mother tongue interference at (supra)segmental levels) were produced by four Nigerians each (three males and one female for Type II and one male and three females for Type III). For the voice stimuli, speakers read a passage containing

challenging words for L2 English speakers. 81 teachers of English from 36 language groups listened to the voices and rated them on 20 personality traits, such as sophisticated, respected, and nice to listen to on a 10-point scale. The findings showed that Canadian English was rated more favourably than the other varieties, while three of the Type III accents (high mother tongue interference) received the lowest ratings. One of the surprising findings of the study was that two Type I accent speakers (those whose accent approximated to RP) received higher average ratings than L1 speakers of British and American accents. One of the limitations of Williams' (1983) study is that he did not provide the linguistic inventory for the British, American and Canadian accents spoken by the 'native' speakers.

Recently, using the verbal-guise technique, Oyebola (2020) examined 209 Nigerian students' attitudes towards American, British, Ghanaian, Jamaican, and Nigerian Englishes. The American speaker was from Boston, the British speaker was from Preston, while the speakers of non-Inner Circle varieties spoke what can be described as Standardised Ghanaian, Jamaican and Nigerian Englishes. Oyebola (2020) found that American and British English varieties received higher ratings than other varieties on both status and solidarity dimensions. The study revealed that NgE was rated relatively highly on solidarity because, the author argues, it indexes Nigerian linguistic identity. In addition, he found that while participants' exposure level to varieties and regional backgrounds significantly impacted language attitudes, gender did not. Concerning the effect of accent recognition and attitudes, the results showed that their ability to recognise the accents did not impact the solidarity ratings but the status ratings of NgE and Ghanaian English, where the former was rated higher than the latter.

Ugwuanyi and Oyebola (2022) conducted a similar study with the same varieties above (excluding Jamaican English) but with different participants. Whereas Oyebola (2020) used Nigerian students residing in Nigeria, Ugwuanyi and Oyebola (2022) recruited 72 Nigerian expatriates living in the UK and Germany. Similarly, British English was rated more positively than the other varieties on both status and solidarity dimensions. Background variables such as gender, country of residence, and duration of stay yielded no significant differences in status and solidarity. The study concluded that Nigerians generally prefer Inner Circle varieties of English to Outer Circle varieties.

Contrary to the above finding that Inner Circle varieties are rated more favourably than Outer Circle varieties on both status and solidarity, Acheme (2018) investigated attitudes

towards SAE, Indian-accented English, and Nigerian-accented English at Cleveland State University, USA, because of the increasing number of students from India and Nigeria in the university. She found that the Indian and Nigerian accents were rated higher on solidarity than the SAE. Olatoye (2022) studied the attitudes of educated Nigerians towards RP, Scottish English, SAE, Acrolectal (educated) NgE, Mesolectal (uneducated) NgE, and Ivorian English accents. She noted that SAE, Acrolectal NgE, and RP received the most favourable rating in terms of status, but not solidarity.

Apart from studying attitudes towards NgE and world Englishes, efforts have also been made to study Nigerian Pidgin English (NPgE). Oyebola and Ugwuanyi (2023) examined the attitudes of 67 Nigerian students towards NPgE using a structured questionnaire. NPgE is spoken by members of every social class and has Standardised NgE as its superstrate and words from indigenous Nigerian languages as its substrate. It is considered the most widely spoken pidgin variety in the world. Oyebola and Ugwuanyi (2023) found that participants had generally positive attitudes towards NPgE, although they did not support it to function as an official language in Nigeria. 64% of respondents noted that they read materials written in NPgE, while 69% supported its use on radio, television, and social media. The authors recommended compiling a dictionary of NPgE to maintain its vitality and standardise its vocabulary and orthography.

The review of Nigerians' attitudes towards varieties of English shows that they tend to rate Inner Circle varieties more favourably than NgE. No known study has attempted to investigate attitudes towards only varieties of NgE. Exploring this aspect of research is critical, as it is important to understand the evaluative hierarchies of Nigerian Englishes. The review above also reveals that most language attitude research in the Nigerian context orients to varieties along educational lines (basilectal, mesolectal, and acrolectal), and thus, they did not prioritise attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes along ethnic or regional lines. Therefore, it is important to explore this aspect of language attitude research. The sample sizes used in the above studies ranged from fewer than a hundred to just above 200. The larger sample size used in the present study strengthens the reliability of the results and enhances statistical power. Also, no previous study has investigated attitude-behaviour relations in the Nigerian context. Comparing reported attitudes and actual language behaviour is relevant for an improved understanding of language attitudes because it helps us reach synchrony between attitudes and actions. The triangulation of data pursued in this study (as discussed in Chapter

4) was under-researched in previous studies, and this study was designed to address these research gaps.

2.2 English language in Nigeria

This section of the literature review provides an overview of the range and depth of the power of English in Nigeria in order to improve our understanding of the sociolinguistics of English in Nigeria.

2.2.1 The power of English in Nigeria

Some languages are considered more prestigious than others because of their value in the linguistic marketplace. English, as one of the languages that wield great power, manifests its linguistic power by “adding a code to the linguistic repertoire of a speech community [through] persuasion, regulation, inducement, and force, [which has resulted in] the suppression of a particular language variety and the elevation of another variety” (Kachru, 2017, p. 87). In Southern Africa, the tale of English, which has led to the agitation for indigenous language education, is fundamentally that of:

attempted genocides (physical extermination of indigenous people), epistemicides (killing of knowledges of the colonised), linguicides (decimation of languages of indigenous people), inventions (mutilating, orthography and naming of indigenous languages) and standardisations (re-defining, re-ordering, re-classification, re-codification, disciplining and re-making of indigenous languages to accord with Eurocentric linguistic standards for instrumental purposes) (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018b, p. vii).

Inasmuch as colonialism negatively affected African indigenous languages, Africans who abandoned their languages in favour of English contributed to the endangerment of their heritage languages. Kachru (2017) identifies six parameters of English globally, namely: demographic and numerical, functional, attitudinal, accessibility, pluricentricity, and material. The following subsections discuss the six parameters related to the Nigerian sociolinguistic situation (to provide an overview of the English language situation in Nigeria).

2.2.1.1 The demographic and numerical power of English

The global spread of English has given rise to terms such as Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle (Kachru, 2017) and these circles cut across different continents of the

world. It is a fact that English is spoken on all the world's continents. The power of English, French, and Portuguese has resulted in classifying African countries into Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone (Mazrui, 2014). Nigeria, which belongs to the Outer Circle because of its colonial history with Britain, first came into contact with English through the trans-Atlantic trade in Benin in 1553 (Banjo, 1970) and started developing through Christian missionaries who arrived in Nigeria in 1842 and went ahead to establish schools (Jowitt, 1991). Although Portuguese first came to Nigerian soil, English became popular due to its unprecedented spread caused by the emergence of Nigeria as a British colony.

Banjo (1970) argues that English was not initially planned to be a lingua franca in Nigeria but an official language in government, the media, and the teaching of Christian doctrines, especially in the southern part of Nigeria. However, the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates by Lord Frederick Lugard in 1914 intensified contact between the North and the South and since the North has Hausa as a lingua franca and there is a multiplicity of languages in the South, English or Pidgin English became necessary for intercultural communication (Jowitt, 2019). During pre-colonial and colonial times, English was seen as an elitist language. Its elitism has recently been questioned because it has become a language spoken by both elites and non-elites alike. During the colonial period, the respect given to those who could speak English was also a driving force that motivated people to learn English because they “sought to establish close relations with the white man” (Igboanusi, 2002, p. 9). This positive evaluation of English made the first set of Nigerian District Officers “speak English even to those with whom they shared a Nigerian language” (Bangbose, 1998, p. 357).

It has been noted that although schools have long been established in the southern part of Nigeria, it was not until 1900 that Lugard saw the importance of establishing schools in the North. This establishment resulted in an increase in the number of children enrolled in primary schools, from 66,000 in 1947 to 205,769 in 1957 (Fafunwa, 1991). In 1900, Hausa still served as a lingua franca and medium of instruction in the North. According to the Annual report of 1934, “In the North [...] the language of instruction is Hausa for the most part, and where some other language is used in the initial stages, Hausa is nearly everywhere introduced as a subject and before the end of the school year becomes the medium of instruction” (Banjo, 1970, p. 65). This practice affected the number of English speakers in the North then and even now. Personal communications with current Nigerian graduates posted under the auspices of the Nigerian Youth Service Corps to the northern part of Nigeria

indicate poor usage of English by students of Hausa descent. They often report that the students tell them *ba turenchi*, which means “I don’t understand English”.

The number of English speakers in Nigeria has increased over the years. Previous estimates of English speakers in Nigeria have placed them at about 20% (Emenanjo, 1990; Igboanusi, 2002) and not more than 30% (Jibril, 1982) of Nigeria’s population. According to Bamgbose (1971), English speakers in Nigeria do not exceed 10% based on the number of primary school leavers. Recent reports have estimated that 53% of Nigerians can speak an intermediate level of English (Pinon & Haydon, 2010). On the other hand, Sawe (2018) reports that approximately 79 million Nigerians speak English. The lack of exactness in the number of English speakers points to a lack of solid data analytics and the need to include linguistic demographic information when conducting censuses in Nigeria. However, one issue that can be observed is the increase in the number of English speakers in Nigeria during the 21st century. It is unknown how many Nigerians speak Banjo’s (1971) variety 4 of English, which is identical to RP in phonology, syntax, and semantics. A basic assumption would be that the number of Nigerians who speak RP will be smaller than those that speak what has been described as NgE because, as Schneider (2007) argues, Nigeria was a settler-free society, with only very few ‘native’ English speakers from the British Isles. He categorises Nigeria as a former ‘exploitation colony’ (where access to English competence was made available to elite co-administrators and withheld from the masses), which partly explains why few people speak variety 4.

The increase in the urban population to 53.5% in 2022 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2023) shows a numerical increase in the number of English speakers in Nigeria. Given that most urban areas accommodate individuals from different cultural and linguistic groups, English – NgE or Pidgin – is a language that unifies these people. Udofot (2010) found that although a more significant percentage of people living in Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom State, South-South Nigeria, speak Ibibio, 76.7% preferred to use English as a medium for business interaction. This practice is common, especially in the South, where individuals who speak a common Nigerian indigenous language would use English in their interpersonal interactions in motor parks, markets, churches, and recreational centres. This positive evaluation of English has resulted in individuals opting for English to be adopted as Nigeria’s official and national language over their mother tongue (Adegbija, 1994). In his study involving 100 educated respondents, Akinjobi (2004) found that whereas 75% of his respondents indicated that one of the three major Nigerian languages should be adopted as the

country's national language, 94% of Igbo speakers, 86% of Yoruba, and 70% of speakers *minorities* languages such as Urhobo and Kalabari indicated that English should perform the function of Nigeria's national language. A possible explanation for Hausa speakers' favourable disposition to Nigerian languages is that Hausa is the indigenous language most likely to be used as a national language because of the number of speakers and political support. The high vitality of Hausa 'oppresses the oppressed' minority languages in Nigeria, according to Igboanusi and Peter (2004) who argue that the Hausa language is increasingly replacing minority indigenous languages in informal domains in Northern Nigeria.

The power of English in Nigeria has stimulated Nigerians to aspire towards learning and speaking it. The beliefs that English is a 'necessary evil' (Unegbu, 2015) and that the knowledge of English is the knowledge of everything (Slabbert, 1994) have made English in Nigeria flourish "on the graveyard of other people's languages" (Ngũgĩ, 1993, p. 35). Although many Nigerians claim to speak indigenous languages, many are not fluent. Adegbija (2000) argues that parents who only attained primary or secondary education and had poor command of English would prefer to speak English to their children instead of their mother tongue. Moreover, due to the inadequate support of the government towards education, which makes teachers continually go on strike and has led to poorly equipped libraries, students' competence in English continues to deteriorate (Aboh, 2022).

In Nigeria today, students are expected to credit English in their West African Examination Certificate (WAEC) before being considered for admission into tertiary institutions. However, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) made Nigerian indigenous languages optional, resulting in a decline in students' interest in these languages. Nevertheless, in the general studies unit (a department in Nigerian universities that teaches courses on English, natural science or peace and conflict resolutions), English remains a compulsory subject in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Notwithstanding that Nigeria is regarded as an English-speaking country where the medium of instruction in secondary and university education is in English, due to economic gains, many Western universities require Nigerians to write the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language System (IELTS) before they can be considered for graduate studies. The reason for the insistence on doing this test, Kachru (2017, p. 102) notes, is "to sell a particular model of English, to make a market for teachers (or "experts") from one's own country, to seek foreign students from particular regions of the

world for the study of English.” This case of ‘open linguisticism’ (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1989) has increased the number of English speakers in Nigeria.

Therefore, the unprecedented spread of English across different states in Nigeria and the increase in its number of speakers pose a severe threat to Nigeria’s indigenous languages. An example of this is *Ohaneze Ndigbo*, a group comprising of Igbo people serving as the voice of the Igbo people in political and cultural issues. Although all members can speak and understand Igbo, the group conducts its meetings in English. The continuous spread of English in Nigeria has led to it being described in *messianic* terms as a language that liberates. In contrast, Nigerian heritage languages have historically been constructed as languages that had served their purposes in the past and may be helpful in the future “when the work of intellectualisation had been completed” (Stroud & Guissemo, 2017, p. 43).

2.2.1.2 The functional power of English

Of the more than 500 indigenous languages and the three major exoglossic languages (English, French, and Arabic) in Nigeria, English is the language that performs the most functions because it “provides access to most important scientific, technological, and cross-cultural domains of knowledge and interaction” (Kachru, 2017, p. 97). In addition, English plays a crucial role in religion (especially Christianity), politics, law, and literacy, which Sadiqi (2003) refers to as ‘sites of power’. This exoglossic monolingual practice in these sites of power has resulted in the functional inertness of Nigerian languages, given that the dominant linguistic ideologies favour English. Many Nigerians seem to (un)consciously prefer English to indigenous languages. This attitude confirms Blommaert’s (1999, pp. 10–11) position: “the more a linguistic ideology is taken up in any setting, the more likely it is to undergo normalization, a hegemonic pattern in which the ideological claims are perceived as normal ways of thinking and acting.” These ideological claims determine the “choice, evaluation, and use of language forms and functions” (McGroarty, 2008, p. 98).

Jowitt (2019, pp. 16–17) identifies six domains in Nigeria where English is used: official, education, mass media, religious observance, informal interpersonal relations, and creative writing. English is used in official pronouncements and correspondence at the courts and in different arms of the government. Jowitt (2019) avers that the only place where the role of English seems to have been officially endorsed in the 1999 Constitution is where it was stated that “the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English”. The Constitution also allows the State Houses of Assembly to use indigenous languages to conduct their

activities, but in practice, the State Houses of Assembly activities are conducted in English. This practice, Jowitt (2019) argues, is due to their uneasiness about speaking for a long time in their indigenous language in a setting where they are to use legislative and legal registers for which they do not have the vocabulary in their native language. This implicit endorsement of English as an official language and its dominance in Nigeria's official settings demonstrate how much power English wields. English does not need to force itself onto Nigeria's official domains; its functions and the ideology of its superiority position it as a linguistic *sine qua non*. Therefore, many Nigerians have accepted the official status of English.

The English language plays a significant role in education in Nigeria. The language-in-education policy stipulates that a child's mother tongue or the proximal language should be used to teach the child in lower primary education, whereas English will serve as a medium of instruction in upper primary, secondary, and tertiary education. The choice of mother tongue education at the lower primary level is inspired by research findings showing that mother tongue education is crucial in a child's cognitive development. One such study is Fafunwa et al.'s (1989) Ife Six-Year Primary Project, which showed that Nigerian students taught in their mother tongue performed better in academics and other aspects of their lives than the control group taught in English. Heugh's (2009) study in Ethiopia also confirms Fafunwa et al.'s findings. Heugh found that students taught in their mother tongue for about six to eight years, plus English as a subject, performed better than students who transited earlier to English after fewer years of mother tongue education.

Despite the mother tongue (MT) education policy in Nigeria, Igboanusi and Peter (2016), in their study involving 1000 respondents comprising 500 teachers in government and private schools and 500 parents and officials of the State Ministry of Education in Benin, Ibadan, Kano, Owerri and Lafia, found that apart from Kano, a state where Hausa is predominantly spoken, other areas have jettisoned MT education. This loyalty towards Hausa in Kano is perhaps because of the role Kano plays as the 'capital' of northern Nigeria. This asymmetry between policy and practice confirms Kamwangamalu's (2003) $2 + 9 = 1$ formula in the South African context, where English and Afrikaans (2) and nine South African languages are seen as official languages, but in practice, only English dominates because many Black South Africans perceive Afrikaans as the language of the oppressors. Despite the policy that supports MT education within the Nigerian context, English appears to be the only language that dominates Nigeria's educational system (except for Hausa at the lower primary level in the core northern states). Schiffman (1996) construes this practice as a false front where

pluralism is constitutionally promoted; however, in practice, only an exoglossic language prevails in education.

Igboanusi and Peter (2016) further pointed out that Igbo used to serve as a medium of instruction in primaries 1–3, but parents and stakeholders complained that their children could not communicate in English when they migrated to urban areas. As a result, parents began withdrawing their children from MT-based instruction schools to private schools, where English was the medium of instruction. Yielding to such pressures, teachers resorted to English as the medium of instruction in lower primary education. Igboanusi and Peter (2016) observed that 24.1%, 24.3%, 25.8%, and 25.8% of ministry officials, parents, and teachers in private and government schools, did not want their children to be taught in their MT. Describing the unexpected dominance of English in Africa, Ager (2005) opines that there was a complete lack of consideration for the possibility that languages besides English could be utilised in the upper echelons of society or education.

Owing to this decline in MT education and economic gain, publishers prefer to publish books in English. However, because of the strong positive attitudes of the Hausa towards their heritage language, and the belief of Muslims among them that English is a Western hegemonic tool, Hausa still serves as a medium of instruction in schools in the core northern states (Igboanusi & Peter, 2016). The reason behind the non-achievement of MT-based education in Nigeria, as well as in other sub-Saharan African countries/regions, as Kamwangamalu (2016) notes, is a misconception that linguistic diversity or multilingualism is a problem. Africa's reliance on the Western world for economic sustenance is also a factor. Another factor is elite closure, which refers to the social mobilisation tactic employed by those in power to maintain their authority through language choice. Finally, African languages suffer from low linguistic instrumentalism, implying little demand for these languages in official job markets.

In addition, MT education appears implausible in multiethnic urban areas in Nigeria because of the social tensions that may be caused by separating urban learners based on their MT may cause. These reasons continue to reinforce the power of English in education. Based on my observations, I have noticed that some schools in Nigeria use English to teach indigenous languages. Since everyone aspires to speak English, individuals who do not have access to education are excluded from 'prestige' jobs.

The power of English manifests itself in radio and television, published books, newspapers, video films, advertisements, and social media. Most radio and television programmes are in English because radio stations and television channels seek to remain relevant and reach an audience within and outside the locality where they are situated. Some programmes and news broadcasts are also conducted in various mother tongues to reach those in rural areas who do not understand English. There is no statistics on the number of radio and television programmes conducted in indigenous languages or English but it is believed that the number of programmes and news broadcasts in English exceeds those in indigenous languages (Aboh, 2022). Virtually all newspapers published in print form are published in the English language. Of the major Nigerian newspapers (such as *The Telegraph*, *The Sun*, *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, and *Premium Times*) published online, only Premium Times publishes in Hausa. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) publishes news content in Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. The low reading culture in Nigeria has made “most Nigerian newspapers belong to a dying breed” (Garba, 2016). The Nigerian video film industry, known as Nollywood, also uses English in its films. Inasmuch as there are films produced in major Nigerian languages, the number of films in English is higher. In some of these films in English, some expressions in either Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba are inserted to express the cultural aspects showcased in them (Aboh, 2022). In her interview with BBC Igbo on 19 February 2022, Chioma Akpotha, a veteran Nollywood actress, remarked that the reason for the low rate of films in Igbo is that they are not as profitable as films in English. As a result, producers are demotivated from producing films in Igbo since the audience is limited compared to films in English.

English also plays a crucial role in interpersonal communication. It is often used by individuals who do not speak a common Nigerian language, especially in interethnic marriages (Offiong & Mensah, 2012). The power of English is seen in its use as a medium of communication among individuals who cannot speak the same indigenous language. In his study involving 245 Yoruba-English bilingual students aged 13–19 years in southwest Nigeria, Owolabi (2014) found that 60% of the respondents indicated that their first exposure to English was at home, while 29% stated that they were first exposed to English in school. The results showed that 96.33% of the respondents were exposed to English within 3-6 years of age, while 81.63% expressed that they were exposed to Yoruba within the same age period. Although the respondents were simultaneous bilinguals, Owolabi (2014) found that Yoruba impacts the respondents’ English at the phonological and syntactic levels. Despite

this early exposure to Yoruba, 77.96% of the respondents indicated that they now prefer English to Yoruba. This shift and preference for English shows how much value people attach to English. Owolabi (2014) found that although the respondents and their siblings were competent in Yoruba, 73.47% admitted using English frequently with their siblings.

Among the Igbo, there is evidence that there is a high rate of language shift towards English in homes, schools, markets, and electronic-mediated communication (Okoro, 2018; Onwudiwe, 2016). Igboanusi and Peter (2004) argue that, whereas speakers of other Nigerian languages are shifting towards English, the Hausa's loyalty towards their language is strong. As such, Hausa joins with English to threaten minority languages in Nigeria instead of English being a threat to the Hausa language. Of the 200 people who speak the 50 minority languages in northern Nigeria used in their study, 17.2% indicated that they used Hausa for oral communication. In contrast, 74.2% admitted using English (Igboanusi & Peter, 2004).

With about 45.9% of Nigerians being Christians (Central Intelligence Agency, 2023), and since English is associated with Christianity, it also wields its power in the religious domain. In some Pentecostal churches in rural areas, the practice is for the preacher to speak in English while an interpreter interprets into an indigenous language. Many Pentecostal churches use English for preaching and correspondence whereas orthodox churches such as Anglican, Catholic, and Methodist have services or Masses conducted in indigenous languages and English. Some of these orthodox churches in the urban areas use more English in the so-called indigenous language services or Masses, thereby linguistically excluding monolingual congregations (Onumajuru, 2017). Apart from the Catholic Church bulletins that contain Bible readings in Nigerian languages and some Pentecostal churches such as the Redeemed Christian Church that translate some of their evangelical documents into indigenous languages, a more significant number of the documents used in churches are in English. Taiwo (2009) claims that most Nigerian Christian youths prefer to attend churches that conduct English services. As a result, most orthodox churches that conduct their services in indigenous languages have established English-based youth services to avoid losing their young members. Despite 53.5% of Nigeria's population being Muslims, 7.6% more than Christians, English still holds sway in Nigeria more than Arabic. Ayuba (2012) argues that the Arabic language is marginalised in Nigeria because of its association with Islam. Some Christians in Nigeria have expressed discomfort in using Arabic on the 1,000 naira note, seeing it as a subtle move in the plan to Islamise Nigeria (Ndiribe & Aboh, 2022).

As indicated earlier, English is crucial in creative writing in Nigeria. Many award-winning literary works, such as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, which won him the Man Booker International Prize, and Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, which earned her the Orange Prize for Fiction, were written in English. Soyinka, the veteran Nigerian playwright's ability to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986 was because of his works in English. The call by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the prolific Kenyan author and academic, to decolonise African literature has not been heeded. Ngugi's recognition in the literary world is not a result of the works he translated into his mother tongue, the Kikuyu language, but because of the literary texts he published in English. Achebe (1975) argues that he decided to write in English because it was given to him and that his interest was to adapt the language to suit his people's philosophy. While responding to why she does not write in Igbo, Chimamanda Adichie remarked that few people have reading skills in Igbo. In a personal communication with the director of one of the publishing companies in Igbo land, Nigeria, the director stated that he prefers publishing manuscripts written in English to those written in indigenous languages because, to him, texts in English have more economic value than texts in Nigerian languages. Following this deterministic line of reasoning, English wields increasing power in creative writing in Nigeria.

English also dominates the Nigerian linguistic landscape. The six figures of the linguistic landscape in Ibadan, Nigeria, presented by Adetunji (2015), have more English expressions than expressions written in indigenous languages. The same can be said for every Nigerian state. In religious signposts, there is a "prominent use of English in the Christian-related signage [which is] a reflection of sophistication and globalization" (Inya, 2019, p. 1157). With these functions, one might say that English has permeated virtually every domain in Nigeria because of its prestige. English continues to perform these functions because of the ideology that Nigeria's multilingual nature is a problem, hence the need to "meet the models provided by Western civilization" (Wolff, 2017, p. 2). The Nigerian linguistic situation supports Kamwangamalu's (2016, p. 47) position that the enduring effects of colonialism on the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural foundations of colonised nations have given rise to a colonial narrative that justifies the belief in the innate superiority of colonial languages at the expense of indigenous languages.

2.2.1.3 The attitudinal power of English

At the intralanguage level, attitudes towards different Nigerian Englishes exist. The power of English in Nigeria with respect to attitudes is best captured at two levels: government and individual. The power of English in Nigeria has made the federal government positively evaluate English, which is seen in the continuous recognition of English as a compulsory subject in schools and as a prerequisite for gaining admission into tertiary institutions, which also applies to many countries in the world, many of which were not English colonies. In contrast, indigenous languages, including major languages such as Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, are optional. This policy has increased the rate at which students want to improve their English language skills and reduced their desire to be competent in their mother tongue. The negative attitudes of stakeholders in the Nigerian educational sector stem from the hegemonic nature of English (Igboanusi & Peter, 2016), which is seen as a language of progression and neutralisation of linguistic diversity in Nigeria. Ager (2001) opines that the prestige of a language influences stakeholders' attitudes towards it, especially in the educational system. Ironically, with all the institutional support given to English, some stakeholders bemoan the endangerment of Nigeria's indigenous languages. In line with this, Kachru (2017, p. 98) notes:

We find evidence of this attitude (and use of language power) of the new emerging elite in the Outer Circle. They are generally English educated; they exploit the power and symbols that such education bestows upon them and they see to it that their children go to the best English medium schools and seek admission to Western universities. And then, they proclaim – both in English and in local languages – the ills of English, and the evils of its power, and they protest against the continued domination of the language.

The inclusion of indigenous languages in education and the recognition of the functions of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba in official domains, such as in the National Assembly, are accompanied by 'escape clauses' such as *if possible* or modal auxiliary verbs such as *should* and *would have* (Kamwangamalu, 2016) or 'when adequate arrangements have been made, therefore' as in the Nigerian case. These escape clauses and negative attitudes towards indigenous languages sustain "the effects of the colonial construction of the cultural images of superior Self and inferior Other on theories, beliefs, and practices in language education" (Shin & Kubota, 2008, p. 210). As Kamwangamalu (2016, p. 51) puts it:

The implementation of the nation-state ideology [centralism] in the then Western colonies in Africa has left a destructive legacy in the continent, including the following: [1] Negative attitudes towards the indigenous languages as equal mediums of learning in the educational system in postcolonial Africa. [2] The marginalization of the indigenous languages and their speakers away from mainstream society. [3] Their exclusion from participation in the social, political, and economic development of the continent.

Upon reflection, Nigeria's political actors endorse the hegemony of English in Nigeria, but during electoral campaigns, when they go to their speech communities or areas where their mother tongue is spoken, they use indigenous languages to communicate with the people as a strategy to show that they share the same social identity with the people and to secure votes (Aboh, 2022). A similar situation is observed in Mozambique, where politicians use African languages for political campaigns as a way of building a 'populist image' but "in the urban public speech, the use of African languages was seen as an indication of tribalism or regionalism, or even conservatism" (Firmino, 2002, p. 107).

Individuals who have access to quality education and are exposed to English early in their lives discriminate against those without access to good education because of their English usage. English is used by many to measure intelligence, success, and status. In other words, English is a tool for othering. Igboanusi (2006) reports that individuals from different ethnic groups in Nigeria negatively evaluate other ethnic groups' use of English. For instance, some individuals of Igbo origin are discriminated against because of their alternation between /l/ and /r/. They pronounce 'raw' when they mean 'law' and use 'law' when they mean 'raw'. Other ethnic groups ridicule basilectal, mesolectal and some acrolectal Yoruba speakers of English because of the phonological problem of /h/ dropping and insertion (Aboh, 2022). These speakers pronounce 'hear' when they mean 'ear' and 'ear' when they mean 'hear'. Basilectal and mesolectal (and even some acrolectal) Hausa speakers of English are negatively evaluated because they substitute /p/ with /f/ and /ð/ with /z/. Words such as 'people' and 'other' are pronounced as 'fiful' and 'oza'. Other ethnic groups also discriminate against Ibibio and Efik English speakers because of their replacing /tʃ/ in 'champion' with /j/, which makes them pronounce 'yampion' instead (Igboanusi, 2006).

Nigerians expect individuals who have attained a particular stage in their careers to speak 'correct' English. In cases where such individuals fail to 'correctly' use English, their

credibility and personality are questioned (Aboh, 2022). One such case is Sabo Bakin Zuwo, a former Senator representing Kano Central and Executive Governor of Kano State Nigeria in 1979 and 1983. Zuwo had no formal Western education, although he claimed to have attended Mallam Aminu Kano Political School, Sudawa, Kano. Zuwo's poor usage of English as a governor made his political associates, like Dr Junaid Mohammed, remark that he is "incapable of any decent argument in English or any other language". One of Zuwo's statements that made him negatively evaluated was his response (when he was still a governorship aspirant) to a journalist asking about the natural solid minerals in Kano state. Zuwo was reported to have replied: "In my state, we get am for panta, we get am for milinda, we get am for danta cola, sina cola, we get am for coke" (In my state, we have Fanta, we have Mirinda, we have *danta cola*, *sina cola*, we have Coca-Cola) (Aboh, 2022). While expected to answer along the lines of coal, crude oil, natural gas, iron, or copper, Zuwo responded with examples of soft drinks, known as minerals, in NgE. Bakin Zuwo's response made him a source of jokes in Nigeria to the point where Zuwo became a name for anyone (even today) who exhibited daftness or cluelessness.

Recently, another individual who has been othered because of her 'improper' use of English is Patience Jonathan, the wife of the past President of Nigeria. Unlike Bakin Zuwo, who had little or no education, Patience Jonathan has a National Certificate in Education from the Rivers State College of Arts and Science and a Bachelor of Education in Biology and Psychology from the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. It is expected that with her level of education and position as the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, she should have mastery of English. Some of the expressions with which she is being ridiculed include: "On behalf of 2 million, I donate my family", "I would rather kill myself instead of committing suicide", and "My fellow widows" (Agbedo & Krisagbedo, 2014). Nigerians did not consider it a slip of the tongue when Patience Jonathan reversed the words in the first example, which should have read, "On behalf of my family, I donate 2 million", because of her previous blunders such as using "My fellow widows", a statement she made when referring to widows as if her husband was dead and her misinterpretation of the word suicide in the second example (Agbedo & Krisagbedo, 2014). These two cases confirm that individuals who have attained a certain position in society are expected to speak English, befitting their status. Scammers in Nigeria understand this societal expectation, which is why they align the identities they portray with language use. It would be a case of identity-language asymmetry when a scammer identifies as a banker but speaks like a petty trader

with little or no formal education. Chiluya and Chiluya (2022, p. 355) studied five Ponzi schemes with international outlooks that operated in Nigeria between 2016 and 2019 and discovered that these Ponzi schemes aligned themselves with the linguistic expectations in Nigeria by “adopt[ing] discourses that match the social and cultural contexts in order to appeal to the Nigerian social contexts”.

2.2.1.4 The accessibility power of English

Following the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates in 1914 and the emergence of a new country known as Nigeria, the need for a link language became expedient because there were more than 400 languages in the newly formed country. As a result of this new development, English which was domiciled in Christian religious teachings, became a crucial part of Nigeria’s education. Currently, English is a unifying language for individuals who do not share the same mother tongue (Schneider, 2007). According to Ochonogor and Ikems (2019), English’s accessibility power as an ethnic neutraliser can be seen in interethnic marriages, where English is used to bridge the linguistic gap between couples. In most interethnic marriages, the home language is English, and the children’s first language is predominantly English. In rare cases, the children may later learn either or both of their parents’ mother tongues. In most cases, several children from interethnic marriages only know how to speak English. Ochonogor and Ikems (2019) argue that this monolingual acquisition threatens the vitality of couples’ indigenous languages. Offiong and Mensah (2012) studied three interethnic marriage families: Efik-Ibibio, Igbo-Efik and Lokaa-Efik and they found that children from these marriages speak English with their parents at home and speak English in schools. English provides individuals from different ethnic groups access to start a family in this situation.

In addition, English provides access for individuals to trade. The international markets in Nigeria, such as the Alaba International Market (Lagos) and Ariaria International Market (Aba), are international because of the cultural and linguistic diversity of buyers and sellers. Without the English language, Igbo people would have no business selling or buying in markets located in Kano, where Hausa is the language of the community (unless they learn Hausa). The intranational accessibility that English provides in Nigeria expands its power and hegemony, making many Nigerians learn it. Individuals who cannot speak Standardised NgE settle for Pidgin English, which satisfies their communication needs. As Chew (1999, p. 37) puts it:

the relentless demand for English needs to be understood in terms of the empowering role of English, which is evident in the employment opportunities the language can bestow on its users [...] and the access it provides both to knowledge and markets.

Apart from providing intranational accessibility in Nigeria, English also links Nigeria with other countries in Africa and the world. As many Nigerians migrate to different parts of Africa and the world, English allows them to interact with people from different countries. The call to make Swahili or Hausa Africa's lingua franca was not generally accepted because of the argument that English already serves as a link language; hence, the promotion of an African language to perform the functions that English is already doing is a waste of time, resources, and a means to force another language on all Africans (Adegbija, 1994). Similarly, Kachru (2017, p. 104) remarks that the legacy of English in the Outer Circle is a tool of "national identity and political awakening, a window onto the world".

2.2.1.5 The pluricentricity power of English

The different varieties of English in the world have given rise to terms such as 'new Englishes' and 'world Englishes'. Today, terms such as NgE, Indian, Canadian, Namibian, and Scottish Englishes show English's linguistic peculiarities in different speech communities. These linguistic peculiarities, which have been nativised, are signs of the pluricentric power of English. Valentine (2006, p. 569) notes:

An extension to the world Englishes paradigm is its potential for pluricentricity. Rather than a monocentric language model, the pluricentric approach challenges the idealized notion of the native English speaker and the monolingual, monocultural Anglocentric identity. It views the English language as several interacting centers, with each center interacting and interreacting with the others.

The pluricentric nature of English is achieved through nativisation. In his dynamic model of postcolonial English, Schneider (2007, p. 212) argues that Nigeria is experiencing the third phase – nativisation – and is not far from entering the fourth stage, which is endonormative stabilization. For him, what is delaying Nigeria from entering the fourth stage is "the stabilisation of a more homogeneous concept of a Standardised NgE, i.e., an explicit codification" and the lack of a formalised role of Nigerian Pidgin. Seventeen years after Schneider's book, one might argue that Nigeria is yet to enter the phase of endonormative stabilization because of the debate between the 'accepters' and 'rejecters' of NgE (Jowitt,

2019) and the perceived low status of Nigerian Pidgin English due to lack of institutional support.

Nativisation, according to Schneider (2007, p. 40), is the “central phase of both cultural and linguistic transformation [when] combining the old and the new (language structures) is in full swing”. Linguistic transformation, Schneider notes, results from the distance between the colonisers and the colonised after the latter’s independence. Kachru (1986, p. 1) opines: “the legacy of colonial Englishes has resulted in the existence of several transplanted varieties of English having distinct linguistic ecologies – their contexts of function and usage.” Within Nigerian literary space, Achebe supports the use of a nativised variety of English, as reflected in his literary works. Achebe (1975) argues that English can be Africanised in producing literature that conveys African experiences.

In Nigeria’s case, the nativisation of English was facilitated by three factors. The first is Nigeria’s multilingual and multicultural nature. The numerous languages in Nigeria provided a linguistic pool from which Standardised English needs to draw. During acculturation, the phonological, lexical, and semantic features of Nigeria’s indigenous languages were transferred to English. The second is English language teaching in many unassisted schools (not sponsored by government grants), especially in southern Nigeria, by teachers who are not ‘native’ speakers (Fafunwa, 1991). Since language is a behavioural process and “the learner will acquire the language only to the extent that he acculturates” (Schumann, 1986, p. 379), students imitate the nonstandardised variety of English, and when they become teachers, they perpetuate the nonstandardised form. Recently, a nativised variety of English has been transferred by mothers who are not competent in the English language to their children (Jowitt, 2019). In Schneider’s (2007) view, the third factor is the absence of a significant settlers’ speech community (STL) strand that could act as a target or an exemplar.

There is a growing body of literature on Nigerian (Pidgin) English. These studies have accounted for the phonological features of NgE (Bamgbose, 1982; Gut, 2005; Jowitt, 2019), its lexical and syntactic features (Igboanusi, 2002; Kperogi, 2015; Schneider, 2007), and discursive features (Jowitt, 2019; Unuabonah et al., 2021; Unuabonah & Oladipupo, 2018). These studies establish the existence of a nativised version of English that demonstrates its pluricentric power. Scholars have also established varieties of NgE that can be observed among L1 speakers of the three major Nigerian languages and some other major-minor languages, especially in phonology (Igboanusi, 2006; Olaniyi & Josiah, 2013). This

distinction suggests that although Nigeria's Southern and Northern protectorates were geographically coalesced and English was promoted to serve as a unifying language, such merging does not include 'koineization' (Trudgill, 2004). The varieties of NgE have "contributed to the expansion of the range of English [and] have acquired important roles that motivate a *variety shift* among the users of English" (Kachru, 2017, p. 97).

2.2.1.6 The material power of English

A famous remark by many Igbo people, *È jì Ìgbò èjé èbéé?* 'what status can one attain with Igbo?' presents a picture of how they view English as a tool to achieve upward social mobility, economic gain, and social status (Nwaozuzu, 2015). This question is rooted in an ideology that one cannot be successful by knowing how to speak Igbo, or by studying Igbo as a course in the university. Indeed, there is a correlation between the socioeconomic value of a language and positive attitudes towards it as a medium of instruction in school and as one worthy of being competent in (Kamwangamalu & Tovaes, 2016). In my personal communication with one of the professors of Igbo literature, he narrated how people derided him for deciding to study Igbo at the university. He further stated that some people asked him whether students studying English in the university complete it in 4 years, if he will also complete his in 4 years since he is studying what everyone else speaks. Similarly, in his qualitative study on the status of English and ethnic languages in Namibia, Stell (2016) found positive attitudes towards English because of its function in interethnic communication. He found that the respondents prefer English as the MoI because if one is taught in Oshindonga, spoken in the Oshiwambo area, it is difficult to communicate with other ethnic groups whenever the person moves to another province where Oshindonga is not spoken. With respect to Zulu in South Africa, Rudwick and Parmegiani (2013, p. 102) observed a similar situation from the responses of some respondents:

Where would I be employed with my Zulu degree in the world? Maybe in the government, but I don't know of a single department where I can only speak isi Zulu. [...] Zulu is as important as all other languages, but then, with English being the language that you need to succeed as a person, it's better to learn in English.

The above excerpt corroborates Kachru's (2017, p. 97) claim: "the *viability* of a language [is] what one thinks the language (in this case, English) will do for a person, and what others think of a person when he or she uses the language (again, in this case, English)". Against this backdrop, English in Nigeria and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa is seen as a tool for

achieving socioeconomic development. In contrast, indigenous languages are seen as hindrances to socioeconomic growth because of their perceived low value in the linguistic marketplace. English continues to wield power in Nigeria because Nigerians believe it will alleviate their troubles and open a pathway for financial stability (Agbedo, 2019). During colonial times, individuals were motivated to learn English because of the social status of the few elites who worked with the government, a scenario which is demonstrated in Achebe's (1964) *Arrow of God*. While Ezeulu was restricted in his position as the spiritual head of his community, which did not permit him to openly embrace British culture at the expense of his own culture and language, pragmatic needs inspired him to send one of his sons to learn English so that the good things the language brings will not pass by his family.

It is undoubtedly true, then, that “the motivation that individuals and communities demonstrate for English is based on economic and pragmatic opportunities” (Ager, 2001, p. 9). One school of thought (Davies, 2003; Phillipson, 1992) argues that the material power of English has resulted in the endangerment and death of many languages. Adherents of this school of thought have used terms, such as *killer English*, *linguistic imperialism*, *linguicism*, and *inequality*, to describe the adverse effects of English on other languages. Following this line of reasoning, Nigerian languages are viewed as an embodied glory of the past, valueless in the present, and optimistically valuable for the future. What appears to be overlooked is that the present was once a future.

In contrast, in line with grassroots theory (Fishman et al., 1996), Kachru (2017) believes that English does not give itself power; instead, its range and depth of power are products of the support it receives from its promoters and users. In other words, many Nigerian indigenous languages do not lose their material power; their speakers strip them of their power and functions. The vitality enjoyed by the Hausa language results from the positive attitude of its speakers, who do not believe that they need to abandon their language for an alternative – in this case, English. Aboh (2022) argues that instead of the Hausa to socially discriminate against a member of their ethnolinguistic group who does not know how to speak English, they are most likely to ridicule a Hausa person who does not know how to speak Hausa. Mchombo (2014, p. 33) admits that English serves as “the gatekeeper for access to the realms of power and economic advantages” but suggests that the linguistic power of English should not lead to the relegation of African languages.

In summary, a review of the parameters of the power of English shows that the power of English is seen in its increasing number of speakers in Nigeria, both in rural and urban areas. This numerical increase results from the functional power of English in government, education, religion, mass media, and literature. Because of these functions, Nigerians positively evaluate English on the one hand and negatively evaluate Nigerian indigenous languages on the other hand. In addition, those who can speak English ‘correctly’ discriminate against those who cannot. Furthermore, the need to speak English has given rise to different varieties in Nigeria. Scholars (Bamgbose, 1982; Jowitt, 2019) agree that there is a peculiar variety of English spoken in Nigeria, known as NgE, which can be identified based on its distinctive phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discursive features. Finally, English wields power in Nigeria because many Nigerians conceive it as a language for social mobility and economic development. To further understand the attitudinal power of English in Nigeria, the present study explores attitudes towards HE, IE and YE to provide insights into how stereotypes are formed based on one’s perceived English proficiency.

2.2.2 The Nigerian English accent

An accent refers to how individuals or groups within a speech community, social class, or region pronounce words, intonate their speech, and utilise other speech characteristics. Essentially, every speech community, social class, or region has distinct accents (Freynet et al., 2018; Giles, 1970). NgE is an accent or variety of New Englishes that is receiving critical attention. Following Walsh’s (1967) pioneering work on NgE, arguments have been made for and against the existence of NgE. Scholars who argue against the existence of NgE as a legitimate variety of English (e.g., Eyisi, 2003; Vincent, 1974) see it as usage errors and deficits which must be discarded in favour of RP. Jowitt (2019) refers to this group of scholars as rejecters and prescriptivists. Scholars favouring NgE (e.g., Bamgbose, 1982; Jowitt, 2019) perceive it as a legitimate variety of English that needs to be given linguistic attention. Given the burgeoning studies on NgE, it seems that accepters (those favouring NgE as a legitimate variety) outnumber rejecters. Hence, NgE in contemporary times has been seen as a variety of New Englishes because it meets four criteria used to classify New Englishes (Brunner, 2017). First, NgE developed as a result of British colonialism and spread through education. Before the British arrived, English was not spoken in Nigeria. Second, NgE is spoken in multilingual Nigeria in which it co-exists alongside Nigerian languages. Third, it performs formal and official functions in sites of power. Finally, NgE results from

nativisation of English in Nigeria evidenced by the presence of specific phonetic patterns, unique grammatical structure and the presence of local vocabulary items.

NgE can be defined from both broad and narrow perspectives. Broadly speaking, NgE is commonly defined as the English spoken by Nigerians. From a narrow perspective, it refers to “the phonological, grammatical, and lexical properties that distinguish the English used in Nigeria from varieties of English elsewhere” (Jowitt, 2019, p. 1). While acknowledging the existence of NgE, the accepters agree that it is not monolithic, given its different varieties, which has warranted the use of the term Nigerian Englishes (Aboh, 2023b; Ugwuanyi, 2021). Educational level and ethnicity are two factors or parameters that contribute to the emergence of Nigerian Englishes. Studies have shown that the linguistic features of individuals with little or no education differ from those of more educated individuals (Jowitt, 1991). The former’s English is often characterised by high L1 interference (i.e., Nigeria’s indigenous languages). Based on the educational background of speakers, Brosnahan (1958) classified Nigerian Englishes into four levels (I-IV). Level I refers to Nigerian Pidgin, which is prototypically used by individuals with no education, especially market women and menial labourers. It has Standardised NgE as its superstrate and Nigeria’s indigenous languages as its substrate. Brosnahan’s Level II is an English variety spoken by individuals with primary school education while Level III is spoken by secondary school graduates who have a fair degree of communicative fluency. University graduates speak the Level IV variety, which has features similar to those of RP. Awonusi (1986) reclassifies Brosnahan’s (1958) four-level classification using the lectal perspective as: basilect, mesolect, and acrolectal. According to Awonusi (1986), basilectal NgE is spoken by uneducated Nigerians, while the mesolectal variety is spoken by lower-middle-class individuals with minimal education. Acrolectal NgE is close to RP and is spoken by educated Nigerians.

Despite the categorisations above illustrating the different Nigerian Englishes spoken based on individuals’ educational level, they have been criticised for their simplification, given that an individual with a university degree may speak like those with primary education (Banjo, 1996). To address this criticism, Jowitt (2019) proposes two categories: acrolectal/more educated and nonacrolectal/less educated varieties. He notes that these categories are not discrete but on a continuum, given that individuals can progress from nonacrolectal to acrolectal variety. The shortcoming of Jowitt’s (2019) categorisation is that he did not state the minimum education an individual needs to attain to be considered more or less educated. In the present study, an acrolectal NgE is conceptualised as the variety mainly

associated with individuals with a tertiary education degree, whereas a nonacrolectal variety is primarily spoken by those with secondary education or lower based on the findings that there is a correlation between good educational background and English proficiency (Aboh, 2023a). As stated, the acrolectal variety, also called the Standardised NgE, is close to RP in phonological, morphosyntactic, and discourse-pragmatic features. This variety is acceptable in Nigeria's educational, political, media, and literary domains (Kperogi, 2015). The nonacrolectal variety deviates largely from RP and is characterised by observable mother tongue interference.

Another parameter for categorising varieties of English in Nigeria is ethnicity or region. The ethnic parameter refers to the variety of English spoken by different ethnic groups in Nigeria, of which HE, IE, and YE are the major ones. Given the distinct phonological features of Nigeria's indigenous languages, Jowitt (2019) found that L1 phonology impacts English language usage, resulting in different ethnic-based Englishes. These varieties are sometimes classified as Northern English (HE) and Southern English (IE and YE) because of the geographical locations where these varieties are mainly spoken (Ugwuanyi, 2021). The challenge with ethnic-based classification is that since there are hundreds of ethnic groups and languages in Nigeria, and given that many of these languages have similar phonology, it is not always simple to differentiate between their English accents (Jowitt, 2019). However, the distinction between HE, IE, and YE has been possible because of the extent of their linguistic descriptions, given their status as major Nigerian Englishes.

Based on the accepters' conviction regarding the existence of NgE, there has been burgeoning research on NgE phonetics and phonology (e.g., Ekong, 1980; Igboanusi, 2006; Olaniyi & Josiah, 2013; Udofot, 2003; Ugorji, 2010), morphosyntax (e.g., Alo & Mesthrie, 2008; Jibril, 1991; Jowitt, 2019; Werner & Fuchs, 2017) and discourse-pragmatic features (e.g., Unuabonah, 2020, 2022). The phonetics and phonology of NgE are described by highlighting the different realisations of RP phonemes by the three major ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria. This approach is attributed to the idea that the sound systems of these major indigenous languages impact their speakers' use of English. At the acrolectal level, features that mark HE include the mappings of [p] onto [f] as in [pipti] for 'fifty', [b] onto [v] as in [beri] for 'very', [z] onto [ð] as in [ɔza] for 'other' and [ɛ] onto [eɪ] as in [trend] for 'trained'. IE is characterised by realising [nj] as [ɲ] as in [ɲu] for 'new', [eɪ] as [e] as in [trend] for 'trained', and dentalisation of [t] as in [toʔal] for 'total'. YE is characterised by [h] insertion and deletion as in [hɔl] for 'all' and [ɔl] for 'hall'. Its features also include the

realisations of [ɜ] as [ʃ] as in [ɪʒu] for ‘issue’, and [ɜ:] as [a] as in [tam] for ‘term’ (see Igboanusi, 2006; Jowitt, 2019 for a more comprehensive description of these features). These varieties are often used in the media, especially social media videos and pop culture. Although not empirically confirmed, it can be argued that IE and YE varieties are more represented in the media than HE because of the speakers’ dominance in Nigeria’s Afro-music, Nollywood movies and comedies.

Some of the NgE morphosyntactic features include omission of articles as in “Ø majority of people are here”; pluralisation of non-count nouns as in “informations”; alternative use of prepositions as in “congratulations for the victory” and alternative use of words, “bogos” to mean “big”. Discourse pragmatic features include the use of discourse particles such as “abi” (used generally for “isn’t it”) and “o” (for emphasis or mitigation) (see Jowitt, 2019; Unuabonah & Oladipupo, 2018 for a comprehensive description of these features). Studies on the morphosyntactic and discourse-pragmatic features of NgE have tended to provide a general description without elucidating ethnically indexed variational features. This generalised approach is possibly because of the challenge in identifying NgE features peculiar to a particular ethnic group, or the assumption that these features are the same for all ethnic groups. The features described above reflect characteristics that distinguish NgE as a variety of English, rather than those associated with learner English, because they are widely used by the vast majority of Nigerians and accepted in (un)official domains” (Bamgbose, 1998, p. 13).

2.3 Language attitudes and social factors

Language attitude studies that collected participants’ sociodemographic information have found that social factors such as gender, ethnicity, race, occupation, and age may impact the evaluation of language varieties (Hansen Edwards, 2019b; McKenzie & McNeill, 2022; Schluter, 2021). The following subsections review the social factors of gender, religion, education, and ethnicity, as these are the variables analysed in this study.

2.3.1 Language attitudes and gender

Studies on language attitudes and gender fall into two categories. The first category centres on men’s and women’s preferences for either standardised or nonstandardised varieties. The second category examines attitudes towards men’s and women’s speech. Beginning with the first category, consistent findings have revealed that women tend to favour the standardised

variety more than men (e.g., Edwards, 2009; Garrett, 2010; Ladegaard, 1998a, 2000; Talbot, 2010). In response to the claim that men and women speak differently, Ladegaard (1998a, p. 3) argues that the difference is an engineered effort by both genders to make themselves different because “they exist in a context where social differentiation according to gender is salient”. For example, he observed that in a rural community in Denmark, boys prefer to speak the regional dialects of Danish because they want to be close to their family and friends, whereas girls prefer speaking Standard Danish because of how others perceive them, which may reflect their social aspirations. Similarly, in the Hong Kong context, Hansen Edwards (2019b) found that more men than women preferred Hong Kong English, while more women than men preferred American English.

Bouziane’s (2020) study on the attitudes of men ($n = 638$, 43.25%) and women ($n = 837$, 56.75%), who were secondary and university students in Morocco, towards English, Standard Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, Amazigh (a local language), and French showed that girls rated English (52.6%) and French (59.6%) as being very important for social mobility against men’s 49.9% and 50.9% ratings for English and French. However, men evaluated the local languages, Standard Arabic (48.6%), Moroccan Arabic (44%), and Amazigh (12.5%), as very important for interpersonal communication as opposed to women’s ratings of 44, 29.4, and 5.8 percent. Whether there was a significant difference in the ratings across genders was not reported.

In the Danish context, Ladegaard (2000) studied the linguistic behaviour of boys ($n = 64$) and girls ($n = 65$) towards nonstandardised varieties of Danish. He found that boys showed more positive attitudes towards nonstandardised varieties than girls did. It was also found that boys used these varieties more frequently in everyday talk than girls. McKenzie (2010) found a significant difference in Japanese female university students’ ratings of three Inner Circle varieties of English (Glasgow Standard English, Southern United States English and Mid-West United States English) than their male counterparts. There was no significant difference in the ratings for moderately accented and heavily accented Japanese Englishes, although boys rated non-Inner Circle varieties higher than girls did.

In the Nigerian context, Oyebola (2020) assessed the attitudes of 209 students towards American English, British English, Ghanaian English, Jamaican English, and NgE accents. Although the mean ratings of girls on solidarity and status dimensions were consistently

higher than those of boys, there was no significant difference between male and female participants' attitudes towards these accents.

In the UK and Taiwan, Chien (2018) did not find any significant difference in the ratings of the Taiwanese and British men and women of the seven accents included in his study (Australian English, General American English, Standard Southern British English, Indian English, Japanese English, Spanish English, and Taiwanese English). However, he observed that British women (from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) preferred Indian English to Standard Southern British English, while male British participants (from England and Channel Islands) rated the latter more highly than the former. He concluded that this finding contradicts the general notion that women rate a prestigious variety more highly than men do.

Gender attitudinal differences have also been reported from a sociophonetic perspective. In his study of the fronting of the GOOSE vowel in South African English, Mesthrie (2010) found that Black girls imitate White speakers in South Africa in the fronting of the vowel, especially when preceded by /j/, while the female Coloured speakers showed moderate resistance to the fronting of GOOSE /u:/. He concludes, "Black females consistently embrace the elite norms more than Black males or any other group" (p. 28). In another study investigating schwa in deracializing South African Englishes, Mesthrie (2017, p. 315) observed: "women do show a greater investment in new forms of status, whereas men's investment in this regard is mediated by older considerations of solidarity and perhaps language loyalty". Within the Namibian context, Stell (2022) found that non-White women are gradually dropping their ethnic-characterised English variety for an ethnic-neutral variety.

Notwithstanding the agreements in the studies above that women aim for standardised varieties more than men, de Kadt (2002) observed that in a traditional rural setting in Zulu, an ethnolinguistic group in South Africa, women are seen as custodians of ethnic culture and are discouraged from being fluent in English. One of her respondents remarked:

For a male, it is important to be proficient in English, in that this will give him increased status and furthermore improve his chances in the job market. His proficiency in English is one sign of his success as a male in the community. Females must therefore guard against being too proficient in English, lest they be seen to encroach on male identities. Zulu remains central to female identities, in that women are required to transmit cultural values to children. Retention of Zulu is more important for their identity than developing skills in English (de Kadt, 2002, p. 88).

A similar situation was reported by Ullrich (1992), in which women in Totagadde village in Karnataka, India, were charged with maintaining and transmitting the home language (Havyaka) during child socialisation.

Similarly, Sadiqi (2003) found that in Morocco, men are more fluent in Standard Arabic than women because women in the Arab Islamic World have restricted access to literacy, law, and politics, whereas men dominate in these areas. The marginalisation of women in politics and the confinement of women's "religious space" contribute to them being less proficient in Standard Arabic. Moreover, owing to their literacy restrictions, they cannot access a good education that will allow them to improve their competence in Standard Arabic (Sadiqi, 2003). This situation supports Valentine's (2006, p. 570) position that "gendering language is one way of perpetuating power hierarchies in world societies and of contributing to certain types of inequality".

The second category of studies on language attitudes and gender examines attitudes towards men's and women's speech. Despite women's fluency in the standardised variety compared to men, it has been observed that "men dominate conversations, men interrupt women more than women do men, women provide more conversational feedback than [sic] men – that is, they make more encouraging and facilitating remarks during exchanges" (Edwards, 2009, p. 26), not because of gender differences at the linguistic level but because of (variations in) power dynamics (Cameron, 1995). This variation in power results in regulating women's speech, where they are required to be polite and criticised for using profanity and obscenity in their speech (Edwards, 2009). Thus, a politics of politeness appears to be at play because it is not about what is said but who said it (Peterson, 2020).

Significant research findings on language attitudes and gender have shown that women's speech is rated more negatively than men's speech (Kramer, 1974; Nelson et al., 2016). In a study conducted by Kramer (1974, p. 626), she found that women's speech was described as "stupid, naïve, gossipy, emotional, passive, confused, concerned, insipid, ineffective and also restricted", whereas men's speech was described as thoughtful, succinct and dealing with pertinent issues. Nelson et al. (2016) corroborated Kramer's study in their study on the attitudes towards North American- vs Spanish-accented English. They found that female speakers were judged more negatively than male speakers based on recorded speech. Regarding those who showed more bias towards accents, Nelson et al. (2016) found that male participants showed increased bias towards Spanish accents. However, in their study of

perceptions of interactive voice systems, Moran et al. (2018) found that women's voices were rated as more pleasant than those of men.

A question yet to be answered by research in the Nigerian context is whether gender influences attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes, and whether there is a difference in the ratings of male and female speakers. This study addresses this gap in the literature on language attitudes and gender in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context by examining the attitudes of male and female participants to male and female speakers used as voice stimuli in a language attitude experiment. The findings will support, or refute, the notion that women tend to favour varieties associated with higher status compared to men.

2.3.2 Language attitudes and religion

While several language attitude studies have included social variables such as gender, occupation, ethnicity/race, regional provenance, age, and social class, there is a paucity of research on the effect of religion as a sociolinguistic variable in evaluating language varieties. The only study found during the writing of this research was Yilmaz (2020), who explored the effect of religion on the evaluation of Bohtan Kurdish (high prestige and associated with the Sunnis) and Maraş Kurmanji (low prestige and associated with the Alevis) among Turkish Kurds in the UK. The distinction between the Sunnis and Alevis is both ethnic and religious. The Alevis are stereotyped as atheists and undergo religious discrimination by the Sunni ethno-religious group, who view the Alevis as practising a different kind of Islam. The Sunnis construct themselves as 'true' followers of Islam and consider their variety of Kurdish (Bohtan Kurdish, BHKr) as more prestigious than Maraş Kurmanji (MRKr).

Using the matched-guise technique, Yilmaz (2020) played recordings of two speakers (a male and a female) who told a children's story in both BHKr and MRKr varieties to 84 Turkish Kurds and asked them to rate the voices on solidarity (politeness, sense of humour, warmth, likeability, and sociability) and status (intelligence, dependability, ambition; leadership qualities and intelligibility) using a 5-point Likert scale. After rating the speakers, participants were asked to state where they thought the speaker was from and whether they thought the speaker was Alevi or Sunni. The findings showed that the BHKr variety generally received more favourable ratings than the MRKr variety. The results demonstrated that BHKr voices were evaluated as religious, whereas MRKr voices were identified as non-religious. Responses to the open-ended question eliciting whether the speaker was Alevi or Sunni revealed that both MRKr voices and the BHKr female voice were identified as Alevi,

whereas the BHKr male speaker was identified as Sunni. The results showed how regional and religious identities impact the evaluation of language varieties, thereby exemplifying Germanos and Miller's (2015) conclusion that religious affiliation on its own is not a critical factor in causing linguistic variation and that its impact is usually intertwined with other social factors.

Yilmaz's (2020) study provides evidence that there is a linguistic variety, or linguistic features, that index(es) individuals from a particular religious group, a phenomenon which has been conceptualised as 'religiolect' (Hary & Wein, 2013). They define 'religiolect' as "a spoken and/or written language variety employed by a religious (or secularised) community, typically of a specific region" (p. 85). Using Jewish as an example, Hary and Wein (2013) identify ten features characterising Jewish religiolects at the phonological, lexical, and discourse levels. Similarly, Baker-Smemoe and Bowie (2009) compared the production of vowel contrasts (*hot-caught*, *pin-pen*, *bag-beg*, *fail-fell*, and *pool-pull-pole*) by Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) and non-Mormons in Utah County, USA. Based on the judgments of vowel-pair contrasts produced by 28 participants (14 Mormons and 14 non-Mormons) by three raters unfamiliar with Utah English, the findings showed evidence of differences between Mormons' and non-Mormons' linguistic features. Taking this research further, Baker-Smemoe and Bowie (2015) also found that Mormons who are more active in church used significantly more standardised forms compared to those who are less active. They noted that the linguistic difference between active and inactive Mormons results from post-adolescent language change, where persons who used to be active become inactive as they grow older (see also Cox & Docherty, 2024 for a similar argument). However, one question that needs to be addressed is whether it is fair to conclude that there is a difference between the linguistic behaviour of the two groups based on (in)activeness in religion alone, without considering other factors such as level of education and workplace.

Understanding the relationship between religion and language has been one of the preoccupations of studies in the sociology of language and religion (see Pihlaja & Ringrow, 2024, for recent developments in this area of research). One of the earliest efforts to conceptualise and establish a foundation in this area of research is Omoniyi and Fishman's (2006) edited volume, *Explorations in the Sociology of Language and Religion*, which featured chapters bordering on the effects of language and religion on each other. Fishman (2006) proposed a decalogue of principles for a sociology of language and religion. In one of the principles, which is related to the present study, Fishman (2006) notes that the language

or variety of religion can exist “both intra-societally and inter-societally and may vary over time” (p. 15). This implies that we may see variations among Hausa Muslims at the intra-societal level, and between Hausa and Yoruba Muslims at the inter-societal level. At the level of religious community, Fishman (2006) asserts that multiple religious varieties may co-exist within the same religious community, given the multiethnic and linguistic backgrounds of its members. These intra-religious differences have also been explained using Milroy’s (1987) social networks theory, which argues that groups or communities with which people associate can bring about linguistic changes and differences. In other words, people tend to speak like those around them. For instance, Baker-Smemoe and Bowie (2015) note that the difference between the linguistic behaviour of active and inactive Mormons is because the former has developed a similar linguistic feature given the social network they have created due to the high frequency of their social interactions. However, the focus of the present study is on the differences in English language use across religious groups (Christians and Muslims), and not within a religious group.

There are two reasons why religion is an important variable to explore in sociolinguistic studies and language attitude research, particularly in Nigeria. First is its role as a major factor “in the struggle for power, influence and the allocation of resources” (Wolf, 2006, p. 55). Given the emphasis placed on religion in virtually all domains of life (even where it is not needed), Nigerians and other Africans have been described as being “notoriously religious” (Mbiti, 1969, p. 1). Thus, we may expect to see attitudes towards a variety based on the perceived religion of the speaker(s). This aligns with Baker-Smemoe and Bowie’s (2009) suggestion that religion should be explored as a variable in speech communities where religion is salient and where different religious groups co-exist. Second is the linguistic consequences of the dominance of Islam in northern Nigeria and Christianity in southern Nigeria, which have resulted in a distinction between the variety of English used by Muslims and Christians. Northerners’ allegiance to Islam and Arabic has been explained as the basis for their disloyalty towards English and the reason for the late establishment of Western-based schools in the North compared to the Southerners who have strong loyalty towards English and had early exposure to Western education (Aboh, 2023b; Jibril, 1986). Ferguson (1982, p. 103) notes that most religious groups respect the founder’s language (or the language of those who introduced the religion to them) and that “all religious belief systems include some beliefs about language.” Hence, the English language use of Christians and Muslims and the evaluative reactions towards these religious-based English varieties need to

be studied to contribute to the call for the inclusion of religion as a variable in sociolinguistic studies (Yaeger-Dror, 2014, 2015). Additionally, Mazrui (2004, p. 75) reported that the Hausa Muslims he has encountered in the USA and Africa remark that “they are ‘better’ speakers of English than members of other ethnic groups in their respective nation-states of Nigeria and Kenya.” This assertion needs to be empirically investigated to determine its validity and generalisability; hence, the inclusion of religion as a social variable to be explored in this study.

2.3.3 Ethnic categorisation and evaluations

Following the call to include a recognition item in matched- and verbal-guise studies (Preston, 1989), several language attitude studies have asked participants to indicate the nationality or ethnicity of the speakers they heard. According to Garrett et al. (2003: 208):

Recognition can be construed as the cognitive mapping of audible speech-features (or stylistic configurations of features in combination) onto individuals’ records of the usage norms of particular communities. By this account, ‘recognizing a dialect’ involves identifying values of variable features and then succeeding or failing to make the appropriate mapping.

This position corroborates Giles’ (1979) view that there are linguistic features that characterise the language use of a particular ethnic or social group. In accent recognition tasks, these ethnicity markers of speech may or may not be accurately identified by participants. The above quote also indicates that recognition precedes ethnic categorisation. Therefore, it can be argued that ethnic categorisation is a three-stage process involving the perception of voice stimuli, (mis)recognition of speech features, and categorisation of the speaker into an ethnic or social group.

Research incorporating speaker recognition and ethnic categorisation revealed no perfectly accurate identification and categorisation of speakers’ accents. For example, in Garrett et al.’s (2003) study of language attitudes in Wales, the most accurate identification was an RP speaker (85%), whereas the lowest was for Valleys and North-West accents (26%). The authors argued that age and the level of geographical mobility are crucial in accurately recognising varieties. In their study of Americans’ attitudes towards ten English varieties, Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2022a) found that the Standard American English speaker received the highest recognition rate (94.3%), whereas the Farsi-accented speaker received

the lowest recognition rate (6.1%). Similarly, Oyebola (2020) asked 209 Nigerian participants to identify the nationality of two NgE speakers and one speaker each of American, British, Ghanaian, and Jamaican English varieties. He found that the highest recognition rate was for the first NgE speaker (64.8%), whereas the lowest was for the Jamaican English speaker (20.2%). Other studies have also identified the absence of a 100% correct identification and categorisation rate of speakers into their ethnic or social groups (Chien, 2018; Hansen Edwards, 2019a; Lindemann, 2003; McKenzie, 2010; Zhang, 2010).

A range of factors may affect participants' 'imperfect' recognition of speakers' ethnicity or nationality. The first factor is perhaps due to the complex nature of speech recognition and ethnic categorisation (Delia, 1974; Garrett et al., 2003: 198). Second, the misrecognition of varieties may result from participants' insufficient experience and awareness of the varieties or outgroup norms (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a; Garrett et al., 2003). Third, it is possibly due to participants' attempt to categorise foreign-accented speakers into specific foreign groups or countries (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a).

Despite this lack of 'perfect' recognition, studies have shown that participants recognise speakers of their own variety more than those of outgroup varieties (McKenzie, 2010; Zhang, 2010). In situations where participants misrecognise their own variety, such misrecognitions might be due to "inadequate cognitive representation (or awareness) of ingroup speech norms" (Garrett et al., 2003:201). It has also been observed that the (mis)identification of accents does not significantly impact or invalidate respondents' evaluations (Lindemann, 2003; Milroy & McClenaghan, 1977; Oyebola, 2020). Delia (1974) found that if the speakers' accents differ from those of the participants, it reduces cognitive differentiation and increases stereotypes among the participants, regardless of their level of cognitive complexity. This position implies that participants have an idea of the linguistic features of (non)prestigious varieties, and although they did not accurately categorise them into the exact (non)prestigious accents, they were able to evaluate them based on popular stereotypes. For instance, Oyebola (2020) found no significant difference between the ratings of participants who correctly identified speakers' ethnic nationality and those who did not. However, studies have found a significant effect of accurate recognition of speaker origin on evaluation (Chien, 2018; Yook & Lindemann, 2013; Zhang, 2010). For example, Chien (2018) found that the Spanish-English bilingual speaker in his study received higher solidarity ratings from those who correctly identified his origin than those who did not. The reason for this inconsistency in variety recognition research remains an important question for future research.

In addition to the discussion on (mis)recognition of language varieties, ethnic categorisation is a social cognitive process involving membership categorisation and intergroup identity formation. Accent variation is closely connected to social differences, meaning that accents can indicate a speaker's social identity, such as ethnicity or nationality (Lippi-Green, 2012). In other words, stereotypes and ingroup identity mediate language evaluations (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a; Ryan, 1983). As Garrett et al. (2003: 208) conclude, "The apparently simple task of giving a community label to a particular speaker may well have tapped into these group-level cognitions and influenced the frequencies with which particular speakers were 'recognized' as members of ingroup and outgroup communities." Within the Inner Circle, participants tend to rate their own variety more favourably on both status and solidarity dimensions than the outgroup, whereas in several Outer and Expanding Circle contexts such as Nigeria and Taiwan, participants often rate the exonormative varieties more favourably than their own variety according to status dimensions (Chien, 2018; Ugwuanyi & Oyebola, 2022).

However, from a raciolinguistic perspective, studies have shown that speakers of Inner Circle varieties tend to negatively evaluate an Inner Circle variety when that variety is presented with the faces of speakers of racialised and stigmatised varieties. For instance, in their study involving listeners' (whose dominant language was American English) perception of American, British and Indian English, Kutlu et al. (2022) found that speakers of American English were given lower intelligibility ratings and judged to have heavier accents when presented with South Asian faces. However, they were given higher intelligibility scores and judged to have less accented speech when paired with White faces. This finding demonstrates how ideologies about language and race can impact the evaluation of language varieties and sustain the racialisation of speakers of nonstandardised varieties (Rosa, 2016). Therefore, in a multiethnic country like Nigeria (with over 250 ethnic groups), we may expect participants' and speakers' ethnic identity to have significant effects on the recognition and evaluation of Nigerian Englishes. Thus, the rationale for the inclusion of ethnicity as a social variable explored in this study.

2.4 Identity and stereotypes

This section of the literature review begins with a broad review of language and identity and proceeds to a discussion of Nigerian cultural identity. It concludes by reviewing stereotypes,

which is a crucial concept for understanding the evaluation of varieties and members of different social groups.

2.4.1 Language and (cultural) identity

Language does not exist in a vacuum; instead, it is a site for contesting social affiliation and belonging. Hence, for a proper understanding of language to be attained, it needs to be examined alongside other social phenomena, such as identity. Identity is a nebulous term defined from different perspectives by scholars in anthropology, geography, history, philosophy, linguistics, political science, sociology, and literature (Edwards, 2009; Jenkins, 2014). According to Hall (1996), identity is the juncture, the point of intersection, between discourses and practices that seek to address and position us as social subjects within specific discourses and the mechanisms that shape subjectivities, constructing us as subjects that can be addressed. This implies that both internal and external factors determine identity. The internal factor comprises what individuals think of themselves, the discourses they use to describe themselves, and their actions, whereas the external factor concerns how people construct others (non)discursively. Peterson (2020) argues that identity could be seen as something individuals are born with and which could be recreated based on what they embrace and a social group they want their behaviours to index. It can then be argued that identity is formed during childhood and can be negotiated and reconstructed during different stages of human development. However, this conceptualisation of identity as innate is against the social constructivist position, which argues that identity is fluid, multiple and performative.

A distinction is made between personal and social or systemic identities. Personal identity or one's personality traits is "the summary statement of all our individual traits, characteristics, and dispositions; it defines the uniqueness of each human being" (Edwards, 2009, p. 19). This suggests that there are 'parametric' and 'principle' dimensions of identity, where the principle involves the general characteristics of a social group, and the parametric is the different shades in which members of the social group manifest such general characteristics. Language also indexes personal and social identity.

At the personal level, linguists talk about idiolect, which is the linguistic behaviour of a particular individual. With this, an individual can be identified by his/her idiosyncratic linguistic behaviour, such as neologisms, pronunciation patterns, and grammatical constructions. Edwards (2009) argues that idiolectal usage is also a part of the social

phenomenon because its understanding relies on other individuals. At the group level, it becomes clearer to differentiate one social group or community from another because of the noticeable linguistic differences between them. Such linguistic differences, together with other social practices, including marriage and funeral rites, dressing, food, music, film, and dance, are the basis for classifying groups of people into ethnicities, races, and nations. In sum, Edwards (2009, p. 154) posits that perception is not solely based on sensory input, but also on our interpretation of that input, which is influenced by our accumulated social knowledge. Perception acts as a filter for sensory data, which are culturally specific and personalised to varying degrees within social groups. Each individual's set of perceptual spectacles is unique because of their accumulated experiences. However, there are also shared social perceptions among group members, which can be viewed as stereotypes or a reflection of culture itself. This submission shows that identity and ethnicity are subjective phenomena that can yield different interpretations based on individuals' perceptions, which could be argued to be more plastic than solid (Phillips, 2007), although with some restrictions to their plasticity (Jenkins, 1997).

Another critical issue raised in the discussion of language and identity is more like the chicken and egg debate, which can be interpreted as top-down or bottom-up orientations. A top-down orientation views social or group identity as a pool from which personal identity is drawn. In other words, social identity does not prohibit or suffocate the emergence of idiosyncrasies. Bourdieu (1990) subscribes to this position in his theorisation of habitus when he asserts that people in the same group have a similar way of being but also have their own unique traits that reflect their personal experiences within the group. These traits are influenced by a group's social environment and can differ from person to person. Bourdieu acknowledges that there is no complete homogeneity. Every homogenous group has cases of individual heterogeneity drawn from the group at large. Thus, what makes homogeneity more dominant than the differences within is that what binds the group together is greater than its internal differences.

On the other hand, the bottom-up orientation views identity as an aggregate of personal identity because "a computation of all the possible combinations and permutations of *group* allegiances and social circumstances would essentially return us to the *personal* level of idiolect" (Edwards, 2009, pp. 21–22). This position contradicts the tenets of behaviourism, which argues that individuals' actions index the social group to which they belong. It also negates the African philosophy of Ubuntu, which translates as "I am because we are", where

an authentic human being is not an isolated entity but exists within a broader and more meaningful network of relationships, communities, societies, environments, and spiritual dimensions (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2020).

Thus, it is more common to think of personal identity as being conditioned by social identity than the other way round. As an aspect of social identity, culture is a widely contested term because of its multifaceted fuzziness. It is generally regarded as a ‘complex whole’ including shared customs, morals, beliefs, knowledge, law, and arts, but also contested sites of struggle between invested powers (Ladegaard, 2024). There are rigid and flexible definitions of culture. A rigid definition of cultural identity views it as unchanging, whereas a fluid definition views it as flexible and fluctuating (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Edwards (2009) argues that cultural identity can vary at different points in an individual’s life, especially as one crosses different ethnonational borders (Barth, 1969). Migration is one of the factors contributing to cultural change. Within the African context, the concept that comes to mind here is Afropolitanism, a variant of critical cosmopolitanism that emphasises the change that stems from the influx of external elements into the internal (Mignolo, 2000). As individuals migrate, they embrace the practices in their new environment to form a ‘multicultural hybrid’, which can be characterised by complex “patterns of mixing, blending, combining and then falling apart” (Ekotto & Harrow, 2015, p. 8). Similarly, Mbembe (2007) argues that there is no cultural puritanism because there is a constant movement and mixing of people with different ideologies and beliefs, making it difficult to clearly explain the concept of nativism (Pahl, 2016).

Given the social constructivist approach taken in the present study, culture refers to the norms and behaviours mainly associated with particular groups of people. I have used the word ‘mainly’ to acknowledge the potential fluidity of norms associated with any social group while still emphasising that certain prototypical norms tend to predominate for a given group. Nigeria, for example, is a highly multicultural country with at least 250 ethnic groups. Each cultural group has unique norms and this uniqueness has resulted in descriptions such as Hausa/Igbo/Yoruba movies, food, modes of fashion, and music. Hausa/Igbo/Yoruba movies and music are unique, given the use of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba languages, and the creation of a plot to reflect the history, knowledge, and norms of the respective groups (for movies) and the use of indigenous musical instruments and beats. Foods such as *ewa agoyin*, *two shinkafa*, and *abacha* are peculiar to the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo cultures. Igbo people are known for their head of leopard-themed attire, the Hausa are known for their kaftan-style

gowns (*babban riga*), and the Yoruba are known for their wide-sleeved robe (*agbada*) and wide-sleeved dress (*buba*) (Falola, 2001; Falola et al., 2018). Attitudes towards these aspects of culture may predict attitudes towards the heritage language and English variety of a given culture.

Concerning culture and language attitudes, studies have explored the relationship between knowledge of the culture of the target linguistic group and attitudes towards their linguistic behaviour. Bradac and Giles (1991) hypothesised that due to the rise of American culture in Scandinavia through different media outlets such as films, fashion and music, students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) would show more positive attitudes towards SAE than towards Received Pronunciation (RP) and that they would be more willing to learn SAE than RP. However, the findings of Ladegaard and Sachdev's (2006) study revealed that although EFL students in the Scandinavian context reported that they liked American culture, they did not aim to speak or learn SAE. This is also similar to the study of Igboanusi (2003), who found that many Nigerians show positive attitudes towards SAE but prefer not to learn SAE over RP in school. Muñoz (2020) revealed that European Spanish speakers showed positive attitudes towards the culture of Andalusian Spanish but negative attitudes towards the dialect of Andalusian Spanish, which suggests an asymmetry between attitudes towards culture and language.

Lacking in the literature on cultural identity and language attitudes is a test of the language-culture discrepancy/consonance hypothesis (Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006) in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context (see section 3.1 for a review of this hypothesis). Testing this hypothesis will improve our understanding of the relationship between attitudes towards culture and language. In addition, it will reveal the role of culture and language in stereotype formation among Nigerians.

2.4.2 Stereotypes

Stereotypes represent culturally defined positive and negative pictures in our heads, which serve as a cognitive shortcut for representing members of a social, cultural, or political group (Lippmann, 1922). In other words, stereotypes are culturally shared and often learned during socialisation and publicised by the media (Ladegaard, 2020). In her dissociation model of stereotypes, Devine (1989) argues that individuals, as members of society, are exposed to social stereotypes, which are subsequently internalised to the point that they become automatically associated with the group they represent. Thus, stereotypes reflect ideological

distinctions within a society and serve as a strategy to legitimise existing social and power relations in a society (Jost & Banaji, 1994). As a cognitive shortcut mechanism, Allport (1954) argues that associating a particular trait with every group member saves people the stress of dealing with group members as individuals. This association often contains elements of false information about ‘reality’ (Schaff, 1980). The extent to which this invocation of false information and negative/positive pictures is dependent on the individuals’ level of prejudice against the target group. On the one hand, high-prejudice people will consistently activate mainly negative information about the target group, while low-prejudice people will activate a mixture of positive and negative information, on the other hand (Augoustinos et al., 2014). In most cases, low-prejudice individuals are those whom education has made aware of alternative perspectives and increased their intercultural competence (Ladegaard, 2020).

There are two major approaches to studying stereotypes: cognitive and discursive psychology. Cognitive psychologists see stereotypes as static and existing in individuals’ cognition, which are activated when stereotype-related information is presented to (stereotypical) individuals. Given that stereotypes are constructed as schemas in cognitive psychology, the emphasis is not on the content of a stereotype, but on the stimuli that activate stereotypes and how this activation impacts subsequent information processing and judgments (Augoustinos et al., 2014). The discursive approach, particularly discursive psychology, argues that stereotypes are discursively constructed and can change in different rhetorical structures of interaction. Discursive psychologists maintain that stereotypes are not a psychological state but a phenomenon that participants orient to in interaction as a structural feature of a society that highlights group dominance (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). They further argue that it is through everyday formal and informal talk that issues such as power relations, exploitation, and dominance are reproduced and reinforced. Commenting on this distinction between cognitive and discursive psychology perspectives on stereotypes, Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 36) note that cognitive theories of stereotypes “presume that people carry around these biased images and reproduce them on demand, while discourse analysts have noted how the same person can produce quite different stereotypical categorizations depending on the demands of the situation.”

While these approaches have independently provided an understanding of stereotypes, there is a need for an eclectic approach that combines the ideas in both approaches. Although it is rational to focus only on what participants orient to in interactions, it would also be analytically enriching to refer to the social, cognitive, and historical factors that may have

given rise to such orientations. This eclectic approach has been adopted by Ladegaard (2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2020) in his studies on stereotypes in the Hong Kong context. These studies highlight how individuals draw on categorisation, polarisation, personal experience, and historical issues to give accounts of individuals and groups in educational and workplace settings. The present study adopts this eclectic approach and focuses on the stereotypes participants orient to in their discussions of the three Nigerian Englishes and, their stereotypes of people from Nigeria's three major ethnolinguistic groups. These orientations are supported with references to their interactional and broader sociohistorical contexts.

There are several positive and negative stereotypes of all ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria. Given that the scope of this study is on the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, I will limit my discussion of ethnic stereotypes to these groups. According to Ogionwo (1980), the Hausa ethnolinguistic group is positively stereotyped for its sagacity in politics, generosity, and bravery. Aboh (2019) remarks that the negative stereotypes about the Hausa people include their indifference to Western education, which has led non-Hausa people to refer to them as *Aboki*. *Aboki* is an Hausa word for 'friend' but has been pejorated to mean an illiterate or fool. The Hausa people's perceived indifference to education has been alleged to be the reason for the high number of *almajiris* (a derogatory term used to refer to young children from poor homes whose parents send them to beg on the streets and are potentially used to perpetrate violence). They are also negatively stereotyped as aggressive and inhumane, especially to non-Hausa people and non-Muslims (Ayansola, 2021).

According to Onyemechalu and Ejiofor (2023), the Igbo are positively stereotyped as being industrious and dogged. Their doggedness is often attributed to their ability to recover after the 1967-1970 Nigeria-Biafra War, which led to the death of over three million Igbo people, loss of property, and their marginalisation in Nigerian politics. They are considered industrious because of their entrepreneurship excellence and communal wealth creation through the apprenticeship system (Obaeko & Adeola, 2021). Conversely, they are negatively stereotyped as a group that engages in 'money ritual' (killing someone for money) and their disrespect to elders. The Yoruba are positively stereotyped for their positive attitudes towards education, wisdom, and emphasis on respecting older people (Odebunmi, 2015). However, negative stereotypes about them include laziness, dirtiness, and deceit (Aboh, 2019). Ogionwo (1980, p. 101) provides a comprehensive list of stereotypes associated with the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, which include the ones stated above. Unsurprisingly, Ogionwo's (1980) list of stereotypes associated with these groups are obtainable today, corroborating the

idea that stereotypes about a group are intergenerationally transferred through socialisation (Ladegaard, 2020). Given this overview of ethnic stereotypes in Nigeria, I explore how these stereotypes, as well as others that participants orient to, are discursively constructed in focus groups. The aim is to understand the functions of these stereotypes in discourse and how participants vary their constructions of both positive and negative ethnic stereotypes.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter explored various topics in language attitudes and the sociolinguistics of English in Nigeria. The chapter argued that language attitude is a multidimensional construct best understood using data triangulation. It highlighted some critical issues in language attitude, cultural identity, and stereotype research and identified gaps in the literature. While few previous language attitude studies in Nigeria have examined NgE relative to other (non-) Inner Circle varieties (Oyebola, 2020; Williams, 1983), there appears to be no known large-scale study on attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes. More so, existing studies have explored attitudes towards NgE from the educational dimension (basilect, mesolect, and acrolect) but not from the ethnic dimension, which the present study does. The present study addresses this research gap and those outlined in Section 1.3. Approaching attitudes towards NgE from an ethnic perspective may provide more insights into whether ethnic markers of NgE affect participants' attitudes. Other social variables such as gender and religion are also considered. The next chapter provides the theoretical framework of this study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter reviews the following theoretical and analytical frameworks: the language-culture discrepancy/consonance hypothesis, social identity theory, discursive psychology, and ethnolinguistic vitality, which have guided data collection, analysis, and discussion of results. The language-culture discrepancy/consonance hypothesis is relevant for this study because it is used to explain the relationship between attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents and the cultures of their speakers. One of the hypotheses in this study is to test whether participants who favourably evaluated a variety did the same for the culture of the speakers of that variety. Social identity theory applies to this study as it sheds light on how participants construct members of the ingroup on the one hand, and members of the outgroup, on the other hand. Discursive psychology is a valuable discourse analytical framework for analysing how psychological constructs (e.g., attitudes and stereotypes) are constructed and negotiated in interactions such as the focus group discussions used in the present study. Finally, ethnolinguistic vitality theory explains the influence of a variety's vitality on the extent to which it is (un)favourably evaluated. A review of these theoretical and analytical approaches is taken in turn.

3.1 The language-culture discrepancy/consonance hypothesis

Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006) proposed the language-culture discrepancy and language-culture consonance hypotheses. This hypothesis is based on findings from language attitude studies that explored whether there is a direct relationship between positive attitudes towards culture and positive attitudes towards the variety/accents associated with speakers' culture (Giles & Coupland, 1991). The language-culture consonance hypothesis is supported when individuals express positive attitudes towards a particular language, dialect, or accent because they are also attracted to the speakers' culture. The language-discrepancy hypothesis, on the other hand, argues that there is no direct relationship between attitudes towards language and the culture associated with the speakers of that language. This implies that one may like people but not like their accent/variety, or prefer their speech variety but not their culture. This hypothesis is in line with the findings from Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2001, p. 152) study, where one of the participants said: "Although I really like the Germans, I simply can't get to grips with the language because I don't like its sound and its structure."

The findings from Ladegaard and Sachdev's (2006) research support the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis more than the language-culture consonance hypothesis because

almost 60% of the participants indicated that they like the American culture but not an American accent. One aspect of the relationship between attitudes towards language and culture that was not captured by the two hypothesis is a situation in which participants demonstrate both negative attitudes towards language and culture. The present study extends this hypothesis by assessing whether participants demonstrated negative attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents, and the culture of their speakers. In Nigeria, Yoruba culture emphasises respect and regard for African traditional religion. Igbo culture promotes wealth creation through apprenticeships and endorses a democratic form of leadership (Nwala, 1985). Hausa culture encourages helping others and allows for polygamy and early marriage (Adejo & Ikpanor, 2016). The present study draws on these two hypotheses to explore whether participants' preference for the culture of speakers of HE, IE, and YE accents correlates with their preference for the accents in question. A detailed examination of the available literature shows that no study has tested this hypothesis in another sociolinguistic context. Testing the hypothesis in the Nigerian context advances our understanding of the relationship between attitudes towards a group's variety and its culture.

3.2 Social identity theory

The social identity theory (SIT) of intergroup behaviour propounded by Tajfel and Turner (1986) hinges on three theoretical principles. First, individuals engage in categorisation by referring to themselves as members of a particular group (ingroup) as opposed to another group (outgroup) with which we compare. This self-categorisation has cognitive consequences, as it spurs individuals to maintain a positive social identity, resulting in an accentuation effect. The accentuation effect states that when individuals or entities are categorised, similarities among the members of a particular category are exaggerated, making them appear greater than they actually are, and the perceived differences between individuals or entities belonging to different categories are also exaggerated, making them seem greater than they truly are (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Second, positive comparisons between the ingroup and some relevant outgroups constitute a significant component of positive social identity and self-enhancement; the ingroup must be seen as positively differentiating itself from relevant outgroups. Before individuals compare their ingroup to an outgroup, they must resolve the problem of referent selection, where they decide which outgroup out of the available options would be chosen as the comparison other. They must also resolve the problem of dimension selection by determining on which dimension(s) (aspects of the outgroup's behaviour or identity) the comparison would be made (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Third, when social identity is unsatisfactory, people will either try to leave their current group and join one that is more positively distinct, or they will try to improve upon their current group's positive distinction, or they will seek new bases for comparison. These principles are based on the assumption that individuals accept their ingroup membership and strive to create a positive image of themselves (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16).

Tajfel (1974) defines social identity as how individuals perceive themselves based on their association with one or more social groups and the emotions that come with that affiliation. Intergroup behaviour refers to actions exhibited by an individual or a group of individuals, which are rooted in their identification of themselves and others as being part of distinct social categories (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social categories are products of the psychological process responsible for categorisations into ethnicities, races, social classes, professional groups, and religious affiliations, among others. With respect to language attitudes, the main focus of social identity is to elucidate people's intergroup views towards speakers of languages who have an accent similar to their own group (ingroup identity), and those who do not (outgroup identity) (Tajfel, 1974).

Tajfel and Turner (1986) posit that dissatisfaction with one's current identity can motivate a process of identity change. This is often observed in cases where individuals have been marginalised or discriminated against because of how they speak or act. This discrimination may lead to three situations. First, an individual may wish for his/her variety to be more similar to that of the outgroup, especially when the outgroup's variety is perceived to be 'superior' or 'better' (Tajfel, 1974). Second, individuals may aim to belong to the dominant group by imitating their linguistic behaviour, mode of fashion, and other identity labels that may suggest that they belong to the group. Third, individuals who cannot handle the psychological implications of discrimination may take drastic action. For instance, Parveen (2020) reported cases in university settings where students committed suicide because they could not handle discrimination because of how they speak. Linguistic discrimination intersects with "other systemic forms of oppression, including xenophobia, racism, and classism" (Orelus, 2023, p. 17).

One of the issues discussed in SIT is the role of perceived borders in intergroup classification. Tajfel (1978) argues that the sense of group identity is facilitated by the existence of borders that delineate one group from the other. This means that a social identity is clearly formed once a border can be observed or created. However, Barth (1969) argues

that group identity is not a product but a negotiated and constructed process as individuals develop a high level of interrelationships and begin to coalesce. A mediating perspective sees social identity as “both symbolic and spatial, suggesting a correlation between ethnicity as a social construct and geopolitical demarcations” (Okolie, 2021, p. 503). In Nigeria, the geopolitical demarcations are clearly marked, but the bordering of social identity is constantly contested, which has resulted in *the* Nigerian identity being described as the “mistake of 1914” and “Nigeria as a mere geographical expression” (Agbedo, 2019, p. 204). The description of “Nigeria as a mere geographical expression” is because of the “complex, shifting and entangled nature of borders in Africa – borders which came about as a result of colonialism – and are marked by social and cultural distinctions such as language, ethnicity, and religion” (Okolie, 2021, p. 504). This shows that spatial bordering is insufficient to delineate social identity. Identity can be ascertained if the psychological border is in sync with the spatial border.

In this thesis, the analyses of ethnic categorisation, effects of social variables on attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes, and the discursive construction of speakers of these varieties in focus groups are informed by SIT in that they focus on how groups construct a social identity for their members, which is used as a criterion for evaluating the outgroup. Therefore, this study aims to adopt SIT to explain attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE spoken by the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba ethnic groups in Nigeria.

3.3 Ethnolinguistic vitality theory

Giles et al. (1977, p. 308) proposed ethnolinguistic vitality theory (hereafter, EVT) and defined it as “that which makes a group behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations”. This theory has inspired over 2,000 published studies on the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups (Smith et al., 2018). According to Yagmur et al. (1999), the goal of the ethnolinguistic vitality model is to provide a framework for the role of socio-structural variables in intergroup relations, cross-cultural communication, second language learning, mother tongue maintenance, language shift, and language loss. An ethnolinguistic group’s vitality makes a group likely to function as a distinctive and dynamic collective unit in intergroup interactions (Giles et al., 1977). This suggests that the survival and vigour of a group are inversely correlated. Emenanjo (2010) states that a group’s language vitality can be positive or negative. He argues that language empowerment, language maintenance, language revitalisation, language development, text development, and capacity building are all aspects

of the positive component, whereas language change, language endangerment, and language death all fall under the negative category.

Ehala (2010) asserts that EVT was developed to stop language endangerment by ensuring that a speech community operates in concert and not independently. This is consistent with Fishman's (1974) observation that a language's vitality and survival chances increase with the number of speakers and the social standing of the group. Essentially, if people want to maintain the vitality of their ethnolinguistic heritage, they must have favourable attitudes towards their own variety. To support this, Bourhis and Sachdev (1984) argue that individuals' propensity to act in ways that will cause an ethnolinguistic group to either maintain or give up its languages depends not only on the extent to which societal conditions work in the group's favour but also on the extent to which individuals perceive their language group as viable and vital. They found that members who believed their group had greater vitality used their language more frequently and broadly than those who believed their group had diminished vitality.

Giles et al. (1977) propose status, demography, and institutional support as three variables that comprise and affect an ethnolinguistic group's objective vitality. Social prestige, sociohistorical standing, and cultural and linguistic prestige of a group are all included in the status factor. This suggests that a community or group's vitality is influenced by its status in society. The distribution of ethnolinguistic group members over a certain national territory or region is a demographic factor that affects vitality (Bourhis et al., 2019). The higher the number of speakers of a language, the higher its vitality and vice versa. A language group's formal or informal representation in many institutions, including the media, education, government services, business, industry, religion, culture, and politics, relative to outgroups, is determined by the institutional support it receives.

These three variables are treated as objective reality because the number of speakers of a variable, its status, and institutional support can be obtained by examining the census and available social indicators (Bourhis et al., 2019). A group's subjective vitality is measured using the Subjective Vitality Questionnaire (containing 21 items), which elicits information on the group's perception of the linguistic strength of their language or variety based on the three variables discussed above (Bourhis et al., 1981). Studies measuring a groups' subjective vitality have, on the one hand, revealed that group members appear to be realistic in reporting

their group's vitality (Harwood et al., 1994). On the other hand, they exaggerate their group's vitality strength (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1993).

The vitality of a language or variety influences attitudes towards it (Ryan et al., 1982). It is hypothesised that the higher the value of a variety in the linguistic marketplace, the greater its vitality. Languages or varieties with high vitality will likely be favourably evaluated in terms of status and solidarity (Kircher & Zipp, 2022). However, in Denmark, Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006) observed the objective vitality of American English owing to its strong institutional support, and its large number of speakers in the world was insufficient to influence participants to rate it as the most favourable variety. The present study adopts EVT to account for a variety's positive or negative ratings as a possible testament to its vitality and to extend the growing body of vitality research to language attitudes in the Nigerian context.

3.4 Discursive psychology

Discursive psychology (DP) is an analytical framework that accounts for social psychological issues based on discursive traditions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). According to Wiggins (2017), DP is a theoretical and analytical framework that regards text and talk as subjects of investigation in their own right, while also recognising that psychological concepts are socially regulated and have implications within social interactions. Discursive psychologists argue that stereotypes, attitudes, and social identity are not static or predetermined, but are co-constructed and negotiated discursively in everyday communication based on contextual and situational factors (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Therefore, attention is placed on people's social practices and discursive descriptions of their stereotypes, attitudes, and emotions rather than their psychological states since DP "treats psychological concepts (attitudes, emotions, identities, for instance) as public and practical, rather than private concerns" (Wiggins, 2017, p. 41). In other words, getting into participants' minds is not DP's aim. Instead, DP focuses on interlocutors' use of linguistic and communicative affordances to legitimise and guide their social behaviour (Ladegaard, 2012). Edwards and Potter (1992, p. 2) argue that discursive psychologists focus on understanding the characteristics of knowledge, cognition, and reality. They examine how events are depicted and clarified, how factual accounts are formulated, and how cognitive states are assigned and interpreted.

Wiggins (2017, pp. 16–23) identifies Wittgenstein's philosophy, speech acts theory, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, sociology of scientific knowledge, semiology, and post-structuralism as the theoretical perspectives that have informed DP. DP owes its

argument about the inseparability of language from reality and the need to study language in use to Wittgenstein's philosophy. Based on the notion of *doing things with words* espoused in speech acts theory (Austin, 1975), DP argues that talk has a function depending on the context of use and can be used to perform an action. Ethnomethodology offered some DP analysts the analytical tools of working with emic focus and the principle that context is produced within, not before, interactions. DP drew from the sociology of scientific knowledge by incorporating the arguments of talking about culturally specific issues, reflexivity, and the importance of participants' resources. The final theoretical perspective that contributed to DP is semiology and post-structuralism, which argue that words do not carry inherent meaning but are meaningful when used in context. DP then draws from these theoretical perspectives to analyse psychological concepts as evident and negotiated in discourse to facilitate an understanding of psychology and social interaction.

Wetherell (2007) identifies two schools of thought in DP. The first school emphasises the turn-by-turn analysis of participants' talk-in-interaction using the tenets of conversation analysis (CA) without explicit reference to the social contexts or practices that may have informed the utterances (Edwards, 1997). This position has been criticised for excluding the context of discourse in the analysis (Abrams & Hogg, 2002). The second school of thought within DP analyses participants' utterances by extending them to their social and ideological contexts (Parker, 2002). Despite these different epistemological approaches within DP, discursive psychologists agree that the focus should be on "psychological topics rather than one common intellectual position on discourse" (Wetherell, 2001, p. 382). Augoustinos et al. (2014, p. 301) call for an eclectic approach to the analysis of text and talk because each of the existing approaches within psychology – social cognitive, social identity, social representations, and discursive perspectives – is limited on its own. The analysis of the focus group data in the present study is informed by this eclectic approach, as the linguistic features of participants' utterances are analysed in relation to their social and ideological context.

Three core principles guide discursive psychology. The first is that discourse is constructed and constructive. This principle aligns with the relativist argument that things cannot be separated from our representation of them. This supports the argument that there is no single reality or truth in the world, because knowledge is culturally and socially constructed (Potter, 1998; Wiggins, 2017). DP argues that discourse is constructed through text, talk, and other forms of nonverbal communication, such as gestures and facial expressions. As Potter (1998, p. 235) states, DP "researches the practices that are sustained

by particular constructions of the world (accounts, descriptions); and it researches how those descriptions are built, how they are fitted to their context of use, and the resources they draw on”.

The construction principle of DP is utilised to account for how different identities and social categories, such as gender, ethnicity, and social class, are constructed in discourse (Day, 1998; Ladegaard, 2012; Speer & Stokoe, 2011). This social category construction aspect of DP is informed by membership categorisation analysis (Sacks, 1992), which argues that individuals invoke commonsense knowledge of social categories and activities of members of the categories to perform ‘membership’ business in interaction. Widdicombe (1998) argues that membership categories are inference-rich, given that they do not just afford individuals the economy of using labels; instead, such labels are also conventionally associated with particular activities of the categories in question. Classical DP analysts (following the CA tradition) focus mainly on how participants orient to social categories in interactions. Among other things, they focus on the function (i.e., interactional consequences) of social categories invoked by participants in their interactional context to accomplish social actions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Critical DP scholars do not limit themselves to the social categories or labels individuals orient to in interaction, they also interpret such categories by linking them to their social and ideological context and attempt to explain what may cause the use of the categories in question (Augoustinos et al., 2014).

The second principle of DP is that discourse is situated within a specific interactional context. It also argues that an utterance is best understood by the (para)linguistic items that come before and after it because they help to understand the normative and rhetorical aspects of discourse. In DP, norms such as greetings and assessments, and rhetoric such as arguments about race, are not seen as governing action or persuasion but are treated as orienting to action or persuasion (Potter, 1998). This perspective allows for accounting deviations and variations from norms and rhetorical countermoves. Potter and Wetherell (1987) argue that variations in participants’ accounts or expressions of attitude in discourse should not be treated as an inconsistency, but emphasis should be placed on the specific consequences of each expression or account in their context of use. Thus, DP analysts need to ask, “on what occasions is attitude X rather than attitude Y espoused, and what functions or purposes do they achieve?” (ibid, p. 35). They further note that variations should be analysed as argumentative or rhetorical strategies, given that some evaluations/attitudes may be due to the considerations of face saving or to achieve an effect such as blaming or criticising. As

Verkuyten (1998, p. 303) remarks, “Attitudes are not simple appraisals pro or contra a position but always include a stance against a counterposition, and therefore argumentation is part and parcel of attitudes. Attitude expression implies justifying one’s position and criticising the counterposition.”

The third principle in DP states that discourse performs some functions or actions; for example, a question elicits a response. In other words, the goal of DP is not solely on the lexical classification of words used in interactions (such as focus groups, interviews, conversations, or electronic-mediated interactions) but on the functions of the words in the context where they were used and how other participants responded to them (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). DP has been presented as a pragmatic approach to studying social psychological phenomena, such as stereotypes and attitudes, owing to its foundation in speech acts theory and its principle that discourse is situated and functional (Wiggins, 2017). Discursive psychologists believe that words, pauses, and repairs are relevant in understanding the interactional activities being performed.

Regarding (language) attitudes, discursive psychologists argue against what used to be the traditional view in cognitive psychology that attitudes were treated as fixed mental constructs. Within the DP paradigm, attitudes (or evaluations/assessments, which is the preferred term in DP) are better understood by focusing on participants’ evaluations in interaction and how such evaluations are treated by other participants (Ladegaard, 2013). As individuals communicate their attitudes in discourse, they do so based on their perceived ingroup or outgroup status (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). DP and social identity theory maintain that there is variability in attitudes, as an individual can provide different evaluations in different contexts and situations, even within the same interaction. This variability is not captured in the traditional matched- or verbal-guise techniques of language attitude elicitation (Ladegaard, 2020; Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain, 2017). Furthermore, individuals are not necessarily “honest souls” who consistently demonstrate their genuine attitudes, but will likely construct their identities and attitudinal positions in relation to the context of the interaction and in response to their interlocutors (Billig, 1996).

The analysis of the focus group discussions in the present study is informed by critical DP because the discussions focus on how students construct attitudes and stereotypes towards ingroups and outgroups, which is one of the focuses of DP. Moreover, since DP has been used to examine attitudes and stereotypes (Ladegaard, 2011b, 2012; Potter, 1998; Puchta &

Potter, 2002) and to analyse focus group data (Goodman & Burke, 2010; Puchta & Potter, 2004), it makes an appropriate analytical framework to inform the analysis of data in the present study. Having reviewed these theoretical and analytical approaches, Figure 3.1 provides an integrative theoretical framework that guides this study.

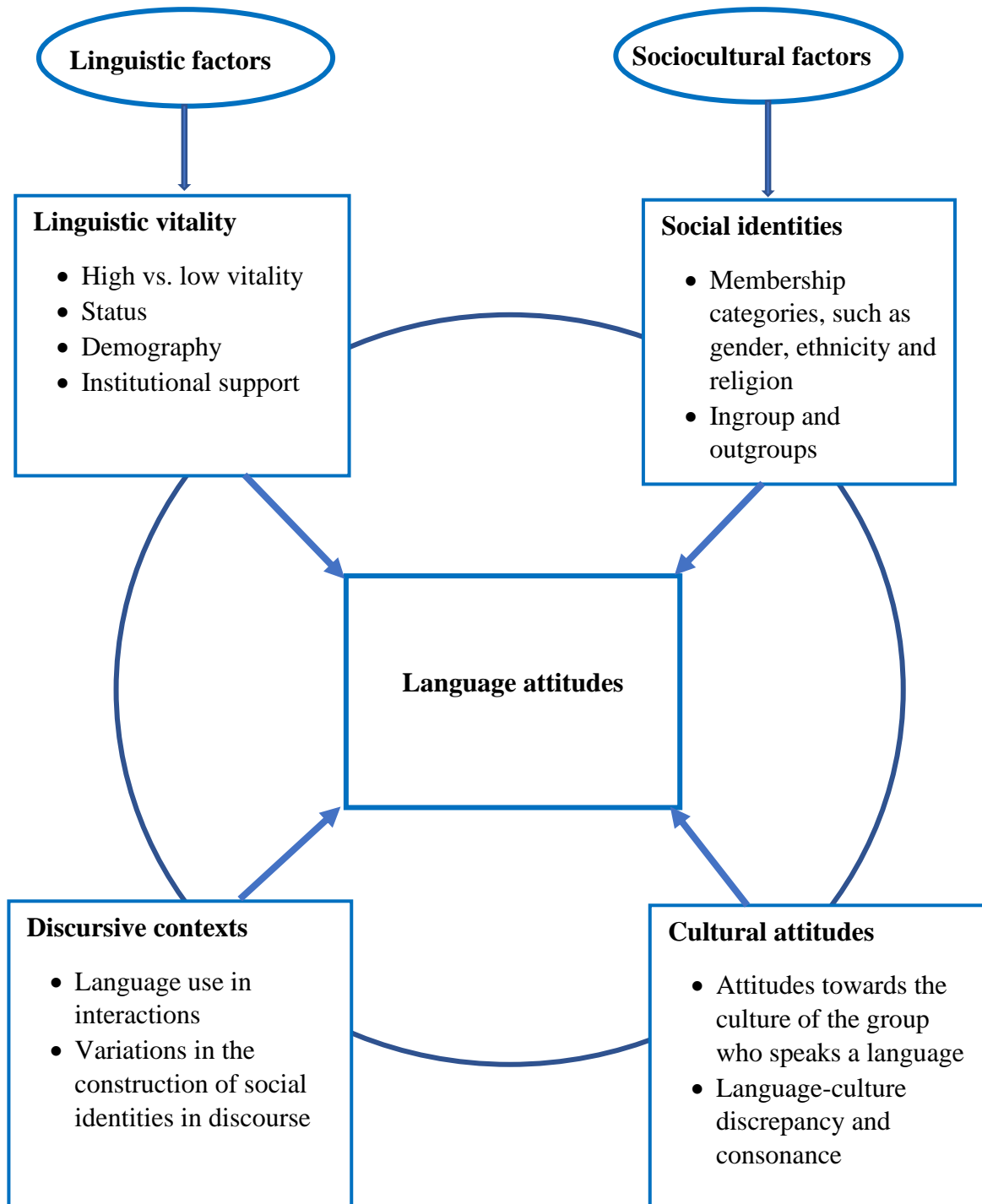


Figure 3.1 An integrative theoretical framework for the study

Figure 3.1 integrates the frameworks discussed above and shows that both linguistic and sociocultural factors may influence language attitudes. Linguistic factors can be categorised into linguistic vitality and discursive contexts. Linguistic vitality consists of the level of prestige of a variety, which is determined by the status and demography of its speakers and its use in education and media. Discourse contexts include how attitudes towards languages are constructed in discourse. Verbalising language attitudes can be a way to entrench the (un)favourable evaluations of languages. Sociocultural factors comprise social identities and cultural attitudes, which indicate that membership categories can be a basis for constructing ingroups and outgroups. This membership categorisation can be drawn upon when evaluating varieties. For instance, belonging to an ethnolinguistic group (Yoruba) may influence an individual to evaluate the speech features of an outgroup (Hausa) less favourably than those of the ingroup. Cultural attitudes consist of attitudes towards the culture of the group who speaks a language, which might correlate with their attitudes towards the language or variety spoken by the group in question. These factors can influence language attitudes in isolation (indicated by the individual arrows) or interactively (indicated by the linking curved lines).

3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter reviewed social identity, discursive psychology, ethnolinguistic vitality theory, and the language-culture discrepancy/consonance hypothesis, which have informed the analysis and discussion of the results of this study. The tenets of these frameworks and the aspects of the study in which they are utilised are summarised in Figure 3.2.

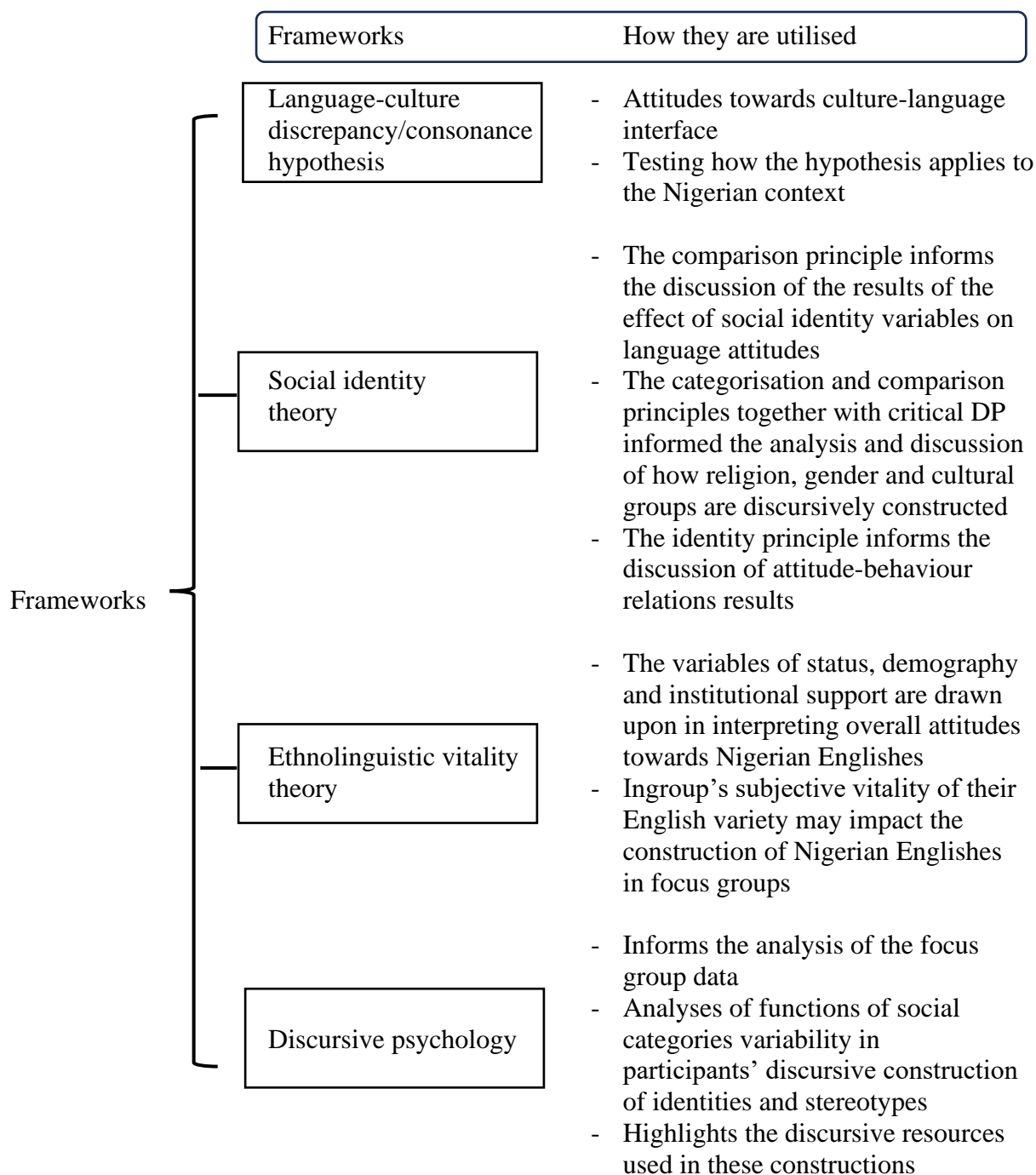


Figure 3.2 The frameworks and how they are utilised

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological issues and procedures undertaken in this study. As mentioned in chapter one, the study seeks to identify Nigerians' attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents, explore the relationship between attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE and the culture of their speakers, determine the effects (if any) of social variables such as gender and religion on language attitudes, and assess the relationship between reported attitudes and actual linguistic behaviour. To achieve these objectives, data were collected using a verbal-guise experiment (VGE) to elicit quantitative information about participants' attitudes towards the varieties under study. The Nigerian culture-and-identity questionnaire obtained attitudes towards the culture of the three major ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria. The focus group discussions complemented data from the VGE and the questionnaire to check for convergence or divergence in relation to attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes. A speech elicitation task was employed to study the actual linguistic behaviour of the participants to understand whether their linguistic behaviour conforms to or deviates from the accent they negatively and positively evaluated.

The participants of the study were students drawn from three universities, one in each of the Southeastern, Southwestern and North Central parts of Nigeria. These universities were chosen because they are sites where the Igbo, Yoruba, and Northern/Hausa accents of English are spoken. Students were chosen because they would better highlight the educational implications of language attitudes. The use of students in this study allows for replication and comparison with previous language attitude research (Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Giles, 1970; Hansen Edwards, 2019b; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006; Oyebola, 2020).

This chapter outlines the research design, the procedures of data collection, the different instruments used to collect data, the sociodemographics of the participants, and the techniques adopted in data coding and analysis. It also explains the research sites and how they were accessed.

4.1 Research design

A research design is a comprehensive plan for carrying out a study logically and cohesively to ensure that its data collection and analysis are well suited to answering the research questions (Yin, 2018). This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed methods research design, which compares the results from quantitative and qualitative data. Creswell and Creswell (2023) maintain that mixed methods design involves gathering, analysing, and

interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data by integrating the two data in different ways within a specific framework or procedure. Mixed methods research is essential for data triangulation, initiation, development, complementarity, and expansion (Greene et al., 1989). The purposes of mixed methods research adopted in this study were triangulation and complementarity because the study sought to corroborate and clarify evidence from VGE with focus group discussions (FGDs) and speech elicitation tasks (SETs).

Mixed methods research design incorporates a survey design, which can be employed to explore past and present behaviours and attitudes (Dillman et al., 2014; Patton, 1987). More so, its method of data collection is based on interviews and questionnaires (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2022). In adherence to the suggestions of Larson-Hall (2015) and Ladegaard (2020), the study adopted triangulation of methods and data (VGE, questionnaire on Nigerian culture and identity, SETs, and FGDs) to arrive at robust and comprehensive findings. In terms of the three components of language attitudes assessed in this study, the aspect of the VGE questionnaire that asked participants to evaluate the speakers assessed the affective component as it evaluates personal and linguistic characteristics based on speech stimuli. The request for participants to identify the ethnicity of the speakers assessed the cognitive component as it evaluated participants' knowledge about, and experience with language varieties and their ability to recognise and characterise speech samples. FGDs and SETs assess the cognitive and behavioural components by eliciting discursive constructions of Nigerian Englishes and measuring variations in participants' actual linguistic behaviour based on (non)standardised linguistic variables (see also Ladegaard, 2000).

Four hypotheses were formulated to examine the first three research questions. As the fourth research question did not involve hypothesis testing, no hypothesis was formulated.

RQ1a: What are the attitudes of Nigerian university students towards HE, IE, and YE accents?

H_{1a-c}: There is a significant difference in the mean ratings of HE, IE, and YE on (a) status, (b) solidarity, and (c) quality of language traits.

RQ1b: What association (if any) exists between ethnic categorisation of speakers and reasons for categorising a speaker into a particular ethnic group?

H_{2a-c}: There is a relationship between the ethnic categorisation of (a) HE, (b) IE and (c) YE speakers and the underlying reasons for categorisation.

RQ2: What effects, if any, do gender, religion, and ethnicity have on attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE?

H_{3a-e}: The social variables (a) gender, (b) religion, and (c) ethnicity have effects on participants' attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE.

RQ3: Do attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures correlate with attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents?

H₄: There is a correlation between attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents, and attitudes towards the culture of their speakers.

4.2 Ethical considerations

As with any research involving human subjects, ethical issues were considered and ethical approval was sought. Robson (2002) recommends that researchers should ensure that all individuals involved in their research understand the procedures in which they are to be engaged, including explaining the reasons for their participation, how their involvement will be utilised, and who will have access to the information gathered. In line with this, ethical approval was obtained from the Human Subjects Ethics Sub-Committee of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University in March 2022 with the approval number HSEARS20220328002 (see Appendix II). The Ethics Sub-Committee confirmed that the research posed no harm to the participants and that an information sheet detailing the research and a consent form that would be provided to the participants were prepared. With ethics approval from PolyU, universities that formed research sites in Nigeria did not require further approval. At each research site, participants were recruited using snowball sampling involving existing participants helping to identify other potential participants. The participants had access to the information sheet (see Appendix III) and the consent form (see Appendix IV), which detailed the purpose of the study, the importance of their participation, and the duration of their participation, and a statement assuring them that their responses would be kept confidential and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time if they did not wish to continue. Given that one aspect of the study involved students making evaluative comments about their lecturers' use of English, participants were assured of confidentiality and non-traceability by guaranteeing that their answers would not be disclosed to their lecturers and thus, would not be used against them in any way. To ensure confidentiality, the data were stored on a password-protected computer to which only I have access. Pseudonyms were used

to protect the identity and privacy of participants. The VGE, administration of the questionnaire, FGDs, and SETs were conducted in June and July 2022.

4.3 Participants

The participants for this study were four hundred and six (406) undergraduate students drawn from three universities in Nigeria: Kogi State University (KSU) in the North Central zone, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) in the South East zone, and Lagos State University of Education (LASUED) in the South West zone. Students from North Central were chosen because of the inability to access students from core Hausa-speaking states, such as Kano and Kaduna, owing to a strike action among university lecturers during the time of data collection. However, due to the identity of North Central and North West as Northerners, it is assumed that they have similar attitudes (Ali, 2021).

I selected university students as participants because, since many language attitude studies have utilised student samples, it allows for comparison with prior findings. Additionally, the students were chosen as participants because they were more likely to volunteer for language attitude research (McKenzie, 2010). They tend to be more exposed to different accents of NgE because of their active use of social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), where people from different accent groups post content (McKenzie, 2010; Oyebola, 2020). The social and demographic characteristics of the participants are summarised in Table 4.1. The mean age score was 20.4 years ($SD=2.41$), ranging from 16 to 32 years. This indicates that the participants were predominantly young adults. Many participants were Christians of the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups. A total of 52.7% reported that they attended private secondary schools, while 47.3% attended public or government secondary schools. Due to the gender imbalance typical in Nigerian universities in general, 268 participants were women and 138 were men. Of the participants, 76.8% reported that they had learned English in school, whereas 23.2% said they had learned English without formal instruction. This is not surprising because many Nigerian parents send their children to English Medium Instruction (EMI) schools where teaching and class participation in English are emphasised (Ndiribe & Aboh, 2022).

Of the respondents, 69.5% indicated that they acquired their mother tongue as their first language, whereas 30.5% reported English as their first language. Ethnicities such as Igala, Hausa, Ebira, and Bassa, from which fewer participants were recruited, were grouped as 'North' since they all belong to the northern part of Nigeria to allow for the conduction of

multiple analysis of variance. This decision also adhered to the suggestion that at least 30 respondents should be sampled in each group of a population (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991). Participants' reported first languages, such as Igala, Bassa-Nge, Ebira, Ogori and Hausa, were also classified as 'Northern' to make them comparable with Igbo, Yoruba and English. All participants were of Nigerian origin, had lived in Nigeria throughout their lives, and were currently enrolled as university students. Table 4.2 shows the departments of the participants.

Table 4.1 Social and demographic characteristics of participants

Sites	Age			Gender		Ethnicity			Religion		Secondary school	
	16-20	21-25	26-32	Male	Female	Igbo	Yoruba	North	Christianity	Islam	Private	Public
ESUT (<i>n</i> =151)	117	32	2	48	103	149	–	2	151	–	100	51
LASUED (<i>n</i> =144)	82	60	2	53	91	16	128	–	105	39	70	74
KSU (<i>n</i> =111)	41	60	10	37	74	4	26	81	88	23	44	67
Totals (<i>N</i>=406)	240	152	14	138	268	169	154	83	344	62	214	192

	First language				How English was learned		Aspired English variety		
	Igbo	Yoruba	Northern	English	In school	WFI	RP	SAE	N(P)E
ESUT	104	1	2	44	100	51	99	48	5
LASUED	4	82	2	56	120	24	70	61	12
KSU	4	18	64	25	92	19	58	45	8
Totals	112	101	68	125	312	94	227	154	25

WFI = Without formal instruction; N(P)E = Nigerian (Pidgin) English; RP = Received Pronunciation; SAE = Standardised American English

Table 4.2 Distribution of participants across study subjects

Subject	N	Percent
English and Literary Studies	138	33.9
English Education	63	15.5
Law	35	8.6
Science	52	12.8
Accounting	12	3.0
Agricultural Education	12	2.9
Business Education	5	1.2
Physical and Health Education	5	1.2
Other*	96	20.9
Total	406	100

* ‘Other’ includes Economics, Chemistry, Geography, Primary Education Studies, Philosophy, Biology Education, Plant Science, Industrial Chemistry, Primary Education Studies, Social Studies

The final participants included in the study were deemed sufficiently representative of undergraduate university students across the southern, western, and northern parts of Nigeria, based on the general study sample characteristics described in Table 4.1.

4.4 Research instruments

This section discusses the design of the verbal-guise, and Nigerian culture and identity questionnaires. It presents justifications for selecting speakers for the voice stimuli and questions that served as prompts during focus group discussions. It also highlights how the paragraph used for speech elicitation tasks was constructed.

4.4.1 Verbal-guise experiment

The verbal-guise experiment or technique (VGE or VGT) is a variant of the matched-guise technique (MGT), which is an indirect approach to measuring language attitudes (Garrett, 2010). Unlike MGT, which uses an individual speaker producing different voices, VGT uses different L1 speakers of the varieties under study as voice stimuli (Hansen Edwards, 2019b). This study used VGT because it arguably creates guises that are more authentic than MGT (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022b). The next two subsections present the linguistic and demographic information of the speakers for the voice stimuli, and it outlines the details of the verbal-guise questionnaire.

4.4.1.1 Speakers

The speakers read an elicitation paragraph centred on explaining research. The text is as follows:

Research is one of the hallmarks of tertiary institutions. A lecturer is charged with three primary duties: research, teaching, and community development service. As a student, you are also trained to be a researcher through the assignments, term papers, and seminar papers you have been given to write in some of your courses. This training culminates in submitting a project report at the end of your study. Many students are often afraid of research. But research is mainly interrogating a particular issue in order to discover new insights that will extend the frontiers of knowledge.

The reason for using research as the subject matter was that it is believed to be a topic that resonates with the participants since they are students in tertiary institutions. It was also thought to be relatively ‘neutral’ in terms of emotions, religion, and race. Two speakers each (one male and one female) from Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba ethnolinguistic communities were selected. The varieties tested in the VGE were a case of intra-country English varieties (spoken within a country) as opposed to inter-country English varieties (spoken in different countries), which are more common in the literature on language attitudes (see Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a; Garrett, 2010).

The speech sample was printed and given to the speakers to read and familiarise themselves with in order to read the passage more fluently. While looking at the paper, the speakers were asked to read the paragraph as naturally as possible in the voice they would use if they were to speak in a lecture setting. Read speech, as opposed to spontaneous speech, helped prevent probable variances (lexical, syntactic, and morphological) of various English speakers (Oyebola, 2020) and ensured that the semantic content was constant across the guises (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022b). It also allowed for a minimal difference in the duration of guises (Chien, 2018).

The speakers were university students in Hong Kong at the time of recording. Each speaker was recorded at least five times. There were two main reasons for the multiple recordings. First, speakers tended to read more naturally in later recordings than in earlier ones, and there were also few or no slips of the tongue in subsequent recordings (Loureiro-Rodríguez & Acar, 2022). Second, multiple versions provided options for selecting recordings that were similar in terms of speech rate and quality. As Soukop (2007: 174)

maintains, “comparability of the speech samples can be sufficiently established if the speakers do not diverge greatly in voice quality.” For each speaker, it took between 15 and 20 minutes to record and obtain their demographic data, such as age, educational background, where they grew up, and the languages they speak. Two researchers listened to all the voices and picked the most suitable. The range of the recordings was 34–42 seconds, with a mean of 37 seconds. Participants in the pilot study confirmed that the voices were authentic representations of the speakers’ Nigerian Englishes and comparable in voice quality. Lexical diversity analysis of the elicitation paragraph showed an aggregate vocabulary diversity (voc-d) of 85.84 and a measure of textual lexical diversity (MTLD) of 91.10, both of which were within the threshold of 85-105, typical of an educated English L1 speech (Malvern et al., 2004). The results of the lexical diversity analysis show that the paragraph reflects the features of acrolectal English. Following Loureiro-Rodríguez and Acar’s (2022) suggestion that speakers should be within a close age range, the speakers’ age range was 25–35 years (mean age=29.5).

Levin et al. (1994) recommend the inclusion of some phonological descriptions of the speech produced by speakers in the VGE to give readers a better idea about the linguistic inventory of the speech samples. The descriptions employ some of Wells’ (1982) lexical sets as a reference point to illustrate the variations in the unique traits of the speakers. The three men and three women constituting the study’s six speakers possessed the following phonological features. These features are based on the speakers’ reading of the elicitation paragraph.

Speaker A (Yoruba male, 31 years old) was born in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. His accent could be described as YE (Jowitt, 2019), which includes features such as /h/-dropping in words like ‘hallmarks’ [ɔ:lmarks] and /h/-insertion in ‘also’ [hɔ:lso:] (a feature that distinguishes him from the other speakers); replacement of STRUT vowel by /ɔ/ as in ‘some’ [sɔm] and ‘but’ [bɔt], and replacement of /ð/ by /d/ as in ‘with’ [wɪd] and ‘this’ [dɪs], as well as the replacement of /θ/ with /t/ as in ‘through’ [tru:], ‘three’ [tri:]. Speaker A also omitted /j/ in words such as ‘community’ [kɔmu:nɪtɪ] and ‘student’ [stu:dent]. There is a devoicing of voiced consonants at word final position, as in ‘duties’ [dju:tɪs] and ‘courses’ [kɔ:sɪs]. Similarly, he deleted /k/ in consonant clusters in ‘project’ [prɔdʒɛt] and ‘extend’ [ɛstend]. Furthermore, Speaker A had monophthongization of /eɪ/ to /e/ as in ‘trained’ [trend], ‘papers’ [pepæs], /aɪ/ to /a/ like ‘primary’ [præməri], and used /o:/ for a GOAT vowel as in ‘also’

[ɔ:lso:]. The schwa sound is changed to /ə/ as in ‘institutions’ [ɪnstɪtju:ʃənz] and ‘community’ [kəmju:nɪti].

Speaker B (Igbo female, 28 years old) was born in Obowo, a suburban area in Imo State where Igbo is predominantly spoken. She spoke a form of NgE with some features that characterise IE speech. This included features such as the realisation of the NURSE vowel /ɜ:/ as /a/ as in ‘service’ [savis]. In addition, Speaker B elided /k/ in consonant clusters as in ‘project’ [prɒdʒet]. She dentalised [t] in intervocalic positions as in ‘institutions’ [ɪnstɪtju:ʃənz]. Furthermore, some of her diphthongs were monophthongised as in ‘culminates’ [kʊlmɪnɛts] and ‘papers’ [pepæs]. Speaker B produced no schwa sound as she replaced it with the CLOTH vowel /ɒ/ or /a/ as in ‘lecturer’ [lektʃɒra] and ‘researcher’ [rɪ'sɜ:ʃa]. Finally, there is an alveolarisation of the interdental /ð/ in words like ‘the’ [di] and the approximation of /θ/ to /t/ in ‘through’ [tru:].

Speaker C (Hausa male, 31 years old) was born and grew up in Dala, Kano State. Speaker C spoke HE, typified by interference from his mother tongue (Olaniyi & Josiah, 2013). His speech included features such as the substitution of /f/ with /p/ in words like ‘afraid’ [æpred] and ‘frontiers’ [frɒntɪə:z] and replaced /v/ with /b/ in ‘discover’ [dɪskɒbə]. These features distinguish Speaker C from speakers from other ethnic groups. He interchanged /ð/ in ‘other’ to [ɔzə] and pronounced the NURSE vowel as [ɑ:] as in ‘research’ [rɪsɑ:tʃ] and ‘tertiary’ [tɑ:ʃɪəri]. Similarly, he deleted /k/ in consonant cluster in ‘project’ /prɒdʒet/. He replaced a NEAR vowel with /ɪa/ in ‘frontiers’ [frɒntɪəz]. Speaker C had monophthongisation of some diphthongs in words such as ‘interrogating’ [ɪntɛrɒgetɪŋ], ‘afraid’ [æpred] and ‘training’ [trenɪŋ]. He also substituted the STRUT vowel with /ɒ/ as in ‘frontiers’ [frɒntɪəz] and ‘one’ [wɒn].

Speaker D (Yoruba female, 27 years old) was born and grew up in Osogbo, a suburban area of Osun State, Nigeria. Her speech contains the production features characterising YE (Igboanusi, 2006). This included features such as the realisation of NURSE vowel /ɜ:/ as BATH vowel [a] in words like ‘research’ [rɪsɑ:tʃ] and ‘tertiary’ [tɑ:ʃɪəri]. The idiosyncratic feature Speaker D had was her pronunciation of /ʃ/ in ‘issue’ as [ɪʒu:]. As is the wont of many Yoruba speakers, she elided /h/ at the word initial position in ‘hallmarks’ [ɔ:lma:ks]. Furthermore, she monophthongised some diphthongs as in ‘primary’ [præməri] and ‘also’ [ɔ:lso:]. Speaker D replaced /θ/ with /t/ as in ‘three’ [tri:], ‘through’ [tru:], as well as /ð/ with /d/ like ‘this’ [dɪs] and ‘with’ [wɪd]. She had /ɒ/ rather than /ə/ in unstressed syllables as in

‘community’ [kɒmu:nɪtɪ] and ‘development’ [dɪveləpment]. Evident in Speaker D’s speech was the replacement of the STRUT vowel /ʌ/ by the CLOTH vowel /ɒ/ in ‘culminates’ [kɒləmɪnɪts], ‘study’ [stʊdɪ] and ‘but’ [bʊt]. The pronunciation of ‘culminates’ showed an epenthesis of /ʊ/ to break the consonant cluster /lm/. Finally, Speaker D devoiced some voiced consonants at the word-final position in words such as ‘frontiers’ [frɒntrɪs] and ‘courses’ [kɔ:sɪs].

Speaker E (Igbo male, 35 years old) was born in Abakpa, a suburban area of Enugu State. The Igbo male speaker in this study spoke with an IE accent. Because of the presence of the voiced palatal nasal /ɲ/ in Igbo, Speaker E realised ‘new’ as /ɲju:/. He had /k/ deleted in consonant clusters in words such as ‘extend’ [estend] and ‘project’ /prɒdʒet/. There was also evidence of the replacement of the STRUT and schwa vowels by the CLOTH vowel in words like ‘discover’ [dɪskɒvə] and ‘submitting’ [sɒbmɪtɪŋ]. Speaker E dentalised [t] in intervocalic positions as in ‘institutions’ [ɪnstɪtju:ʃəns]. He also devoiced sounds at the word-final position as in ‘courses’ [kɔ:sɪs] and pronounced diphthongs as monophthongs as in ‘afraid’ [æfrɛd] and ‘interrogating’ [ɪntərəʒetɪŋ].

Speaker F (Hausa female, 25 years old) was born in Dala, an urban area in Kano State, Nigeria. A number of the features of HE were present in Speaker F’s speech, including replacing /f/ with /p/ in ‘afraid’ [æpred]. Rather than pronouncing the schwa in unstressed syllables, she realised it as /ɔ/ in ‘lecturer’ [lektʃərə] or as /a/ in ‘researcher’ [rɪsɔ:ʃərə]. Speaker F also substituted STRUT with CLOTH in words like ‘discover’ [dɪskɒbə] and ‘culminates’ [kɒlmɪnɪts]. She devoiced the final consonant in ‘papers’ [peɪpəs] and ‘courses’ [kɔ:sɪs]. There was also evidence of monophthongisation of diphthongs /eɪ/ to /ɛ/ in ‘papers’, NEAR to /ɪə/ in ‘frontiers’ [frɒntrɪz] and /aɪ/ to /a/ as in ‘primary’ [praməri]. She replaced NURSE with BATH in ‘tertiary’ [tɜ:ʃiəri], ‘term’ [tɜ:m], and ‘service’ [sə:vɪs], and elided /j/ where it should have been realised in words such as ‘particular’ [pɑ:tɪkələ] and ‘community’ [kɒmu:nɪtɪ]. Figure 4.1 presents a snapshot of HE, IE, and YE speakers’ linguistic features for easy visualisation.

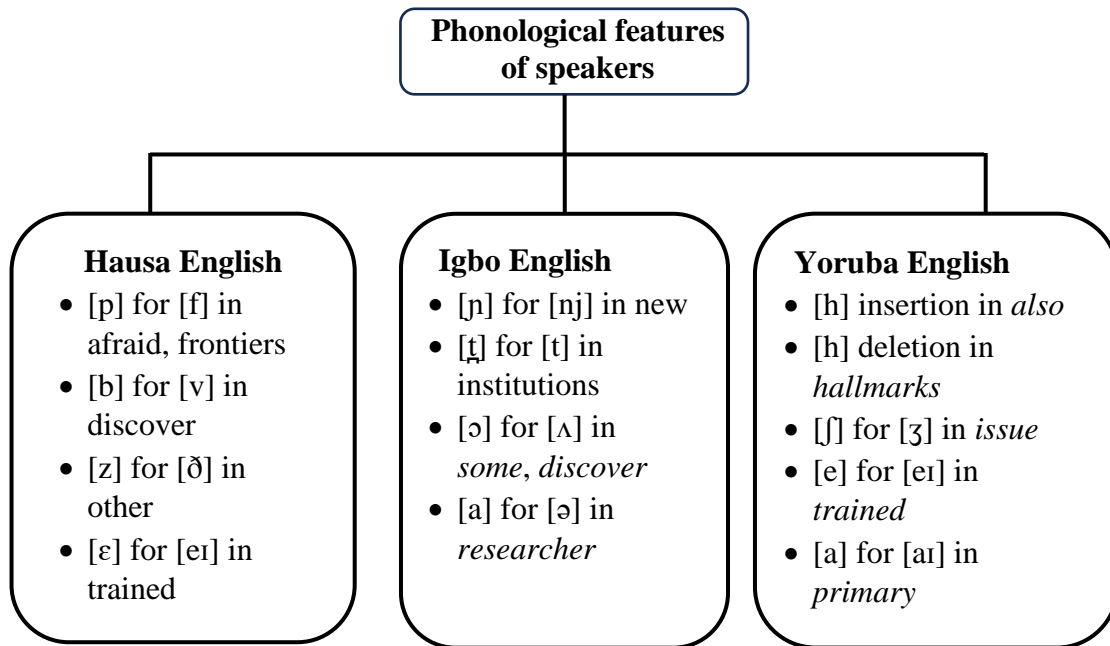


Figure 4.1 Phonological features of the speakers

4.4.1.2 Measures

Bradburn et al. (2004) suggest that when developing attitude questions, a good practice is to refer to related studies. Drawing on Edwards’ (1999), Ladegaard and Sachdev’s (2006) and Schluter’s (2021) rating dimensions, participants were asked to rate the speakers, one at a time, on five status items (education, self-confidence, leadership, wealth, intelligence), four solidarity items (friendliness, sincerity, sense of humour, handsome/beautiful) and four questions on the perceived quality of the speakers’ language (model of pronunciation, correctness, processing fluency, aesthetic quality). Handsome/beautiful was included because arguably it belongs to the social attractiveness component of Lambert’s (1967) two solidarity-type factors. Speakers were rated on a five-point Likert scale, with the following values: 1 (not at all), 2 (only a little), 3 (to some extent), 4 (rather much), and 5 (very much). The five status items, four solidarity items, and four quality of language items were averaged for each speaker to create the status scale (score range: 1–5), solidarity scale (score range: 1–5), and quality of language scale (score range: 1–5). All three dimensions were averaged to obtain the attitude scale for each variety (score range: 1–5). To avoid order effects, the recordings were randomised when presented to the participants. Table 4.3 captures the results of the reliability analysis of the status, solidarity, and quality of language scales.

Table 4.3 Reliability analysis of verbal-guise scales

Speakers	Status		Solidarity		Quality of language	
	α_s	M	α_s	M	α_s	M
A	.83	.50	.72	.39	.78	.47
B	.85	.53	.78	.47	.77	.47
C	.87	.57	.82	.54	.84	.57
D	.87	.59	.82	.54	.80	.52
E	.88	.61	.83	.86	.81	.52
F	.90	.66	.87	.64	.88	.65

α_s = Cronbach alpha; M = Mean of inter-item correlations

Table 4.3 shows that Cronbach alpha ranged from .83–.90, .72–.87, and .77–.88 for the status, solidarity, and quality of language scales. All scales recorded an alpha above .70, the cut-off score reported in the literature (Cohen et al., 2018). These ranges indicated that the scales were reliable. The data were judged to be normally distributed following the central limit theorem, which states that data with more than 30 participants can be considered normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). As such, parametric tests were used mainly for data analysis.

Before rating the speakers on the above dimensions, participants were asked to list three words or sentences that they believed best described the speaker based on their first-hand impressions. This item allowed them to reflect freely on their first-hand impression of the speakers without being restricted by closed questions. For example, it has been observed that respondents sometimes prefer to be allowed to voice their ideas more freely and may find it annoying only to have the pre-made options available to them (Fowler, 2002). Dörnyei and Dewaele (2022) advise that open-ended questions should be placed at the end of closed-ended items so that they will not be answered at the expense of the closed items. However, the reason for placing the question asking about participants' first impressions of the speakers is that it allows them to reflect freely on speaker characteristics without being restricted by predefined questions (Ladegaard & Chan, 2023, 2024). After rating each speaker, an open-ended question elicited information on why/why not the participant liked the speaker's language (refer to Questionnaire in Appendix VII). Following Preston's (1993) suggestion that it is important to ask the participants to indicate where they think the speaker is from, the last two open-ended questions asked the participants which ethnic group they thought the

speaker belonged to and what made them say so. Yook and Lindemann (2013) assert that such open-ended questions enable respondents to provide ethnic labels of speakers quickly. They also provide surprising responses that the researcher may not have considered (Holmes & Wilson, 2022).

After the VGE, the participants were asked to complete the second section of the questionnaire, which asked them to state their (i) demographic characteristics (sex, age, ethnicity, religion, etc.), (ii) English learning history, (iii) linguistic background, and (iv) how many months they had stayed in the town where their university was situated. This background information was elicited from the participants because it has been found that positive or negative attitudes towards accents are influenced by participants' social and linguistic characteristics (Chien, 2018; McKenzie & McNeill, 2022). The main reason for not placing biodata and background information at the beginning of the questionnaire was to prevent drawing unnecessary attention to the aim of the study (to elicit language attitudes and stereotypes). The participants took an average of 30 minutes to complete the VGE, including demographic information.

4.4.2 Questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity

Given that the study seeks to correlate participants' attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE and the culture of their speakers, a questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity was designed (see Appendix VIII for the questionnaire sample). Holmes and Wilson (2022) avow that attitudes towards language ultimately mirror attitudes towards language users and their culture, although Hansen Edwards (2019b) argues that it is not always the case given that individuals may display contradictory attitudes in the same and different spatiotemporal contexts. The questionnaire was divided into four parts. The first part, comprising two items, elicited information on participants' preference for any variety of NgE (a closed-item) and the reason for such a preference (an open-item). The second part asked participants whether they had visited any Hausa-, Igbo-, or Yoruba-speaking states. If they had, two open-ended questions were provided to include the names of the states they had visited and for how long. They were also asked if they had personal friends or close family members from Hausa-, Igbo-, and Yoruba-speaking states and to provide the names of the states if they had. These questions would help explain whether there is a relationship between attitudes towards culture, accents, and personal relationships with speakers of the accents.

The third part of the questionnaire contained four items eliciting information about participants' attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures. The culture for each group participants rated was operationalised with four scales: movies, food, mode of fashion, and music. I acknowledge that culture is a nebulous term (Fortman & Giles, 2006). In Nigerian context, the term culture relates to traditional rites and practices, such as marriage ceremonies, festivals, greeting patterns, mode of dressing, food, music, and movies (Falola, 2001). The attitude towards Nigerian cultures scale (based on the responses to the questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity) was found to be highly reliable ($\alpha = .82$). The participants responded to the question, 'Which movies do you prefer?' and were given 'Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba' to indicate their first, second, and third choice. The question was followed by an open-ended question asking them to explain why they chose a particular culture as their first choice. This format of constructing the items instead of framing them as 'I like Hausa movies', 'I like Igbo movies' was to minimise questionnaire fatigue since the same respondents participated in the VGE. In addition, participants were asked to indicate among Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures which one they were most attracted to and their reason. The final part of the questionnaire centred on Nigerian identity. It contained three open-ended items that asked the participants to write three expressions each that they thought would most adequately describe Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba persons. The questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity took the participants an average of 10 minutes to complete.

Questionnaires are helpful in obtaining general information about attitudes because they are easy to construct and can be used to quickly collect a large amount of data (Dörnyei & Dewaele, 2022). However, they do not provide an in-depth understanding of attitude as an unstable phenomenon (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2017). It then becomes pertinent to incorporate a data collection technique that allows for the performance and co-construction of attitudes. Focus group discussions were included to address this dilemma.

4.4.3 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with select participants of the VGE in the three universities to triangulate the data. The participants were selected based on their gender, ethnic group, and willingness to participate in the focus groups. The choice of FGD over personal interviews is because attitudes are "performed" instead of "pre-formed" (Puchta & Potter, 2004, p. 27), which makes participants frequently change their minds, especially when discussing issues they do not often talk about (Warr, 2005). In this way, FGDs allow a

researcher to “study the processes of attitude formation and the mechanisms involved in problematising and/or modifying views”, which may not be given a fairer hearing in semi-structured personal interviews (Hornsby, 2022, p. 115). Similarly, Morgan (1988, p. 25) argues, “Focus groups are useful when it comes to investigating *what* participants think, but they excel at uncovering *why* participants think as they do”.

The discussions were based on ten prompts (see Appendix IX). Four of the prompts were adapted from Kamwangamalu and Tovares (2016).

1. Have you noticed any difference between how you speak and how other students talk?
2. Can you tell if someone is from your area by the way he or she talks? How can you tell?
3. If you just heard someone talk without seeing this person, could you tell what kind of background he/she had (their level of education, position in society, political affiliation, etc.)?
4. Have you ever tried to change anything about the way you talk? Why (not)?

In addition, three of the prompts bordered on how participants’ lecturers speak and the relationship between the gender and ethnicity of their lecturers and their understanding of class content. The last three prompts centred on discussions of men’s and women’s language use, Christians’ and Muslims’ language use, and the cultures and languages of Nigeria’s three major ethnic groups. The discussions in the focus groups were relaxed and did not follow a rigid QA format. While there was a need to ask questions to elicit responses from the participants, emphasis was placed on listening and paying attention to the respondents’ contributions so as to seek clarification and expatiation where necessary (Poland & Pederson, 1998).

The participants in the focus groups were recruited through snowball sampling, where current participants helped identify new participants. As soon as potential focus group participants were identified, they were given an overview of the research focus and were assured anonymity. Subsequently, they were informed about the ground rules that apply to the discussion, including being open to contradictory opinions and avoiding face-threatening utterances. Then, the first topic for discussion was raised, followed by other topics. The participants were in tutorial groups together, meaning that the group members knew each other. The advantage of using pre-existing groups in focus group discussions is that it allows “participants feel comfortable and secure, enables complex social data to emerge, in terms of

how the participants speak between themselves, and how that illustrates relational dynamics” (Brown 2015, p. 94). After the discussions, the participants were thanked and given the opportunity to raise any questions, and provided with the researcher’s email address should they wish to enquire about anything.

A female fieldwork assistant was trained in standard sociolinguistic group interview procedures (Becker, 2013) and recruited to help speak to women, especially Muslims, who showed signs of unwillingness to participate when I first talked to them. In one of my encounters, one of the women said that she did not pay attention when I was addressing them but became interested when the female assistant spoke. Such an experience was also noticed among men whose interest in participating increased when the female assistant addressed them. Barbour (2018, p. 60) points out that a young female research team member can be vital in “establishing rapport and credibility” in the eyes of (female) participants. Besides recruiting a female assistant to encourage female Muslim participants, she was recruited because of her linguistic and communicative competence in Yoruba, the language most LASUED participants speak. Suggestions have been made to have an assistant who shares a common social background with the participants (Di Paolo & Yaeger-Dror, 2011; Eckert & Rickford, 2001) because it helps to reduce the observer’s paradox (Labov, 1972).

Barbour (2018) suggests that the minimum number of participants for an FGD should be three or four, while the maximum should be eight. There were 18 focus groups, including 132 students in total, with an average of seven students per group. The focus groups were distributed equally across the three regions. The 34 students from the university in the Southeast were all Igbo; of the 38 students from the university in the Southwest, 35 were Yoruba, and three were Igbo; and of the 60 students from the university in North Central, 40 were Igala, 15 were Yoruba, three were Hausa and two were Igbo. The 67 men and 65 women who participated in the 18 focus groups ranged in age from 16 to 32 years. I conducted discussions in the universities’ quadrangles, classrooms, and phonetic laboratories, each lasting an average of 40 minutes. The focus groups were audio recorded. I did not impose any restrictions on the participants’ language use but encouraged them to speak freely in whatever language they felt most comfortable with. Given that the study took place in university settings where English is the official language, I assumed that the primary language of communication would be English, but including codeswitching to local languages, commonly found throughout Nigeria, and this was in fact what happened.

4.4.4 Speech elicitation task

Sixty participants (30 men and 30 women) were recruited from the three universities for the speech elicitation task. This speech elicitation task aided in exploring the link between language attitudes and actual language behaviour (Ladegaard, 2000). The L1 languages of the participants from the Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Lagos State University of Education, and Kogi State University were Igbo, Yoruba, and Igala. Each participant was individually recorded in a relatively quiet environment, which was sufficient for acoustic analysis. The participants were given a paper containing the speech elicitation paragraph and were asked to read it once without practice. This was to obtain their natural reading of the excerpt.

The participants read a 78-word short paragraph adapted from Weinberger (2015). This paragraph was chosen because it contained practically all English sounds. Table 4.4 indicates that out of the 20 vowels and 24 consonants in the English phonemic inventory, the elicitation paragraph contained 15 vowels and 21 consonants. The original paragraph was slightly adjusted to reflect some of the NgE phonological features that have been discussed in the literature. The newly added words are italicised and in bold.

Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, *a litre of **Champion pressure oil***, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a *very nice* plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her *early on* Wednesday at the train station.

The purpose of adding ‘a litre of Champion pressure oil’ was to increase the occurrence of schwa in the text. With respect to ‘very’, /v/ did not occur at the word initial position in the original paragraph. Therefore, it was included as it might be used to test for the claim that the Hausa use /b/ to replace /v/ in their speech. The diphthong /aɪ/ and the nasal /ŋ/ occurred only once, and the word ‘nice’ was introduced to increase their occurrence to at least two. The NURSE vowel was lacking in the original paragraph. Since it has been observed that the vowel is often not realised in basilectal and mesolectal NgE, its inclusion becomes important. Table 4.4 summarises the sounds in the elicitation paragraph.

Table 4.4 The sounds in the elicitation paragraph (numbers indicate occurrences)

Single consonants		Vowels	Clusters	
initial	final		initial	final
k (3)	z (5)	i (13)	pl (2)	sk(1)
t (3)	l (5)	ɑ (4)	st (4)	ŋz (2)
ð (6)	ŋ (1)	ε (6)	br (2)	ks (1)
θ (3)	θ (1)	æ (11)	fr (3)	nz (2)
w (5)	m (2)	ɪ (13)	sp (1)	bz (1)
s (2)	r (6)	ʌ (2)	sn (3)	nd (3)
f (3)	v (3)	ə (23)	sl (1)	dz (1)
ʃ (2)	ʃ (2)	u (5)	bl (1)	gz (1)
n (2)	k (4)	əʊ (3)	sm (1)	
b (3)	b (1)	aɪ (2)	sk (1)	
l (3)	d (2)	eɪ (5)	θr (1)	
ʒ (2)	g (2)	ɔ (3)	tr (1)	
d (1)	n (5)	ɔɪ (2)	pr (1)	
g (1)	t (2)	ɪə (1)		
m (2)	p (1)	ɜ (1)		
h (4)	s (1)			
v (1)				

Adapted from Weinberger (2015)

4.4.5 Field notes

I made notes during the VGE and the FGDs. The purpose was to document contextual data such as names, departments, number of participants per focus group, and the experiment's setting and discussions. Some of the participants' verbal comments when the voices were played were also noted as they were helpful during the analysis. The activities of the students and the language in which they were discussing before being approached to participate in the study were also noted. During the FGDs, the field notes contained essential information from the respondents' side-talk, which the audio recorder may not have captured. Generally, the field notes also documented my reflections on the data collection and the preliminary patterns deducible from the data.

4.5 Pilot study

As noted by Oppenheim (1992, p. 180), "the writing of successful attitude statements demands careful pilot work, experience, intuition and a certain amount of flair". Therefore, a pilot study was conducted before administering the VGE to the main participants. The reasons for the pilot study were to anticipate any problems that may arise during the actual

administration of the research instruments, to correct for ambiguity in the wordings of the questionnaire items, to confirm the accuracy of the voice stimuli, ensure that respondents would not suffer from participation fatigue, and check that the layout of the questionnaire is acceptable (Oyebola, 2020; Schleef, 2014). In addition, Gillham (2008) asserts that it is essential to be careful with the wording of questions in a questionnaire to reduce unwanted answers.

The six verbal guises were played to six undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in February 2022. They were able to accurately identify the ethnicity of four of the speakers. Two of them were uncertain about the ethnic group of the Igbo and Yoruba female speakers, but they all agreed that they were from the southern part of Nigeria. They confused the Yoruba female (Speaker D) with Igbo (Speaker B) and the Igbo speaker with Yoruba, which may have resulted from the similarity in the speech of many southern females in Nigeria (Igboanusi, 2006). The voices were also played to an expert in language attitude studies who confirmed that they were authentic and comparatively similar in terms of speech quality, speed, and volume. In the VGE questionnaire, the penultimate item that seeks to elicit information on where the participants think each of the speakers is from was changed from “Where do you think this person is from?” to “Which ethnic group do you think this speaker is from?” so as to limit participants’ response to ethnic groups of speakers and avoid generic terms such as ‘Nigeria’ or ‘Africa’.

In the Nigerian culture and identity questionnaire, ‘Sub-urban’ was added to the previous categories of ‘Urban’ and ‘Rural’ regarding where the respondents’ primary and secondary schools were located. This decision was to accommodate respondents who did not domicile in typical urban or rural areas. An online version of the research instruments was created using Google Forms to facilitate data collection. The link was sent to two Android and iPhone users to complete the questionnaire to ensure that the layout was clear to the respondents, that the link was functional, and that the voices could be clearly heard. Items that did not work as intended, such as links to the voices of Speakers C and D, which could not be played, were resolved before finally sending the link to the main participants.

An expert in applied linguistics was approached after I developed prompts to be used during focus group discussions. The prompts were revised based on the expert’s comments. For instance, the expert suggested changing “Do you think that men and women speak differently?” to “What would you say about men’s and women’s language use?” to avoid steering the participants towards specific types of responses. The prompts were piloted with

second-year undergraduate students in the Department of English and Communication at PolyU. Students found that the prompts were unambiguous; hence, there was no need to change anything else.

4.6 Research sites

Data were collected from three universities: Kogi State University (KSU), Lagos State University of Education, and Enugu State University of Science and Technology. KSU is located in Anyigba, a locality populated by the Igala ethnic group. The major indigenous languages in Kogi State include Igala, Ebira, and Okwun, while the minor languages are Nupe, Kakanda, Yoruba, and Hausa. Kogi is bounded by nine states, Edo, Enugu, Anambra, Benue, Niger, Abuja, Imo and Kwara. There are Hausa people in the Kogi (North Central) who are involved in trading. According to Ali Abukakar, a sociolinguist at KSU (personal communication), a community close to the market may likely understand Hausa because of the dominance of the Hausa in the market areas. He pointed out that Igala culture is close to Hausa culture because of the predominance of Islam in the region and cultural diffusion. A greater percentage of the students at KSU are Muslims.

Lagos State University of Education (LASUED), formerly known as the Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, is located in Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State. Lagos is a cosmopolitan city in Nigeria inhabited by people from different ethnic groups. The indigenous language of Lagos is Yoruba, one of the major languages spoken in the city, along with English and NPgE. Students of this university hail from different ethnic groups, such as Igbo, Benin, and Ibibio. However, the vast majority of the students are of Yoruba origin.

Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) is situated in Agbani, Enugu suburban. As an Igbo-speaking state, most of the students in the university are from the Igbo ethnic group. Igbo and English are the major languages spoken in the region. The students are predominantly Christians.

4.7 Access to research sites

At ESUT, I gained access to the participants through a lecturer I knew as a student at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He assisted me by speaking to other lecturers who agreed to recruit students for this study. I also accessed the language laboratory, where some speech elicitation tasks and focus group discussions were conducted. Access to the language laboratory allowed me to distribute the paper questionnaire to students without Internet

access and play the voices using the lab's sound system for the VGE. In addition to the research conducted in the phonetics laboratory, data collection also took place in the common areas of the faculty building, quadrangles, and classrooms.

A fellow linguist at the Linguistic Association of Nigeria introduced me to a lecturer at LASUED who helped me gain access to students from different departments. I also recruited student research assistants who aided in identifying potential research participants. Soukop (2007) remarks that researchers have limited options in choosing the physical setting to administer instruments due to participant recruitment and time constraints. Data collection at LASUED was conducted in lecture halls, classrooms, and quadrangles.

Access to KSU was possible with the assistance of a lecturer at the university I met when he was a PhD student at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He introduced me to the Dean of Students Affairs, who approved my use of the university's students for research. He also introduced me to lecturers from different departments who gave me the contacts of class representatives who helped disseminate the online questionnaires to students. During my meeting with lecturers at these three universities, I presented the permission to conduct research in the institution issued by my Chief Supervisor, explained the research rationale, the kinds of data to be collected, the procedures involved in the data collection, and assured them of the confidentiality and anonymity of their students.

4.8 The researcher-researched relationship

Giving the students the information sheet and assuring them anonymity and confidentiality improved their trust in me and facilitated their participation in the research. During the focus group discussions, I ensured no one was insulted for voicing their opinions. For example, there was a scenario in which one of the contributors said that a fellow participant was lying, and the person in question felt insulted. I stepped in by categorically stating that everyone is entitled to their opinions, and different views have to be respected. I also endeavoured to speak with the students in NPgE to create a more relaxed environment during data collection because it is the language that facilitates their acceptance of participating in the research and contributing to discussions.

4.9 Procedures

This research was conducted in three stages. The first stage involved completing the VGE and a questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity. Participants were first asked to read

the information sheet and provide consent to participate in the study. In most cases, the VGE was conducted with groups of students and individuals on the spot. In this case, before distributing the rating sheets to groups of participants and individuals, they were told of the importance of maintaining silence to hear the voices clearly and were reminded that their honest response was needed. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Both paper and online questionnaires were used. The former was opted for when some participants had no access to a smartphone, or there was no power supply or Internet connection. When an online questionnaire was used, the link was sent to the class representative, who forwarded it to their class on the WhatsApp group page. In cases where the group members did not have one another's contact information, the link was sent to them individually. Compulsory questions were set as required to minimise missing values so that respondents could not move to the next page without completing the required questions. The first page of the online questionnaire contained an information sheet explaining anonymity issues. Participants were notified that there was no 'wrong' or 'correct' answer so they would not "contaminate" one another through copying (Oppenheim, 1992). The information sheet also contained my email address, which I told the participants they could use to communicate with me if they had any concerns or enquiries regarding the research. Participants were encouraged to sign into their Google mail address before completing the questionnaire so that their answers could be saved so as to not having to start afresh in case of Internet disconnection or device malfunctioning.

Following the information sheet was the consent form, in which participants were asked to consent to participate in the research before moving to the next page. The participants who also did the reading task were given a participant code for easy identification of their responses to the VGE questionnaire and their reading of the speech elicitation paragraph. The following six pages contained questions on each of the six speakers including hyperlinks to their speech samples. After rating all speakers, the participants moved to the eighth page, where they filled out their personal information including questions about Nigerian culture and identity. The online questionnaire was designed so that only a one-time submission was permissible to avoid multiple submissions by the same participant.

In ESUT and LASUED, the VGE was conducted first so that the students could give honest answers. It also enabled me to elicit qualitative responses (during the FGDs) from the respondents based on the voices they heard in the VGE. This mixing of direct and indirect

methods of eliciting attitudes aligns with Ryan and Giles' (1982) call for 'methodological eclecticism'. After completing the VGE and questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity, the second stage of the study was conducted. Here, participants who indicated an interest in participating in the FGDs were recruited. Subsequently, the speech elicitation task (which was the third stage of the study) was done after the VGE, completion of the questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity, and FGDs. However, because of the situation at KSU, where students were at the peak of lectures and registrations, they had no time for both on-the-spot VGEs and FGDs. Hence, I conducted the FGDs and SETs with them and sent them the link to the VGE through their class representatives and individually (in some cases) and asked them to complete it when they got home.

4.10 Data preparation and coding

This section discusses how the questionnaire data were cleaned and the techniques employed in transcribing the FGDs. The section also presents how the open-ended items in the VGE questionnaire and the FGDs were coded.

4.10.1 The verbal-guise questionnaire

After data collection, the data were cleaned to detect and remove errors or responses that could distort the results (Dörnyei, 2016). A total of 435 individuals responded to the questionnaire but 20 were excluded because they did not belong to the ethnic group or region of the speakers. These included Delta (9), Akwa Ibom (4), and Edo (7) and only participants from Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, and other ethnic groups in Kogi State were selected. The participants from Hausa and other ethnic groups in Kogi state were coded as 'Northerners'. Six participants who wrote gibberish to the open-ended items in the questions and three who completed the paper questionnaire and had a lot of missing data were removed from all analyses. Thus, a total of 406 questionnaires were included in the study.

The voice stimuli were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5). A higher score on the scale indicates a positive evaluative reaction to the accent/speaker. In other words, because the scale captured the range of how little and how much the participants rated the speakers, there was no need for reverse coding. Participants' ratings of status, solidarity, and quality of language were averaged for each variety for the male and female speakers.

Since status, solidarity, and quality of language dimensions have been reported in many language attitude studies (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a; Garrett, 2010; Kircher & Zipp, 2022; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006), a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the fitness of the items to the three language attitude dimensional model: status (education, self-confidence, leadership, wealth, intelligence), solidarity (friendliness, sincerity, sense of humour, handsome/beautiful), and quality of language (model of pronunciation, correctness, processing fluency, aesthetic quality). Navarro and Foxcroft (2022) recommend using CFA to check the established scale in a new sample. Table 4.5 presents the results of the CFA conducted using Jamovi (version 2.2.5).

Table 4.5 Fit indices for CFA models of language attitudes

Model	Description	Est.	St. Est.	χ^2	<i>df</i>	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
1	Three factors: Stat, Soli, QoL	.80	.68	173	62	.95	.94	.06
2	One factor: Status	.78	.70	6.56	5	.99	.99	.02
3	One factor: Solidarity	.72	.62	10.2	2	.97	.92	.10
4	One factor: QoL	.88	.69	3.53	2	.99	.99	.04

N = 406, Est = Estimate of factor loadings; St. Est = Standardised estimate of factor loadings; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; Stat = Status dimension with five items; Soli = Solidarity dimension with four items; QoL = Quality of language dimension with four items

The three-factor model fairly characterised the data, given that CFI and RMSEA (at 90% Confidence Interval) met .95 and .06 cut-offs for an excellent fitting model, whereas TLI was close to the acceptance rate of .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Models 2 and 4 characterised the data very well as they met the cut-off of .95 for CFI and TLI and <.05 for RMSEA. This indicates that all items in the factors consistently measured the status and quality of language dimensions of language attitudes. The solidarity dimension is not an excellent fit based on TLI and RMSEA, but with a CFI of .97 and a significant χ^2 , $p = .0006$, it shows that it can be accepted as a good fit for the model. As the data fit the pre-specified model, no alterations were made to the original model. Confirmatory factor analyses showed that status, solidarity, and quality of language scales were good models for measuring language attitudes. A path diagram of the language attitude model is shown in Figure 4.2.

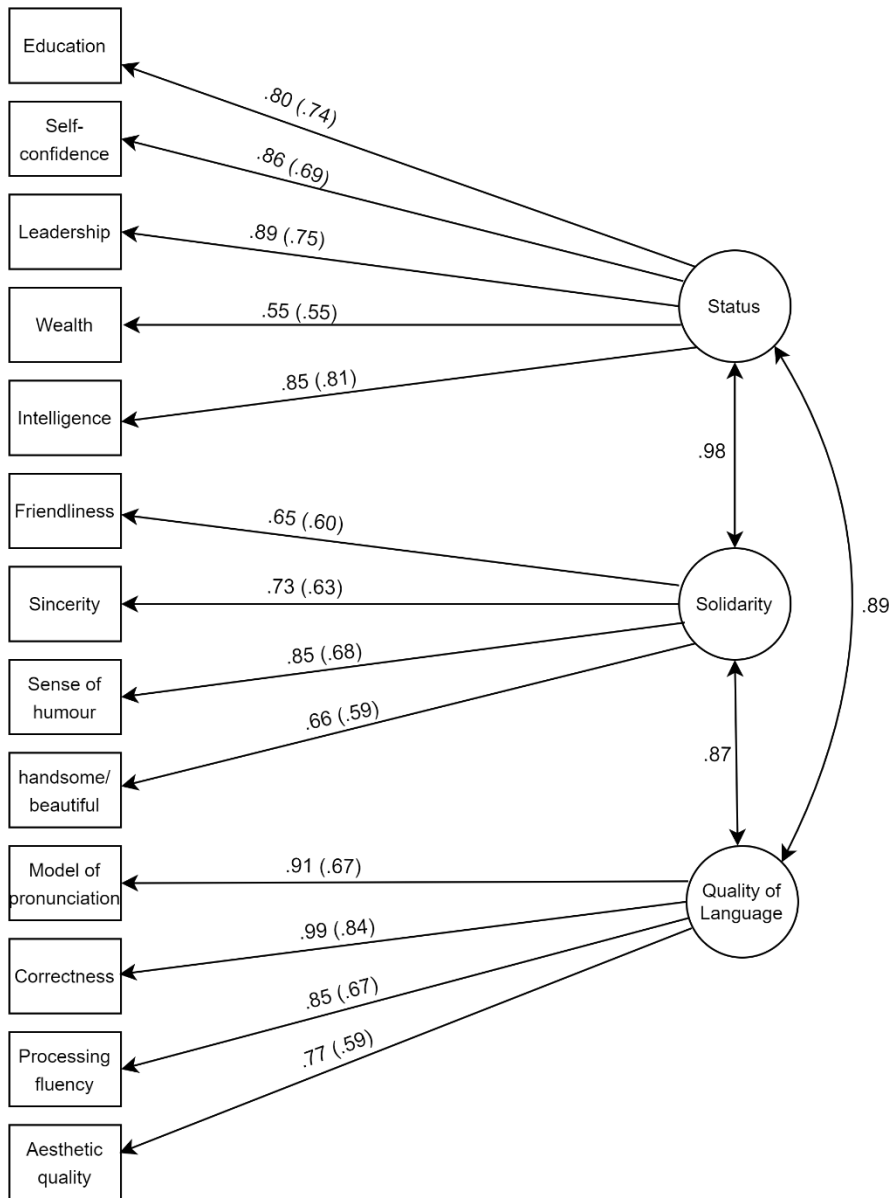


Figure 4.2 CFA path diagram for status, solidarity and quality of language dimensions

Figure 4.2 shows the pre-specified factor loadings and factor co-variances of the individual items and between factors. The unstandardised estimates of the factor loadings are listed first, followed by the standardised ones in parentheses. The standardised estimates of the co-variances were not included because they were the same as the unstandardised estimates. The figure shows that the items and factors contribute to the language attitude model because the factor loadings and co-variances are significantly different from zero (Navarro & Foxcroft, 2022). The high covariance of the three dimensions (status, solidarity, and quality of language) indicates that they correlate with each other because they measure the same construct – language attitude.

Participants' responses to speakers' ethnicity were classified into eight categories: Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, De-ethnicised¹, Foreign, South-South, Middle Belt, and Don't know. The percentage of responses within each category for each variety was calculated. Apart from explicitly mentioning 'Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba' among others, respondents used phrases suggesting that they were referring to these ethnic groups. Therefore, responses such as 'northern part', 'Fulani/Hausa' 'North', and specific mentions of states or cities such as 'Jos, Kastina, Kaduna' were coded as Hausa because the Hausa-speaking people occupy the northern part of Nigeria, and the states mentioned above are where Hausa is mainly spoken. Responses like 'Eastern side', 'south east' (where Igbo people are predominantly located) and explicit mention of Igbo-speaking states and cities such as 'Enugu, Imo, Nsukka and Abakiliki' were coded as Igbo. The Yoruba category included responses such as 'southwestern part of Nigeria' and Yoruba-speaking states and regions as in 'Ondo, Oyo, Egun'.

Responses coded as de-ethnicised included statements such as 'The speaker did not mix dialect while speaking', 'Can't say, there is no trace of an actual accent', 'Sounds like a Nigerian whose mother's tongue occupies no space on her tongue', among others. 'Foreign' included cases where the respondents mentioned countries other than Nigeria, as in 'American', 'Sweden', Ghanaian, or 'Spanish'. Responses classified as South-South included mentions of states and ethnic groups belonging to the South-South geopolitical zone such as 'Delta, Akwa Ibom, Edo, Calabar, Urhobo and Ibibio'. Middle Belt category included states

¹ De-ethnicised or de-ethnicisation is a term used by Stell (2022) as a variant of Mesthrie's (2010) notion of 'deracialisation' to represent a shift from ethnic speech to ethnically neutral speech. It is rooted in Trudgill's concept of 'koineisation,' which argues that dialects merge with one another wherever they are in intense contact (Trudgill, 2003). Since New Englishes behave at least partly like native varieties (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008), one may expect koineisation (a concept developed in relation to L1 varieties in the Outer Circle) to also apply to NgE. The early exposure of southern Nigerians to education and the popularity of American and British movies in Nigeria (Falola, 2001) may have contributed to a 'substrate erasure' (Mesthrie, 2017) of common features that characterise Igbo and Yoruba speakers. Belonging to the same language family and the close contact between Igbo and Yoruba speakers may have also contributed to the similarity of Igbo and Yoruba Englishes (Igboanusi, 2006). Koineisation (substrate erasure and de-ethnicisation) is a plausible scenario in multi-ethnic urban southern Nigeria among educated individuals who have devoted time to NgE accent reduction. This de-ethnicisation explains why participants did not assign some speakers to any ethnic group in the VGE.

and ethnic groups, like ‘Ebira, Benue, Tiv’, and explicitly mentioning the term ‘Middle Belt’. Where participants indicated, ‘I don’t know’, ‘No idea’, ‘Can’t really tell’ or provided no answer, they were categorised as ‘Don’t know’.

Coding the reasons for categorising a speaker into an ethnic group was done by generating an initial list of 11 codes. Here, ‘mother tongue interference’, ‘accent’, ‘intonation’ and ‘ethnic speech matching’ were coded separately. However, after a closer look at the categories, these four codes were merged into one category – ‘Accent’, because speakers’ mother tongue interference and intonation characterise their accent. More so, judging from the responses, accent and intonation appear as synonyms. The resultant recoding gave rise to eight categories: accent, good educational background (GEB), poor educational background (PEB), verbal nonfluency, verbal fluency, behavioural tendencies, respondents’ intuition, and don’t know. Finally, the percentage of each category was calculated. Table 4.6 provides the coding scheme of ethnic categorisation and some examples.

Table 4.6 Categories of the reason for ethnic categorisation

Categories	Examples for all speakers
Accent	<i>Accent; his way of speaking; the way his words sound; he is disturbed by mother tongue; he speaks like them</i>
GEB	<i>He went to a good school; Because most Yorubas are educated; She speaks like a learned person</i>
PEB	<i>They (Igbo) have a lot of poorly educated people; she is not (properly) educated; he sounds like a roughly educated Igbo man</i>
Verbal nonfluency	<i>His phonation are not fluent; he speaks as though he is still learning; some words are not pronounced correctly; bad intonation</i>
Verbal fluency	<i>He speaks very well; his accent sounds good; smooth voice; there are no sign of ethnicity from the speaker; she speaks flawlessly; nice English</i>
Behavioural tendencies	<i>Because of the way he behaves; because he has the zeal to know more; hardworking and vibrant</i>
Intuition	<i>I feel so; just guessing; my thinking; because I can feel it; my thoughts</i>
No reason	<i>Don’t know; I just can’t tell; and (no answers provided)</i>

In the demographic and social characteristics section of the questionnaire, participants' age was coded as a categorical variable with three levels: 16–20, 21–25, and 26–32. With respect to the question that asked participants to indicate how old they were when they started learning English since the telegraphic stage of language acquisition begins at two years, participants who reported that they started learning English when they were children were coded as two years. Those who said they started learning English in primary school were coded as six years because that is the average age at which individuals begin their primary education in Nigeria. Responses to how many months participants have stayed in the town where their university is situated were codified into a factor with five levels: 0–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16–20, and 21–25 years.

4.10.2 Questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity

For the items that measured attitudes towards the culture of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, each ethnic group had a minimum score of 1 and a maximum of 5. The ethnic group chosen as the first choice was assigned five, the second choice was assigned three, and the third choice was assigned one. For instance, if a respondent indicated Yoruba food as the first choice, Igbo as the second choice, and Hausa as the third choice, a score of five, three, and one, was assigned. The open-ended question that requested the participants to provide the reason for their preferred culture was coded and further categorised using the inductive approach.

4.10.3 Focus group discussions

The 18 recorded FGDs were uploaded to Sonix.ai, an online transcriber, and I subsequently went through the audio recordings manually to ensure accurate verbatim transcription. Following Cheng (2020) and Hornsby (2022), the FGDs were transcribed verbatim to include: fillers, silence, stutters, repetitions, false starts, self-corrections, codeswitching, pauses, conversational overlap, and laughter. After this initial transcription, the FGDs were listened to again to correct errors and omissions. To ensure anonymity, the contributors were identified with a code comprising the initials of their universities: ES for Enugu State University of Science and Technology, LS for Lagos State University of Education, and KSU for Kogi State University, followed by the number of the focus group (FGD1, FGD2 etc.), their gender (M or F) and their number based on first, second or third speaker. This resulted in codes such as ESFGD3M1, KSFGD6F2, and LSF GD3F4. Subsequently, the codes were changed to pseudonyms. Table 4.7 shows the transcription symbols used for the FGDs.

As an L1 speaker of the Igbo language and someone conversant with NPgE, I translated the Igbo and NPgE expressions interjected by the participants during the focus group discussions, while keeping the original in the transcripts. For the focus group conducted in the Yoruba speaking context, I employed the assistance of an L1 speaker of Yoruba to translate the Yoruba expressions. There were no cases of codeswitching in KSU discussions.

Table 4.7 Transcription symbols of focus group discussions

Symbols	Meaning
<i>Italics</i>	Utterance in a language other than English
WORD	Upper case indicates louder pronunciation
::	Colons indicate lengthening of the immediately prior sound; the more colons, the more lengthening
//	Phonological representation of words as pronounced by the participant
Students	More than one student saying the same thing simultaneously
<u>word/word</u>	Emphasised sound or word
(2.0)	Duration of pause in seconds
((word))	Transcriber's notes
[]	Square brackets indicate the beginning and end of overlapping speech. They are inserted where the overlap occurs
=word=	Latching, i.e., where there is no noticeable pause between a turn and another or between sentences
°word°	Quieter than surrounding talk
' '	Enclosing English translation of a non-English expression as well as indicating examples
“ ”	Double quotation marks are used to enclose quotes
> <	Used to mark speeded-up talk
(xxx)	For indicating unintelligible speech
(laugh)	To indicate laughter

Adapted from (Wiggins, 2017)

4.10.4 The speech elicitation task

The schwa vowel was singled out for sociophonetic analysis to test whether attitudes towards language behaviour were reflected in actual language behaviour. Schwa was chosen because the Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba languages lack schwa in their phonemic inventories. Hence, it will help to clearly differentiate how the participants adapted to, or approximated, the production of schwa in English. Schwa was also chosen because its acoustic analysis in the African and Nigerian sociolinguistic contexts is lacking (Cox & Docherty, 2024). Perceptual analyses of the production of schwa by the Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba people have found that it is either realised as BATH /a/, DRESS /ɛ/, CLOTH /ɒ/, or GOOSE /u:/, depending on the context of occurrence (Jowitt, 2019). In the speech elicitation paragraph, the schwa vowel occurred 23 times. For the sociophonetic analysis, 60 participants, 20 (10 men and 10 women) from Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba who participated in the VGE and FGD, were used to represent their respective ethnic groups. A total of 1,380 schwa tokens were analysed, which is sufficient for the sociophonetic analysis of a vowel (Cox & Docherty, 2024).

4.11 Data analysis

The statistical tests performed in this study used SPSS 26.0, Jamovi 2.2.5 and Python, with the alpha value set at .05 for the two-tailed test, which is used by many language attitude studies. Jamovi was also used because of its high-resolution graphics. The Shapiro–Wilk normality test was run on the data and based on the central limit theorem, which states that a parametric test can be used when the sample is large enough (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019), the data were adjudged to be normally distributed. There were 169 Igbo, 154 Yoruba, and 83 Northern participants, and therefore, parametric statistical procedures were mainly adopted. The sample size for each group, the mean and standard deviation for all the variables with the *F* value (for the (M)ANOVA), χ^2 (for the two-way contingency table analysis), Kendall's tau (for the correlation analysis), *t* value (for *t*-test), *df*, *p*-value, and effect sizes (for correlation, two-way contingency table, and (M)ANOVA analyses) are reported.

4.11.1 Attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was used to test the significant difference between the ratings of the three Nigerian Englishes. A repeated measures ANOVA is appropriate for testing more than two dependent scores by the same group of participants (Cohen et al., 2018). Where Mauchly's sphericity assumption (if *p* is less than .05) was not met, the

Greenhouse–Geisser correction was adopted because it is more conservative than the Huynh–Feldt correction (Larson-Hall, 2015).

Microsoft Excel was used to arrange the categories generated from the open-ended questions in the VGE and to calculate the frequency of each code. The codes were further imported into SPSS for statistical analysis. Analyses relating to the impact of ethnic categorisation on language attitudes were based on respondents' assumptions about speakers' ethnic groups rather than the actual speakers' ethnic group.

After generating the frequency and percentage of the codes for ethnic categorisation and reasons for categorising speakers into ethnic groups, two-way contingency table analyses were conducted to analyse the relationship between ethnic categorisation and reasons for assigning the speakers to a particular ethnic group. To obtain the *p values* of the post-hoc contingency analysis, the adjusted residuals for each pairwise comparison were calculated and transformed into chi-square values by squaring the adjusted residuals (Beasley & Schumacker, 1995). Then, the obtained chi-square value was transformed into a *p value* using the significance (Sig.chisq) function in SPSS v.26. Since there were 64 analyses (eight ethnic categories by eight categories for reasons), Bonferroni correction was applied to prevent Type I error. For this analysis, the adjusted *p value* = .0007.

4.11.2 Effect of social variables on attitudes towards HE, IE and YE accents

One-way between-groups multiple analyses of variance (MANOVA) were conducted to examine the effects of social variables (gender, religion, and ethnicity) on the attitude scores of HE, IE, and YE accents. MANOVA is the appropriate test when the independent variable is more than one (Pallant, 2020). The data met the assumptions of MANOVA, such as normality, large sample size, independent groups, and no outliers. A sample size of 406 was considered sufficiently large and fairly robust to meet normality assumptions (Field, 2018). There were no outliers in the dependent variables, as indicated by the boxplot and the Mahalanobis distance. There was no multicollinearity across the groups of dependent variables, as evidenced by the results of Pearson's correlation: HE status ($r = .56, p < .001$), IE status ($r = .67, p < .001$), YE status ($r = .67, p < .001$), HE solidarity ($r = .60, p < .001$), IE solidarity, ($r = .68, p < .001$), YE solidarity ($r = .69, p < .001$), HE quality of language ($r = .52, p < .001$), IE quality of language, ($r = .63, p < .001$), YE quality of language ($r = .69, p < .001$). These results show a moderate correlation among the dependent variables as they were within .3 to .7, which is the acceptable range for passing the no multicollinearity

requirement (Rencher & Christensen, 2012). MANOVA also requires a linear relationship between each pair of dependent variables (Cohen et al., 2018). Visualisations of the variables in scatterplots showed linear relationships.

The Box's *M* statistics was used to test the assumption of the variance-covariance among the dependent variables across all levels of the factors (Green & Salkind, 2014). Given that the Box's *M* test was less than .001 in some of the MANOVA tests, Pillai's Trace multivariate statistics was used instead of Wilk's Lambda because it is more robust and suitable when there is unequal N and violation of the assumption of the variance-covariance among dependent variables (Field, 2018; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Given the number of dependent variables (i.e., 18) and the necessity to control Type I error (i.e., rejecting a null hypothesis when it is true), the alpha is adjusted using the Bonferroni correction, which involves dividing the nominal alpha .05 by the number of statistical tests to obtain the adjusted alpha. Thus, the rationale for setting the alpha at .003. The adjusted alpha applied to the post-hoc results (the test of between-subjects effects). The results of the MANOVA shed more light on the effects of social variables on attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents. Only the main effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables were reported. The reason for the significant difference, or no significant difference, is explained in the discussion section.

4.11.3 The relationship between attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba cultures and attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents

Two sets of analyses were used to explore the relationships between attitudes towards varieties and cultures. Firstly, the frequency and percentage of participants' overall preference rankings for Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures were calculated. This provided insight into participants' general orientation towards each cultural group. Additionally, participants' preference rankings were analysed based on their own regional membership to examine potential ingroup favouritism effects on cultural attitudes. Secondly, to increase the generalisability of the findings, I conducted correlation analyses of attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE and attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures. To obtain a comprehensive attitude measure for each language variety, the status, solidarity, and quality ratings were first averaged across both the male and female speaker guises representing that variety. This provided a single composite attitudinal score reflecting the overall orientation towards HE, IE, and YE. Deriving this aggregated attitudinal index for each NgE variety enabled the

subsequent analysis of correlations between attitudes towards variety and corresponding attitudes towards culture. Additionally, the total scores of attitudes towards the cultural items associated with the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba groups were averaged.

Since the attitude items were measured on a scale of 1 to 5, and the culture items were ranked whereby the participants' first, second and third choices were assigned the scores of 5, 3, and 1, I standardised the scores by converting them into T-scores (Cohen et al., 2018). Kendall's tau rank correlation coefficient was utilised as the nonparametric equivalent of the Pearson product-moment correlation to augment the rigour and dependability of the findings. As a nonparametric statistical test was utilised, the assumptions of linear relationship between each pair of variables, independence of observations, normal distribution, and homoscedasticity were obviated (Larson-Hall, 2015).

I correlated attitudes towards the three varieties and cultures separately for participants from each of the three ethnic groups. With six dependent attitude measures included in each analysis (language attitude scores for the three varieties and cultural attitude scores for the three cultures), the alpha level was adjusted to 0.008 to control for Type 1 error due to multiple correlations. Analysing correlations by participants' ethnicity allowed for nuanced relationships between language and cultural attitudes, specifically among individuals from each of the three ethnic backgrounds, and facilitated comparisons with the results of the effect of ethnicity on language attitudes.

4.11.4 Analysis of focus group discussions

The analysis of the focus group transcripts was informed by qualitative *thematic discursive psychology analysis*, a combination of thematic analysis and the data analysis procedures in discursive psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Wiggins, 2017). To find patterns in the FGDs transcripts and identify social actions and psychological constructs, a close reading of the transcribed FGDs data was performed several times to familiarise myself with the data and then develop a coding scheme consisting of multiple categories as emergent from the repeated readings of the data. The codes related to the research questions were then classified independently into categories and specific analytical issues through constant comparison. Finally, these themes and analytical issues were revised and refined as counter-examples emerged.

The iterative process of coding and theme categorisations was completed when no new categories or themes emerged. The identification of themes in the texts was based on Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 82) view of theme as that which "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set". The interactions in the FGDs were analysed based on the critical DP tradition, which sees attitudes and stereotypes as "socially and discursively constructed in the course of everyday communication, and, once objectified, assume an independent and sometimes prescriptive reality" (Augoustinos et al., 2014, p. 262). In the critical DP tradition, the sociohistorical context surrounding participants' orientation and accounts was included in the analysis, given that the construction of meaning in everyday talk is influenced by social, cultural, and historical processes (Wetherell, 2001). I also linked the line-by-line analysis of FGDs excerpts to theories of social identity and ethnolinguistic vitality. The analysis of FGDs focused on the participants' utterances, their interactional contexts, instances of variability, and their functions.

Several steps were taken to ensure the validity, reliability, and robustness of the analyses of the FGDs. Validity in DP is not about the correctness of the analysis since there is no one way of analysing interactional data. Instead, it focuses on how grounded analysis is in the data and issues being researched (Wiggins, 2017). The validity of the analyses was ensured by making use of participants' orientations, reporting variability, providing analytical insight from previous related studies, and allowing readers' evaluation through the presentation of the transcripts being analysed.

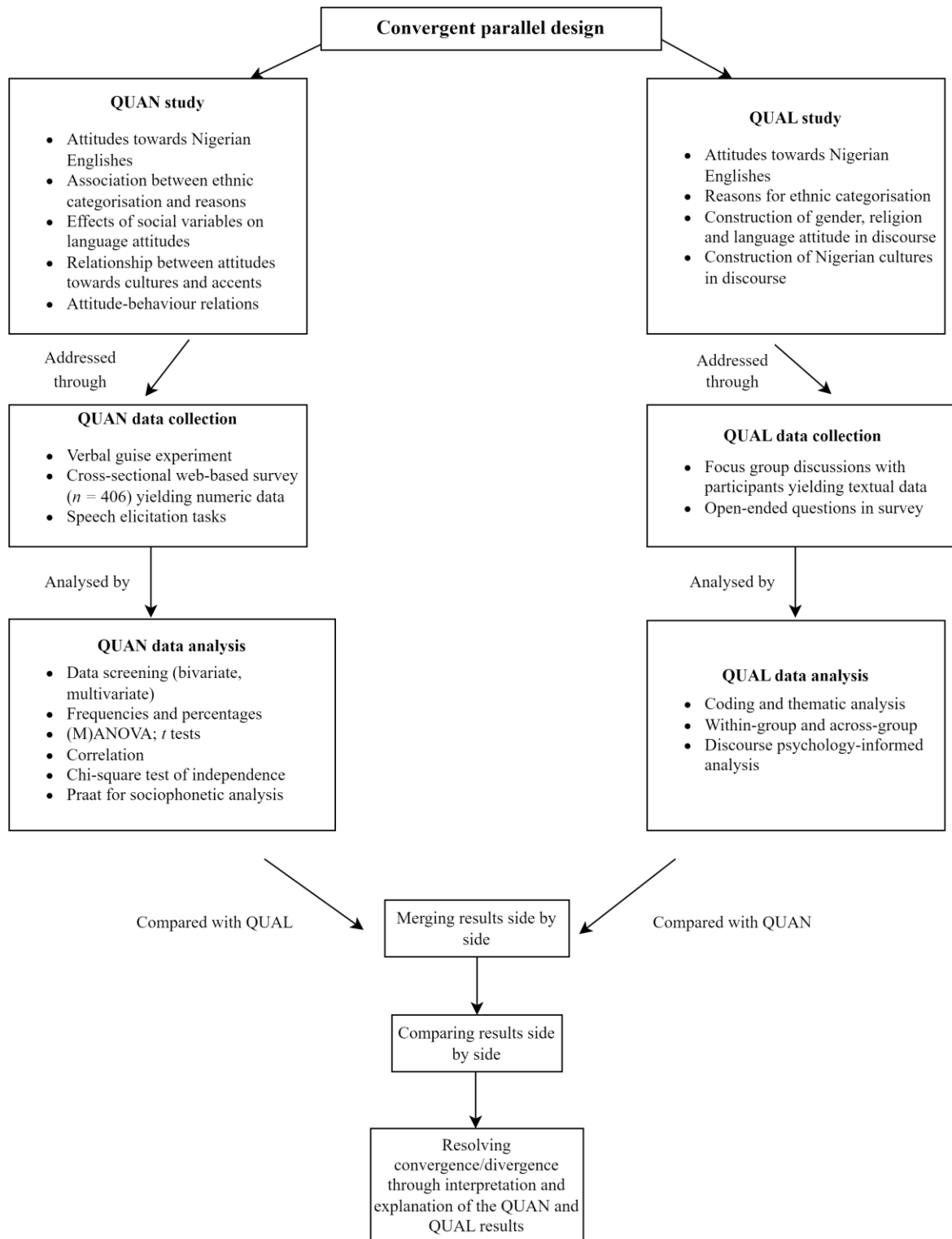
4.11.5 Analysis of schwa tokens from speech elicitation task

The analysis of the schwa tokens started by categorising the 23 occurrences of schwa in the speech elicitation paragraph into three categories: a_schwa, e_schwa and o_schwa based on their orthographic representation in the words in which they occurred. This was aimed at providing a clearer view of how participants realised schwa in their linguistic behaviour (reading). I calculated the frequencies of the actual realisations of these categories of schwa by the respondents. Another Nigerian English researcher was invited to establish coding reliability. The result of the inter-coder reliability test on 10% of the data showed 85% agreement. All remaining differences were discussed and resolved. Participants' realisations of schwa were then compared to the realisations of schwa by the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba groups, as reported in the literature, to indicate areas of similarities and differences. The

degree of difference and similarity was then compared to the participants' evaluations of HE, IE, and YE varieties in the VGE to explore the link between reported attitudes and actual linguistic behaviour.

Acoustic analyses of the schwa tokens followed Mesthrie (2017) and Stell (2022b). The schwa tokens were analysed using Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2021). The F₁ and F₂ formant values and duration of each schwa were extracted using a formants-midpoint script with the formant frequency set at 5000Hz and 5500Hz for men and women. The F₁ and F₂ formant values of the 1,380 schwa tokens were normalised using the Lobanov method (Lobanov, 1971) because of its ability to eliminate speakers' physiological differences, such as the shape of the mouth and vocal tract size, while retaining sociolinguistic differences (Adank et al., 2004; Thomas & Kendall, 2007). The Lobanov normalisation method has been found to be the best, preserving vowel identities with 77% accuracy (Voeten et al., 2022). Normalisation was performed using the NORM tool (<http://lingtools.uoregon.edu/norm/norm1.php>), developed by linguists at the University of Oregon (Thomas & Kendall, 2007). Lobanov normalisation belongs to the speaker-extrinsic method, which factors more than one speaker's vowel into the formula (Labov et al., 2006). The reasons for normalising vowel tokens are to maintain distinctions in vowel quality across sociolinguistic, dialectal, and linguistic boundaries and maintain the phonetic differences between vowels (Disner, 1980; Thomas, 2002). The normalised formant values were organised in Excel and further analysed using SPSS v.26 and Python.

Mesthrie (2017) suggests that only schwa tokens with at least 50ms duration should be included for acoustic analysis. The duration of the 1,380 tokens ranged from 55ms to 383ms. Hence, they were all included in the analyses. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of individual schwa realisation patterns was conducted to assess the level of variation among the three ethnic groups. Additionally, a one-way ANOVA was performed with the normalised F₁ and F₂ mean values as the dependent variables and the participants' ethnicity as the independent variable to test for significant differences among the three ethnolinguistic groups. An independent-samples *t*-test was also conducted to test for significant differences between the F₁ and F₂ values of the men and women. Figure 4.3 presents a summary of the design, data collection, and analytical techniques used in this study.



Adapted from (Creswell, 2015, p. 66)

Figure 4.3 A convergent design summary of the study

4.12 Chapter summary

This chapter introduced the overall research design of the current study, that is, convergent parallel design, which merges quantitative and qualitative analyses. This was followed by an account of how ethical issues were addressed and the demographic information of the participants collected. The chapter then presented a detailed discussion of the instruments (VGE, questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity, FGDS, and SET) used for data collection. The chapter concluded with a description of the quantitative and qualitative techniques adopted to answer the research questions. With the thoroughness that went into the design of the study, it is believed that the study is robust, comprehensive, and valid.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and the discussion of the results. It is divided into four sections, each addressing one set of research questions and concluding with a discussion of the research findings. The reason for presenting the discussion immediately after the results of each research question is to make the thesis more reader-friendly.

5.1 Attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes

This section starts with the results of attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE varieties and continues with the results of the association between ethnic categorisation and reasons for categorising speakers' accents into ethnic groups. This is followed by the results of FGDs and a discussion of the reported findings.

5.1.1 Results of the verbal-guise experiment

This subsection presents the general ratings of the HE, IE, and YE varieties and the results of the participants' ratings of the varieties on status, solidarity, and quality of language.

5.1.1.1 The general ratings of the varieties

Before conducting the descriptive and inferential statistics, an *a priori* power analysis was performed using G*Power3 (Faul et al., 2007) to test the suitability of the sample for a one-way repeated measures ANOVA. A small effect size ($d = .25$) and an alpha of .01 were used. The results showed that a sample of 58 participants was required to achieve a power of .95. This indicates that 406 participants in this study were sufficient to conduct the required analysis. Table 5.1 shows the descriptive statistics of the ratings of the HE, IE, and YE varieties across all participants.

Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics for the dependent measures for three Nigerian Englishes

Speakers	Status		Solidarity		Quality of language	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
HE	3.09	.87	3.00	.87	2.85	1.00
IE	3.43	.72	3.31	.74	3.40	.78
YE	3.59	.75	3.36	.77	3.55	.82

The descriptive analysis showed that speakers of YE were rated more favourably in terms of status, solidarity, and quality of language dimensions than those of HE and IE. In contrast, HE received the lowest rating on all dimensions. The results also showed that the Englishes spoken in the Southern part of Nigeria (IE and YE) were rated more favourably than that of the Northerners (HE). A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to test for significant differences in the mean scores between these varieties, as reported in the following subsections.

5.1.1.2 Status ratings

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to test for significant differences in the participants' ratings of HE, IE, and YE on the status dimension (education, self-confidence, leadership, social status, and intelligence). The significance value of Mauchly's test was $<.05$; therefore, Greenhouse-Geisser was used for sphericity correction. The results of the ANOVA test indicated significant differences in participants' ratings of the three NgE varieties: $F(2, 405) = 118.42, p < .001; \eta^2_p$ (partial eta squared) = 0.23, which is a large effect size. Tukey's post-hoc procedure (with Bonferroni correction) indicated that HE ($M = 3.09, SD = .87$) 95%CI [3.00, 3.17] had significantly lower ratings than IE ($M = 3.43, SD = .72$) 95%CI [3.66, 3.50] and YE ($M = 3.59, SD = .75$) 95%CI [3.52, 3.66] (see Figure 5.1). YE was significantly higher on status than IE.

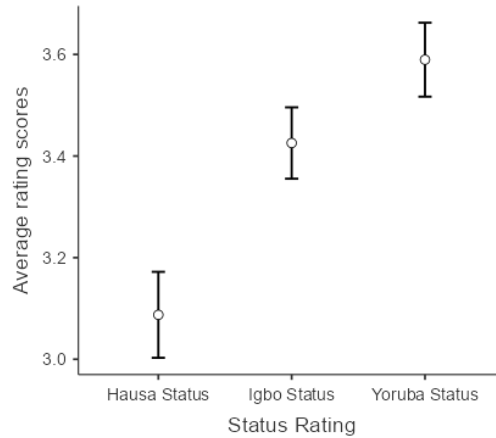


Figure 5.1 Marginal means plot for status ratings

Figure 5.1 shows that there was no overlap among the confidence intervals. This indicates that the mean status rating of YE was higher than that of IE, which in turn was higher than that of HE. This means that hypothesis H_{1a}, which proposed a significant difference in the mean ratings of HE, IE, and YE on status dimensions, has been confirmed.

5.1.1.3 Solidarity ratings

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to test for significant differences in the participants' ratings of HE, IE, and YE on the solidarity dimension (friendliness, sincerity, sense of humour, handsome/beautiful). The significance value of Mauchly's test was $<.05$; therefore, Greenhouse-Geisser was used for sphericity correction. The ANOVA test results demonstrated a significant difference in participants' ratings of two NgE varieties: $F(2, 405) = 69.81, p < .001; \eta^2_p = 0.15$, with a large effect size. Tukey's post-hoc procedure (with Bonferroni correction) indicated that HE ($M = 3.00, SD = .87$) 95%CI [2.92, 3.09] had significantly lower ratings than IE ($M = 3.31, SD = .74$) 95%CI [3.24, 3.39] and YE ($M = 3.36, SD = .77$) 95%CI [3.29, 3.44]. However, YE did not differ from IE in terms of solidarity ($p = .336$). Figure 5.2 presents the marginal means plot of the analysis, which showed an overlap between the confidence intervals of Igbo and Yoruba Englishes.



Figure 5.2 Marginal means plot for solidarity ratings

This result means that hypothesis H_{1b}, which proposed a significant difference in the mean ratings of HE, IE, and YE on solidarity dimensions was supported.

5.1.1.4 Quality of language ratings

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to test for significant differences in the participants' ratings of HE, IE, and YE on the quality of language dimensions (model of pronunciation, correctness, processing fluency, and aesthetic quality). The significance value of Mauchly's test was $<.05$, so the Greenhouse-Geisser sphericity correction was used. The main results of the ANOVA test showed significant differences in participants' ratings of the three Nigerian Englishes: $F(2, 405) = 172.30, p < .001; \eta^2_p = 0.30$, which is a large effect size. Tukey's post-hoc procedure (with Bonferroni correction) indicated that YE speakers' quality of language ($M = 3.55, SD = .82$) 95%CI [3.47, 3.63] was significantly higher than that of speakers of IE ($M = 3.40, SD = .78$) 95%CI [3.32, 3.47] and HE ($M = 2.85, SD = 1.00$) 95%CI [3.47, 3.63]. The results also showed a significant difference between the quality of language of HE and IE speakers. A graphical representation of these significant differences is presented in Figure 5.3. This indicates that hypothesis H_{1c}, which proposed a significant difference in the mean ratings of HE, IE, and YE on quality of language dimensions, has been confirmed.

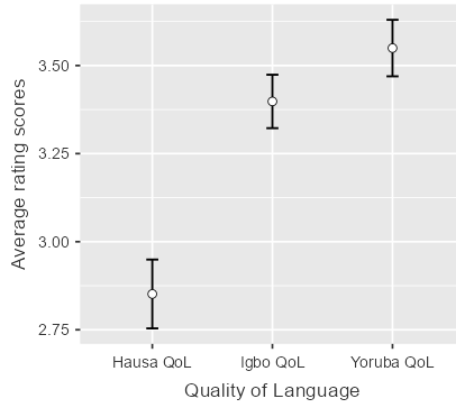


Figure 5.3 Marginal means plot for quality of language ratings

5.1.2 Association between ethnic categorisations and reasons for categorisations

This section presents the results of the second part of the first research question, which sought to explore the association between the ethnic categorisation of HE, IE, and YE speakers and the reasons for their categorisation of the speakers into ethnic groups. It begins with the percentage distributions of ethnic categorisation and reasons for categorisation categories and ends with the results of two-way contingency table analyses.

5.1.2.1 Ethnic categorisation

Participants were asked to indicate the ethnicity of the speakers they listened to. This was to test whether they could assign an ethnic group to speakers based on their accents. Figure 5.4 presents the results of the ethnic categorisation of speakers. The percentage of ethnic categorisations was calculated across the two speakers of each variety (male and female).

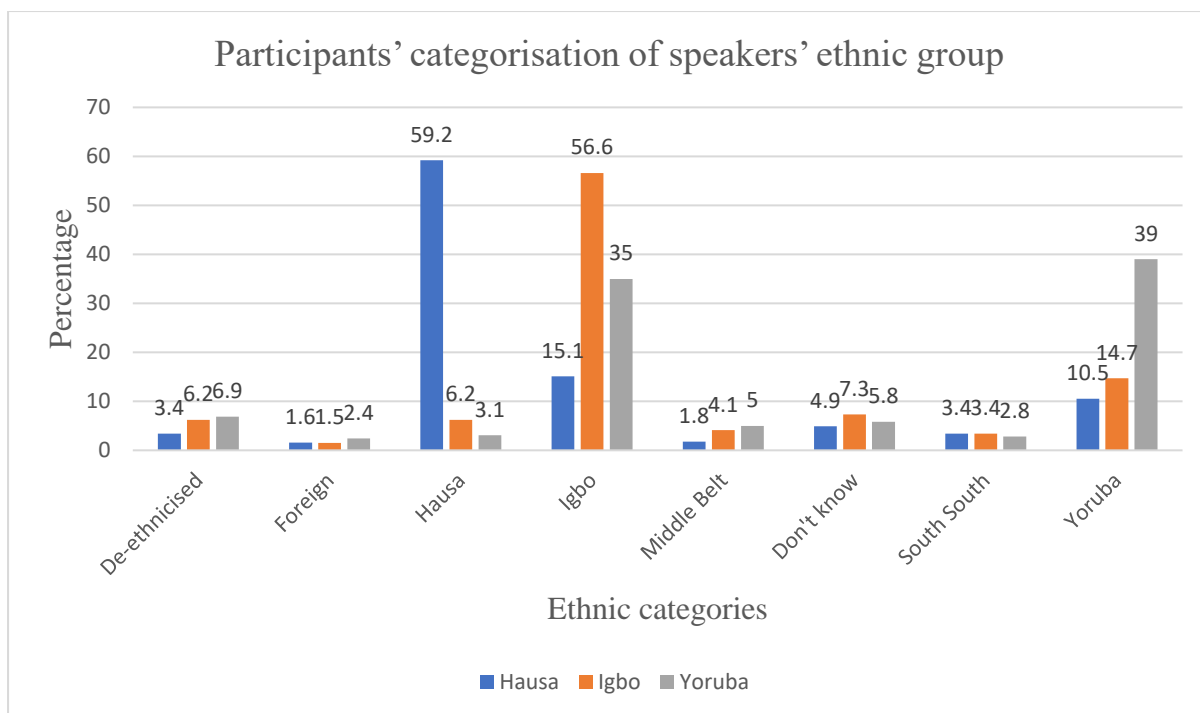


Figure 5.4 Participants' categorisation of speakers' ethnic group

Figure 5.4 is quite revealing in several ways. First, it shows that the ethnic categorisation of the HE speakers has the highest percentage (59.2%), followed by IE (56.6%) and YE (39%). This result demonstrates that the participants found the HE accent the easiest to identify. A closer inspection of the table shows that some participants found it difficult to clearly distinguish between IE and YE speakers. For example, 35% of the participants classified IE speakers as Yoruba, while 14% categorised YE speakers as Igbo. This table shows that only 6.2% and 3.1% of the participants classified the IE and YE speakers as HE.

Second, the results in Figure 5.4 show that YE speakers were categorised as being de-ethnicised more often (6.9%) than HE speakers, which had the lowest percentage for this category (3.4%). Additionally, YE speakers had the highest percentage (2.4%) categorised as foreign. The high percentage of YE's de-ethnicised category aligns with the findings from the VGE, where YE received the highest status, solidarity, and quality of language ratings. In general, the results show that the participants were moderately accurate in identifying speakers' ethnic groups based on speech alone.

5.1.2.2 Reasons for ethnic categorisation

Participants' reasons for categorising speakers' accents as they did provided eight categories, as presented in Figure 5.5.

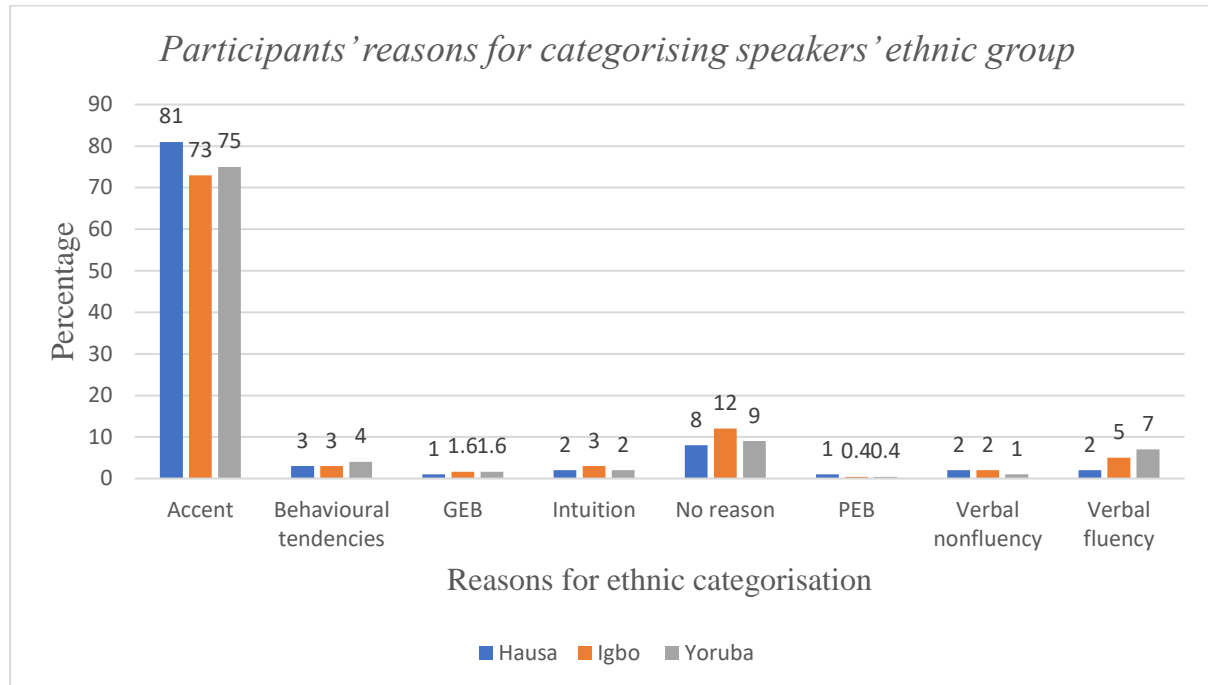


Figure 5.5 Participants' reasons for categorising speakers' ethnic group as they did; GEB (Good educational background), PEB (Poor educational background)

What stands out in Figure 5.5 is that accent was the most frequently reported reason for ethnic categorisation. In other words, participants who categorised speakers into different ethnic groups did so because of speakers' accents. This reason featured prominently in the categorisation of HE speakers (81%), followed by YE (75%) and IE (73%). The second most frequently reported reason was 'no reason', which may represent the inability of the respondents to provide an ethnic categorisation, or to find words to justify the reason for assigning the speakers to a particular ethnic group. Rather than providing any concrete justification, some respondents reported that they felt that the speakers spoke like individuals from the ethnic group to which they assigned them. This reason (intuition) is comparatively similar across the HE, IE and YE speakers. Whereas YE (1.6%) and IE (1.6%) had the highest percentage for GEB, HE had the highest percentage for PEB. In agreement with having a relatively high percentage of GEB, the YE speakers were seen as being more verbally fluent (7%) than other speakers, IE (5%) and HE (2%). Conversely, HE and IE speakers were rated relatively highly in verbal nonfluency at 2% each. 10% of the

participants in this study classified the speakers' ethnic groups based on behavioural tendencies with statements such as "Because of the way he behaves" and "because he has the zeal to know more". The next three sections report on the results of the association between ethnic categorisations and the reasons provided by the participants for this categorisation.

5.1.2.3 Two-way contingency table analysis for HE speakers

A two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to ascertain the relationship between the ethnic categorisation of HE speakers and the reasons for classifying them into ethnic groups. The two variables were ethnicity with eight levels (de-ethnicised, foreign, Hausa, Igbo, Middle Belt, Don't know, South-South, and Yoruba) and reasons for categorisation with eight levels (accent, behavioural tendencies, good educational background, intuition, no reason, poor educational background, verbal nonfluency, and verbal fluency). Ethnic categorisations and reasons for categorisation were found to be significantly related: Pearson $\chi^2(49, N = 406) = 408.24, p < .0007$, Cramér's $V = .26$, which supports hypothesis H_{2a} that proposed an association between the two variables. In addition, follow-up pairwise comparisons were conducted to ascertain the combination of categories that contributed to statistical significance. Table 5.2 shows the results of these analyses. Holm's sequential Bonferroni method was used to control for Type I error at the .05 level across all comparisons. The adjusted p value = .0007. The significant pairwise differences were between the following categories: GEB and de-ethnicised, accent and Hausa, Igbo and accent, accent and don't know, no reason and don't know, PEB and Middle Belt, and Hausa and no reason.

Table 5.2 Results of the pairwise comparisons using the Holm's sequential Bonferroni method for HE speakers

Comparison	Pearson chi-square	p value	Cramér's V
GEB vs de-ethnicised	34.81	<.0007	.07
Accent vs Hausa	104.04	<.0007	.13
Accent vs Igbo	16.81	<.0007	.05
Accent vs don't know	114.49	<.0007	.14
No reason vs don't know	234.09	<.0007	.20
PEB vs Middle Belt	11.56	<.0007	.04
No reason vs Hausa	88.36	<.0007	.12

Table 5.2 shows that the relationship with the largest effect size was no reason and don't know, which shows that a greater percentage of the respondents could not categorise the

speakers into an ethnic group, or provide any reasons for ethnic categorisation. The table also shows an association between Hausa and accent, indicating that participants who categorised the speakers as Hausa did so based on their accent. Additionally, participants could identify the speakers as Hausa, but could not find words to explain their reasons. Furthermore, the contingency analysis showed a significant relationship between PEB and Middle Belt. This result shows that the speakers were categorised as Middle Belt based on the perception that individuals from this area have limited exposure to good education (Adeyemi, 2001), which impacts their English language use. Some participants claimed that the speakers were Igbo, based on their accents. Because some participants categorised HE speakers as Igbo, this explains why there is an association between Igbo and accent in the two-way contingency table analyses of HE speakers. There was also an association between GEB and de-ethnicisation, demonstrating that the LI of people with good education has minimal influence on their speech.

5.1.2.4 Two-way contingency table analysis for IE speakers

A two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to test for the association between ethnic categorisation and the reasons for the ethnic categorisation of IE speakers. The two variables had the same levels as those of the HE speakers described above. Ethnic categorisations and reasons for categorisation were significantly related: Pearson $\chi^2(49, N = 406) = 330.79, p < .0007$, Cramér's $V = .24$, which confirms hypothesis H_{2b} that proposed an association between the two variables. Follow-up pairwise comparisons were conducted to ascertain significant relationship levels. Table 5.3 shows the results of these analyses. Holm's sequential Bonferroni method was used to control for Type I error at the .05 level across all comparisons. The adjusted p value = .0007. Significant pairwise differences were found between GEB and de-ethnicised, verbal fluency and de-ethnicised, no reason and foreign, Igbo and accent, Igbo and no reason, accent and de-ethnicised, accent and don't know, and no reason and don't know.

Table 5.3 Results of the pairwise comparisons using the Holm’s sequential Bonferroni method for IE speakers

Comparison	Pearson chi-square	<i>p</i> value	Cramér’s <i>V</i>
GEB vs de-ethnicised	30.47	<.0007	.07
Verbal fluency vs de-ethnicised	49.46	<.0007	.09
No reason vs foreign	16.00	<.0007	.05
Accent vs Igbo	21.16	<.0007	.06
No reason vs Igbo	34.81	<.0007	.07
Accent vs de-ethnicised	18.49	<.0007	.05
Accent vs don’t know	123.21	<.0007	.14
No reason vs don’t know	248.04	<.0007	.20

As shown in Table 5.3, the results demonstrate that GEB and verbal fluency were significantly associated with the de-ethnicised category. This result demonstrates that speakers who could not be associated with any particular group were categorised based on perceived GEB and verbal fluency. A closer inspection of the table shows that participants who categorised IE speakers as foreign could not provide any reason for their choice. On the one hand, respondents who correctly identified the ethnic group of IE speakers were convinced that they were Igbo but could not find any reason. This finding demonstrates that one can identify an accent, but unable to explain why. On the other hand, the participants could identify IE speakers based on their accents. It is apparent from this table that participants who reported ‘don’t know’ for ethnic categorisation did not provide any reason. What is surprising about the data in this table is the relationship between accent and the de-ethnicised category. A possible preliminary interpretation of this relationship is that there tends to be de-ethnicisation in progress, but it is not fully observable by a vast majority of the sample. As such, while some participants reported that IE speakers have ‘accent neutral’ speech, others could recognise they were Igbo based on their accent.

5.1.2.5 Two-way contingency table analysis for YE speakers

A two-way contingency table analysis was conducted to test for the association between ethnic categorisation and reasons for the categorisation of YE speakers. The two variables had the same levels as the HE and IE speakers described above. Ethnic categorisations and reasons for ethnicity were significantly related: Pearson $\chi^2(49, N = 406) = 235.19, p <.0007$, Cramér’s *V* = .20, which supports hypothesis H_{2c} that proposed an association between the two variables. Follow-up pairwise comparisons were conducted to determine the points of significance. Table 5.4 shows the results of these analyses. Holm’s sequential Bonferroni

method was used to control for Type I error at the .05 level across all comparisons. The adjusted p value = .0007. Significant pairwise differences were found between GEB and de-ethnicised, accent and don't know, no reason and don't know, Yoruba and accent, and Yoruba and no reason.

Table 5.4 Results of the pairwise comparisons using the Holm's sequential Bonferroni method for YE speakers

Comparison	Pearson chi-square	<i>p</i> value	Cramér's <i>V</i>
GEB vs de-ethnicised	26.01	<.0007	.06
Accent vs don't know	68.89	<.0007	.10
No reason vs don't know	158.76	<.0007	.16
Accent vs Yoruba	32.49	<.0007	.07
Yoruba vs no reason	16.81	<.0007	.05

This result demonstrates that participants who did not categorise YE speakers' accents based on ethnicity provided no reason for ethnic categorisation. This shows a relationship between having a GEB and the ability to speak 'good English' without being identified with any particular ethnic group in Nigeria. The 'Accent vs don't know' and 'Yoruba vs no reason' significant relationships demonstrate that participants could identify that the speakers are Yoruba but could not find any reason to justify their choice. There was a significant relationship between Yoruba and accent, which indicates that the participants who identified the speakers as Yoruba did so based on their accent.

5.1.2.6 Comparing the two-way contingency table analyses for the three NgE varieties

The most striking observation from the two-way contingency table analyses for the three varieties is the relationship between accent and ethnic categories. The classification of speakers into the actual ethnic group to which they belong was based on their accents. This result shows that a greater percentage of the participants were able to detect the ethnic group of speakers based on their speech. Another consistent result from the contingency analyses is the association between GEB and de-ethnicisation, which shows that when one is perceived to be well educated, it can be difficult to detect one's ethnic group. Another common association among the three varieties was accurately identifying the speakers' ethnic groups but providing no justification. This association indicates that accent detection can be intuitive. Some of the participants in this study were convinced that the speaker was from a particular ethnic group, but could not explain why. Recurrent in the categorisation of the three varieties is the relationship between 'don't know' and 'no reason', a finding that shows that

participants who did not categorise the speakers into any ethnic group did not provide any reason. In all the contingency table analyses, there were no significant differences featuring any of the following categories: behavioural tendencies, intuition, verbal nonfluency, and South-South.

Peculiar to IE speakers is the association between verbal fluency and de-ethnicisation, as well as accent and de-ethnicisation. For the former, it shows that IE speakers could not be assigned to any specific ethnic group by some respondents, perhaps, because of their fluency. This relationship found for the IE speakers is surprising because the YE speakers have the highest percentage of de-ethnicisation of speech (Figure 5.4) and verbal fluency (Figure 5.5). This finding may explain why there was also a relationship between accent and de-ethnicisation for IE speakers, which has been explained to mean de-ethnicisation in progress, which many respondents have not fully recognised.

There was a unique relationship between PEB and Middle Belt for the HE speakers. This relationship may show that participants who perceived HE speakers as belonging to the Middle Belt did so based on PEB. This result is not surprising because many states that belong to the Middle Belt, such as Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau, are classified as educationally disadvantaged states (Adeyemi, 2001).

5.1.3 Findings from focus group discussions

This section presents analyses of FGDs focusing on participants' expressed attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE and what helped them identify and classify the speakers.

5.1.3.1 Attitudes towards the three Nigerian Englishes

In line with the results of the VGE, participants in the FGDs also demonstrated less favourable attitudes towards the HE variety. When asked what they think about the voices they heard in the VGE, one of the Igbo participants remarked that she rated an IE speaker more favourably than the HE speaker based on perceived personality. She argues:

Excerpt 1

Unlike Speaker C [HE male speaker] whose language is not that good, Speaker B [the female IE speaker], she was very fluent and her English was very, very good. So when I heard her speaking, I was like, this lady must be very beautiful. That was what came to my mind because they believe that believe that when you are ugly, your voice will be ugly, too or something like that.

This participant's use of the intensifier 'very' four times to qualify how fluent and good the speaker's English was shows how favourably the participant evaluated her. This positive attitude towards the speaker is based on the participant's perception that "this lady must be very beautiful". She legitimises her stance by drawing on a stereotype that beautiful people have good accents, while ugly people do not. This association between beauty and fluency may be a result of 'halo effect', a type of cognitive bias where a perception of physical attractiveness can influence an evaluation of people's language use. The participants' evaluation supports the claim that individuals can evaluate people's language use based on solidarity traits such as beauty.

Although participants agree that Igbo and Yoruba Englishes are better than HE, one observable phenomenon in the FGDs is that many Igbo participants argued that Yoruba are the people who are most fluent in English in Nigeria. However, many Yoruba participants thought the Igbo are more fluent in English than the Yoruba, as shown in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2

Context: Participants were discussing the English language usage of the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba and made evaluative comments about them. All the participants are men and Yoruba and the discussion took place at LASUED. (Mod = moderator).

- 1 Caleb: For me (1.0) Igbo people speaks better English than other tribes
- 2 Mod: What do you think↓
- 3 Tunde: I think I agree with him
4. (1.0)
- 5 Kayode: Yes, Igbo people English is sweet
- 6 Tunde: I also want to say that just like Igbo speaks good English=I am sorry to say
- 7 this (2.0) Hausa's English is very bad
- 8 Caleb: Exactly

Participants in this excerpt collectively construct an evaluative hierarchy of Nigerian Englishes, placing IE at the top and HE at the bottom. By using 'sweet' (line 5), Kayode conceptualises language as a sugary food based on his sensory experience of taste and the pleasantness of the language. In NgE, 'sweet' can mean 'desirable' or 'delicious' (Blench, 2005). It is noticeable in Tunde's account (lines 6-7) his use of the phrase "I am sorry to say this", which can be interpreted as a mitigation strategy to the face threats against the Hausa. Although all the participants are Yoruba, they did not align with the 'we-they dichotomy' by positively representing the other. This favourable attitude towards Igbo deviates from the

results of the VGE, which established that YE speakers were the most favourably rated accent on the quality of language dimension.

However, the participants agreed that HE is the least fluent accent, as observed in the VGE. This positive-other representation negates the concept of ethnocentrism, which argues that one's own group is favoured while the outgroup is unfavoured (LeVine & Campbell, 1972). Instead, evident in Excerpt 2 is a case of 'ethnorelativity' (Bennett, 2013), a situation where the participants acknowledge that there is another variety better than theirs. From an ethnolinguistic vitality perspective, the Yoruba participants in Excerpt 2 may have considered the IE variety as being more prestigious and having a higher vitality than their own YE variety.

Like their Yoruba counterparts, the Igbo participants in an FGD did not choose their IE variety as the most fluent. Instead, they argued that Yoruba people speak English better than the Igbo. Excerpt 3 is from a discussion about the English language usage of different ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Excerpt 3

Key: Kene and Jide (J) are men while Nenyé (N) and Mary are women. The discussion took place at ESUT and participants were responding to the prompt asking them what they think about the English language use of different ethnic groups in Nigeria.

- 1 Kene: In all the ethnic groups in Nigeria, especially among the major ones,
- 2 Yoruba has a better command of English
- 3 N&J: Yes o
- 4 Mod: What makes you say so?
- 5 Kene: In Nigeria, free education started in Yoruba land, that's why
- 6 they are more advanced in learning (1.0) if you watch here in Igbo land, the you
- 7 know the level of lockdown here, it is affecting educational system (1.0) most
- 8 people don't voice out, but if you see Yoruba people speaking, most
- 9 professors are from there=90% of books I have read is professor this
- 10 professor that, that's from Yoruba land (2.0) Igbos are trying our best
- 11 Mod: So, as someone that stayed in the North, what would you say about Hausa's
- 12 English usage=
- 13 Nenyé: =All of them, they don't know English
- 14 Mary: It is not all (1.0) like where I went to school, it is not all that can speak English
- 15 Jide: Even if, even if, I have not seen any Hausa man that has finished school,
- 16 even if from small, started reading English or till he becomes a big man,
- 17 you will still know that he is an Hausa person

Kene begins this part of the discussion by stating that the Yoruba have a ‘better’ command of English than other ethnic groups in Nigeria. This position is emphatically supported by Nenyne and Jide, signalled by using the NgE pragmatic marker ‘o’ used for emphasis (line 3). When the moderator probes further by asking for an explanation, Kene offers two reasons in lines 5–10 for asserting that YE is ‘better’ than other Nigerian Englishes. The central idea is that the Yoruba speak better English because “free education started in Yoruba land” (line 5), which has resulted in their production of many professors. He corroborates his claim with personal experience by asserting that “90% of the book I have read is professor this professor that. That’s from Yoruba land” (lines 9–10). This is in sync with the finding that individuals with good educational backgrounds are perceived to speak fluent English more than those with poor educational backgrounds (Aboh, 2023a). Kene constructs the Yoruba people’s early access to English as a sociohistorical capital that has given them an edge in English over other ethnic groups in Nigeria.

By stating, “Igbos are trying our best” (line 10), Kene indicates that the Igbo are trying to catch up with the Yoruba. In lines 6 and 7, he maintains that apart from free education that began in Yoruba land, the educational system in Igbo land is affected by “the level of lockdown here”. By referring to the lockdown in Igbo land, he presents a ‘collective victimhood’ (Bourhis et al., 2019), which the Igbo ethnic group suffers that has hindered their ability to speak fluent English. During the time of data collection, schools and businesses across the five Igbo states in Nigeria were closed on Mondays because of the restrictions on movement by a Biafran freedom fighter group who protested against the arrest and detention of their leader by the federal government of Nigeria. The implication is that there is a reduction in the number of hours students are expected to learn English in school, which affects their English fluency. By using the second person pronoun ‘you’ in lines 6 and 8, he constructs himself as an animator who merely communicates a common knowledge. He proceeds to use ‘I’ (line 9) to corroborate the common knowledge that the Yoruba are fluent in English. Mgbo-Elue (1987) reaches a similar conclusion that speakers of major languages in southern Nigeria show more positive attitudes towards the linguistic forms of other ethnolinguistic groups than their own ethnic group. The reason for this positive-other presentation may be because of the close relationship between the Igbo and Yoruba, which is observed in the extensive language borrowings between the two languages, geographical proximity, inter-ethnic marriages and trade.

Similar to Excerpt 2 and in line with the VGE results, the participants in Excerpt 3 also expressed negative attitudes towards HE. The question in line 11 by the moderator was addressed to Mary, who had previously stated that she grew up in northern Nigeria where Hausa is mainly spoken. Without allowing the addressed (Mary) to speak, Nenye quickly interjects and discloses her stereotypical conception of the Hausa. Without exempting anyone, she generalises, “All of them, they don’t know English” (line 13). Ladegaard (2012) argues that when individuals talk about the outgroup, it is not necessarily about who the outgroup is but rather who they (the ingroup) are not. Mary softens Nenye’s negative extreme case formulation of the outgroup in line 14 as she brings forward her personal experience with the Hausa in the North as supportive evidence to imply that some Hausa people can speak English. Countering Mary and aligning with Nenye, Jide in lines 15–17, upgrades Chinenye’s categorisation of the Hausa as ‘poor English speakers’ by remarking that he has not met any Hausa person, no matter their level of education, who does not have L1 phonological interference. In doing so, an account about HE is used to perform a social action: a potentially negative stereotype that HE does not match his perception of a ‘good’ variety of English. One of the immediately apparent features of Jide’s turn is the repetition of “even if, even if” (l. 15), which may indicate that he is not open to accommodating any counter-assessment of his stance about HE, thereby constructing him as a prejudiced individual. As Wetherell and Potter (1992, p. 206) point out, “prejudice is indicated when an individual continues to hold an opinion despite being confronted with contradictory information”. In his subsequent turns, Jide links the dominant phonological interference in HE speech to the absence of some sounds present in English in the Hausa language. He argues:

Excerpt 4

The cause is from, yeah, alphabetical arrangements, because in Igbo land, there are some words that you can’t—you know in Igbo, Igbo have the whole words in English but some, yeah (2.0) even in that Yoruba, they misplace words (1.0) trying to voice it out after learning the English and oral:: every every (1.0) they tend to make that mistake (1.0) that’s it

In Excerpts 2 and 3, participants perform the social action of evaluating Nigerian Englishes. This evaluation is often realised by mentioning an ethnolinguistic category, followed by evaluative adjectives aimed at comparing HE, IE, and YE. In other words, by

mentioning the ethnic groups and their perceived degree of English proficiency signalled by using adjectives such as ‘better’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’, the participants highlight their attitudes towards these varieties. This nature of evaluation aligns with SIT, which proposes that social comparison between ingroups and outgroups must resolve the problems of referent and dimension selections. The participants adopt the three major ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria as their referents, and their English language usage as the dimensions for comparison. By evaluating the other Southern NgE variety more positively than their own variety, the Igbo and Yoruba participants construct themselves as nonbiased in the evaluations. However, their discursive positioning deviates from the main tenet of SIT that individuals evaluate the linguistic behaviour of the ingroup more positively than the outgroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Generally, we can see how this linguistic evaluation demonstrates the kind of language ideology the participants have and how it maintains a certain kind of status quo, where the HE variety of English is ranked lower than IE and YE.

5.1.3.2 Accent as the main reason for speaker identification and ethnic classification

As observed in the reasons for the ethnic categorisation results (Figure 5.5), accent was the main reason for speaker identification and ethnic groupings. Similarly, the transcripts of the FGDs also showed that participants identified and categorised speakers into ethnic groups based on their accents.

Excerpt 5

Context: After listening to the voices and completing the VGE questionnaire, the participants were asked to explain what enabled them to identify the ethnic groups of the speakers since they had stated that the speakers were from Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. The discussion took place at LASUED. Olamide and Bashirat are women and Yoruba.

- 1 Moderator: So now we just listened to six voices, what made you to say that this
- 2 person belongs to a particular ethnic group?
- 3 Olamide: The reason why I said so is because of their accent that they’re speaking
- 4 (1.0) the accent
- 5 Moderator: What can you say about this? Can you describe this accent?
- 6 Olamide: Uh (2.0)
- 7 Bashirat: Like Yoruba (laughs), eh maybe from Ibadan now, when they want to talk
- 8 about something that was their ‘son’, they will say [sɔ̃n], and the normal ‘son’,
- 9 they will say is ‘tson’ like son of the soil, they will now say,
- 10 “tson of the soil” (laughs)

Despite identifying accent as the major reason for the identification of the speakers' ethnic groups, Olamide found it challenging to illustrate as seen in the use of filler 'uh' and her long pause (line 6). To fill the void, in lines 7–10, Bashirat steps in with an example by pointing out that Yoruba people from Ibadan have a dentalisation of their voiceless alveolar fricative /s/, as in when they want to pronounce 'son'. Her laughter at the beginning of her turn (line 7) may signify her negative attitude towards Ibadan speakers of English. She uses the word 'normal' to imply the standardised form from which Ibadan English speakers deviate (line 8). In a comment made by one of the female participants, which is not presented in the excerpt, she remarks that she was able to identify the YE female speaker based on how she pronounced 'issue', which has been discussed in Section 4.4.1.1 where the linguistic features of the speakers were described. Bashirat's laughter at the end of her assessment (line 10) could be interpreted as derision laughter, which she uses to ridicule Ibadan people when they speak English (Giles & Oxford, 1970). Bashirat's laughter after presenting instances of Ibadan English is unsurprising because individuals tend to laugh when juxtaposing normatively appropriate and inappropriate speech features (Stokoe, 2008).

Overall, during the discussions, the participants noted that speakers' accents enabled them to identify the speakers' ethnic group. However, one observation is that many of them found it difficult to provide direct examples from the speakers' utterances that informed their identification and categorisation. They were convinced that the speakers came from the ethnic group they categorised, but they could not provide the linguistic features of the speakers' utterances that informed their decision, as Excerpt 6 further illustrates.

Excerpt 6

Context: After completing the VGE questionnaire, the participants at LASUED were asked what helped them identify the ethnic groups of the speakers and one of the participants stated that it was the fluency of the speakers. The following discussion ensued. (Taiwo, male; Tomi, female).

- 1 Mod: So how are you able to identify the Igbo person apart from fluency?
- 2 Taiwo: Hmm, the Igbo the way they (3.0) place the tenses and the words, the
- 3 English you will know that this person is from Igbo. But not all of them are
- 4 from Igbo *sha o*. Though but the way they speaks, if you listen, it's not that
- 5 you just listen to it once, you will listen over and over again, so you'll be
- 6 able to what, identify at least they are not, you will just grab that, okay,
- 7 this person should be from Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa.
- 8 Tomi: I'm from eh, I am a Yoruba person, so I could tell who was Hausa from

9 Igbo and Yoruba because of the accents and intonations because the Hausa
 10 person the way he pronounced ‘study’, the way he pronounced ‘study’ it was
 11 different from the way I pronounce study (1.0) so I could tell that this is
 12 Hausa and that Igbo too.
 13 Taiwo: You can’t (differentiate) Yoruba and Igbo em this thing tongues o easily=
 14 Tomi: =You can get Igbo but you can hardly get Yoruba=
 15 Taiwo: =But Hausa now Hausa now with the way easily but with the way of
 16 speaking you will know he is an Hausa man or a woman *sef*.

Taiwo fails to provide specific examples of the placement of tenses and words, which he argues, are what differentiate Nigerian Englishes. To substantiate his claim that he can differentiate IE speakers from others, he refers to the voices in the VGE by stating, “but not all of them are from Igbo *sha o*” (lines 3–4). ‘sha’ is a pragmatic marker found in NgE, which often occurs at the clause-final position (Unuabonah & Oladipupo, 2018). In the context of use, Taiwo may have used it to consolidate his claim that he can differentiate IE speakers from others. In addition to ‘sha’, he employs another pragmatic marker in NgE, ‘o’, which performs the epistemic stance of certainty used to “emphasise the force of the basic message in an utterance” (Unuabonah & Oladipupo, 2018, p. 12). Taiwo may adopt it to show that he is convinced that the speakers he heard are not from the same ethnic group. Despite this certainty, he finds it challenging to produce a specific example to justify his argument. Taiwo emphasises the difficulty in differentiating Nigerian Englishes, which could be a result of the complexity in mapping linguistic features onto ethnic categories (Garrett et al., 2003). This difficulty may also explain why there were 7% ‘intuition’ responses and 29% ‘no reason’ as the reasons for categorising speakers into ethnic groups (see Figure 5.5).

Taiwo’s inability to provide a concrete example was also experienced by a participant (Chidi) in another discussion in the university in Igbo land who argues that one can distinguish among Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba Englishes. However, when asked how he would know, he reiterates his intuitive abilities:

Excerpt 7

I think, you will know, because most of the ethnic groups or most of the languages like the first language affects the second language, which is English, so when you speak, when you learn your language first and you want to speak in English, most at times, the intonation you use for your language affects the English language you speak, so that’s

why most languages, as in most people when they speak English, you will say, yes, this person is from Anambra or this is from Hausa.

After Taiwo relinquishes the floor, in Excerpt 6, Tomi in line 8 takes up the turn and immediately identifies herself as a Yoruba person. She may have used this strategy to show that she can identify when someone who is not from her ethnic group speaks. Explicitly stating that she is Yoruba is also a way to create dimensions to make herself positively distinct from the Igbo and Hausa (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), which is needed for ingroup-outgroup categorisation. She mentions that the Hausa speaker's pronunciation of 'study' is different from how she would pronounce it and, by extension, different from how other Yoruba speakers like her would pronounce it. Tomi partially aligns with Taiwo's submission, "You can get Igbo but you can hardly get Yoruba" (line 14). Taiwo agrees with this new position but adds that Hausa is the easiest to identify. Modification of previous assessments is "expected as people perform different actions with their talk; for example, as they respond to assessments, align themselves with friends and differentiate themselves from enemies, and as they construct locally coherent versions of the social and moral world" (Potter, 1998, p. 244).

The pragmatic marker, 'sef' in line 16, is synonymous with 'as a matter of fact', used to emphasise how easy it is to identify an HE speaker. This aligns with Figure 5.4, where HE has the highest percentage of ethnic categorisation. However, the difficulty of Yoruba participants identifying the Yoruba speakers, as implied by Tomi in line 14, was observed during FGDs conducted at LASUED. In another FGD, one of the participants aligns with Tomi's statement in line 14 that it is difficult to identify the Yoruba accent. The 'h' insertion and dropping is one of the features that characterise Yoruba English speakers, but many Yoruba participants could not identify the difference between 'oil' and 'hoil' when they heard them. This shows that while it is easier to identify the speech of other ethnic groups, it is relatively challenging to identify the speech of one's own ethnic group. This could explain why 35% of the participants classified the Yoruba speakers as Igbo.

Unlike the participants in Excerpt 6, some participants attempted to give linguistic differences that distinguish Nigerian Englishes.

Excerpt 8

All participants are women and Igbo. They were discussing the linguistic features of ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria. The discussion took place at ESUT.

1. Theresa: The Hausa people, they have this interference of /f/ and /p/ when talking,
2. then, the Igbo people, they have their own too, they have interruption of /r/
3. and /l/ like if they want to say “I love you”, they might say “I rove you” or
4. something like that, then for the Yoruba people, they talk like they sing like
5. when you hear them talking (1.0) a typical example is Funke Akindele,
6. Jennifer (2.0) like this my friend here, she talks like her (laughs) a lot.
7. Amaka: I know it actually affects like the English language, like what she has said,
8. she has said it all, the Igbo we do have interruptions—if you look, people are
9. educated now, they are trying that, trying to get a way to stop it, like me now
10. I know that I know I do not have a problem with my /r/ and /l/, it’s just those
11. that didn’t emm, how to do I put it, those that stopped maybe at their primary
12. schools and stuffs like that, so that’s it
13. Ify: Okay, so I feel like it’s not like they have this accent, most of most Igbo
14. people, they have this /l/ factor, some of them if you are from Anambra, they
15. must have that /l/ or /r/ factor, but I feel like it’s not so because people I have
16. met so far they don’t really have that accent, so I believe that it’s their
17. background, where you come from and the way your parents pronounce some
18. things and the intonations they use at times, it can affect the child and also I
19. feel the Hausa people, they don’t really care about whatever they say.

The alternation between /r/ and /l/ is a prominent stigmatised feature typical of nonacrolectal Igbo (Igboanusi, 2006), which may explain why Theresa orients to it. While HE and IE features are segmental, she assigns the YE feature as a suprasegmental phenomenon, which makes them “talk like they sing” (line 4). She supports her claim with a Nollywood (the term for the Nigerian film industry) Yoruba actress who became popular with her series ‘Jenifa’s diary’ where she plays the role of a nonacrolectal Yoruba person who commits ‘errors’ at the phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels when speaking English. Amaka supports Theresa’s examples and attributes the cause of the interference to a lack of proper education. However, as people become more educated, they allegedly learn how to stop doing so (line 9). She supports her argument by using herself as an example of someone who does not have /r/ and /l/ interference because she did not discontinue her education at the primary school level. This statement suggests that interference is something that people may acquire during childhood but is addressed through continuous education. In line with Amaka’s argument that interference can be due to a lack of proper education, an Igbo participant (Tochi) comments:

Excerpt 9

I can remember there was a time (2.0) my language and English was always going together, like you can tell that yes, this guy is a typical [a place name, not named for anonymity] boy, do you understand? but after going to school and speaking English for a while, I can actually (1.0) if I want I will speak like a French man learning English, I can speak like an Italian man because I've gotten to the level of language, like I can manipulate my language and confuse you

It is noticeable how the participants draw on personal experience, marked by their constant use of the first-person pronouns 'I' and 'me' to add credibility to their accounts, given that personal experience is difficult to refute (Tusting et al., 2002).

In line 12 (Excerpt 8), Ify re-echoes the /l/ vs /r/ feature of Igbo English. At first, she asserts that some of the Anambra Igbo people "must have that /l/ and /r/ factor" (ls. 13–14). The use of 'some' and 'must' is quite contradictory, which indicates that the feature is not found among all Anambra English speakers. She contradicts herself by saying, "people I have met so far they don't really have their accent" (lines 15–16). This contradiction shows that individuals can re-categorise the outgroup when expressing their attitudes towards language varieties. She takes the discourse further by adding another possible cause of phonological interference. For her, the interference results from one's background and the individuals people grew up with. The ethnic speech features she describes can be explained by behaviourism, where people pronounce words based on how they learned them from their parents or people around them during the early stages of language acquisition. Unlike the Igbo who try to stop the phonological interference in their speech, as explicitly stated by Amaka in line 9, Ify avers, "the Hausa people, they don't really care about whatever they say" (lines 18–19).

The following excerpt provides instances of HE features, as highlighted by another group of participants at KSU.

Excerpt 10

Key: All participants are men and Igala.

- 1 Enejo: I can give three examples of eh identification of eh ethnic eh language
- 2 speaking, mostly let us start from home because a home is an alma mater, like
- 3 we Igala, are we listening? sometime, when we write a words on the board, and
- 4 you were asked to pronounce especially, 'Zaria', the the Igala person will never

5 call it Zaria rather than WHAT ‘Jalia’ ((students laugh)) okay↑ then when you
6 go back to North, instead of the Hausa man to say ‘speak’, he will never
7 pronounce it ‘speak’, you say what? ‘sfis’ (1.0) then when you go to Yoruba,
8 then when Yoruba man, a typical Yoruba man wants to pronounce a word, it will
9 be difficult, difficult for a person that is not a Yoruba to what↑ speak, especially
10 when you want to call a name of a market just like Lagos or a place the Yoruba
11 person will never call here, as in Kogi State and say, Kogi, he will rather have a
12 tune on on Yoruba to call it what, ‘Toji’, is that understood↑ so by speaking, you
13 will equally identify that this person is a person of this ethnic group, that’s my
14 contribution↓

15 Ameh: The easiest way to identify a Hausa person is (2.0) take for instance if they want
16 to pronounce ‘four’, they will use ‘pour’, okay↑, if they want to pronounce eh:
16 ‘five’, they will say ‘pipe’, these are some of the easiest way to identify Hausa’s
17 intonation

18 Samuel: Like this, this PDP (Peoples’ Democratic Party) now, for example, like Hausa
19 man will say ‘FDF’ (1.0) so he doesn’t have this eh ‘p’

Although Enejo acknowledges his Igala origin, “like we Igala” (ls. 2–3), he excludes himself when he talks about the interference the Igala have while speaking English. Instead of continuing using ‘we’, he changes it to “Igala person,” indicating that he is not part of the Igala people substituting /dʒ/ for /z/. The laughter from the students in line 5 may function as a confirmation of Enejo’ point. This could be seen as an example of derision laughter (Giles & Oxford, 1970), which the students use to ridicule those with such interference. It has also been observed that when a speaker assesses speakers of a variety, other participants respond with their own assessment through laughter or applause (Potter, 1998), signifying approval. From there, Enejo moves to HE, which substitutes /p/ with /f/, and then to YE, which he claims realises ‘Kogi’ as ‘Toji’. He recognises that intonation also plays a role alongside segmental variation in identifying YE. This supports the findings of the VGE that judges could identify the speakers and evaluate them based on their accents. One thing worthy of mention in Enejo’s utterance is the interpersonal pragmatic markers, ‘okay↑’, ‘WHAT’, ‘are you listening↑’ and ‘is that understood↑’, which he uses to sustain audience attention and elicit backchanneling. It can be a strategy to persuade the listeners to form an ingroup agreement (Ladegaard, 2012).

Ameh simplifies the issue by highlighting the substitution of /f/ with /p/ as “the easiest way to identify Hausa’s intonation” (lines 16-17). As already pointed out in section 4.10.1, some participants do not know the difference between the segmental and suprasegmental aspects of language. They tend to view intonation, accent, and segment production as one.

That is why Ameh assigns the interchange of /p/ and /f/ to the intonational level of Hausa English. Aligning with what has been said as a way of forming consensus in the group, Samuel adds another example where Hausa substitutes ‘p’ with ‘f’. ‘PDP’ (Peoples’ Democratic Party) is the main opposition political party in Nigeria.

Based on the discussions analysed in this section, the participants agree that Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba Englishes can be differentiated. The recurrent reason for identification is accent, which concurs with the VGE. However, the participants’ accounts vary in terms of how easy or difficult it is to detect the varieties of NgE. While some believe it is easy to detect, others do not. It was also observed that some participants could not provide specific examples that made them say Speaker A was from Yoruba, but they were still convinced that he was from the Yoruba ethnic group. Another issue arising from the discussions is that it was easy for the respondents to identify the HE speakers, but it was challenging to clearly distinguish between Igbo and Yoruba Englishes.

5.1.4 Discussion

Six major findings from the first research question are discussed: (1) YE was rated higher than other varieties on status, solidarity, and quality of language dimensions; (2) accent identification; (3) accent as the dominant reason for ethnic categorisation; (4) the significant association between ‘de-ethnicised speech’ and ‘good educational background’; (5) intuitive-based ethnic categorisation and inability to provide concrete examples as to the linguistic features that influenced the identification of speakers; and (6) the relationship between verbal fluency and de-ethnicised speech.

5.1.4.1 Yoruba English as the most favourably rated variety

The first finding to be discussed is that YE speakers were rated more favourably on the status and quality of language dimensions, while HE speakers received the least favourable ratings. The results of the language attitude experiment align with previous research, which has shown that varieties that are rated more positively in terms of quality also tend to be rated favourably in terms of status (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a; Shuck, 2004) because people’s attitudes towards different varieties can impact their ability or willingness to understand speakers of those varieties (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). More so, the broad findings of the study are consistent with those from a number of previous studies (Giles, 1970; Hiraga, 2005; McKenzie, 2010; Trudgill, 1972), which have reported that a variety that is rated more

favourably on the status dimension is likely to be rated lower on solidarity. Apart from the HE variety, which has the quality of language dimension as receiving the lowest rating, for the IE and YE varieties, the highest rating was on status, followed by quality of language, and then solidarity.

Because Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba are major languages in Nigeria, they enjoy more institutional support than other languages and have attained a fair degree of standardisation. Although Hausa has more speakers than Yoruba and Igbo and occupies the highest political positions in the Executive, Legislative, Judiciary and Armed Forces in Nigeria (Aboh & Agbedo, 2020), none of these factors resulted in a positive rating of HE. This demonstrates that political power seems to be separated from linguistic power in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context. Therefore, a distinction can be made between linguistic, political, and economic status in Nigeria. The linguistic power is linked to the aggregate level of education acquired by an ethnolinguistic group, as revealed in Excerpt 3, where the participants agree that the Yoruba speak English ‘better’ than others because they are more educated. In other words, exposure to English language and education helps reduce mother tongue interference (Igboanusi, 2006). The political status centres on how much political power an ethnolinguistic group has, while economic status focuses on the most enterprising and entrepreneurial ethnic group. In the Nigerian situation, based on the findings from the VGE, Yoruba possesses linguistic power, while Hausa and Igbo possess political and economic powers (as discussed during focus group discussions not reported here). Giles (1978, p. 388) reaches a similar conclusion, “linguistic differentiation *vis-à-vis* a competing outgroup does not in itself mean that an ethnic group has achieved a satisfactory social identity. This might be particularly true in situation where economic and power disparities still exist between the groups.”

Bourhis and Landry (2012) classify a language with high demographic vitality and strong institutional support into the ‘full wellness’ quadrant in the wellness model of ethnolinguistic vitality and cultural autonomy. HE, IE, and YE can be argued to belong to the ‘full wellness’ quadrant because of the high number of speakers who continue to safeguard their own language interests. However, based on the results of the present study, being ‘fully well’ does not guarantee that a variety or language will consistently attract positive attitudes.

Unlike in many linguistic contexts where speakers of a variety with more political status equally have a more favourable linguistic demographic profile (Bourhis et al., 2019), it does

not apply to Nigeria's sociolinguistic context. The reason for this political-linguistic status asymmetry is traced back to the degree to which Southerners and Northerners accepted English, and how much they have been exposed to English. English came to Nigeria in 1553 through transatlantic trade. While schools were already established in the southern part of the country in 1842 (Jowitt, 2019), it was not until 1900 (58 years later) that the then High Commissioner, Lord Lugard, established schools in the North (Banjo, 1970). Awonusi (1986) reports that despite the introduction of education in Yoruba and Igbo lands before Hausa land, the number of schools established in Yoruba land was higher than in Igbo land. He notes that out of 20 secondary schools and teacher training colleges in southern Nigeria as of 1913, only two were in Igbo land. This historical fact may explain why YE was rated as the most attractive, given the speakers' early exposure to English. Southerners' early acceptance of English was because English was viewed as a lingua franca. However, Hausa serves as a lingua franca in the North, so there was no expedited need to learn English (Jowitt, 2019). Given the fact that Southerners started speaking English before Northerners, this may explain why the Hausa speakers were the least favourably rated on status, solidarity, and quality of language dimensions. The popularity of IE and YE speakers in the media, especially in Nollywood movies and music, may also be a reason for the favourable ratings of these varieties. The early exposure of Southerners to English may also explain why features of their speech are favourably rated based on Mufwene's (2001) "Founder Principle" argument. Hausa's affiliation with Islam seems to have made them focus more on learning Arabic than English because English may have been perceived as a Western and thus 'Christian language' (Kachru, 2017).

The apathy of the Hausa towards English was observed by Igboanusi and Peter (2005) in their study, which comprised 1000 educated participants randomly selected among speakers of major and minor languages in Nigeria. The study, which sought to uncover participants' attitudes towards RP, NPgE, and some of Nigeria's indigenous languages, found that Hausa speakers showed more negative attitudes towards English than Igbo and Yoruba speakers did. This finding demonstrates that one's attitude towards a language may impact one's fluency in the language in question. Igbo and Yoruba speakers' positive attitudes towards English may have improved their fluency, leading to a favourable rating of their accents. The apathy of the Hausa towards English and their alleged minimal efforts to improve their English indicate that they have accepted their low status on linguistic dimensions (Lambert et al., 1960).

In ethnolinguistic vitality terms, Kircher and Zipp (2022, p. 14) argue:

When the degree of standardisation is low but vitality is perceived to be high, ratings on the status dimension are likely to be low but solidarity ratings should be high; and when the degree of standardisation is high but vitality is perceived to be low, then ratings of status should be high while those of solidarity are likely to be low.

Situating the above quote with the results of the present study, the standardisation of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba Englishes appears to be low, given that their codification is limited and they are not fully accepted in formal contexts (Schneider, 2007; Ugwuanyi, 2022). It can be argued that vitality is high because of the number of people who speak the varieties. Deviating from Kircher and Zipp's (2022) prediction, the results from the descriptive statistics in Table 5.1 show that within the varieties, the solidarity ratings are lower than the status ratings. A possible reason for this is that individuals tend to identify educated, self-confident, and intelligent (status) people based on their speech more than their sense of humour (especially when the topic is not humorous, as in the case of the verbal-guise paragraph text that talks about research) and sincerity (solidarity). During data collection, many participants asked how I wanted them to identify if the speaker was handsome or beautiful. Very few of them raised such questions in relation to status items. Another reason for the deviation may be the different accents compared because they are spoken in the same country (the Outer Circle of English).

5.1.4.2 Accent identification

The next point to be discussed is participants' difficulty distinguishing between IE and YE speakers, which contrasted with the relatively easy identification of HE speakers. As shown in Figure 5.4, 59.2%, 56.6%, and 39% of the participants accurately categorised the HE, IE, and YE speakers. However, 14.7% categorised the YE speakers as IE, while 35% categorised the IE speakers as YE. Two factors may explain this difficulty in distinguishing between YE and IE speakers. The first is the geographic proximity between Yoruba and Igbo lands. In pre-colonial Nigeria, the lands inhabited by the Yoruba and Igbo people belonged to the Southern protectorate, whereas Hausa belonged to the Northern protectorate. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 gave rise to the country known as Nigeria. The closeness of these ethnic groups may have given rise to similar linguistic characteristics between Igbo and Yoruba Englishes. The second factor is that the Igbo and Yoruba languages belong to the Kwa group of languages, a branch of the Niger-Congo language family (Heine & Nurse, 2000). In contrast, Hausa belongs to the West

Chadic group of the Afroasiatic language family. The phonological features of the Afroasiatic language family, such as ejectives, implosives, bilabial fricatives, and the absence of regular phonemic distinction between p/f and b/v, make HE stand out from other Nigerian Englishes. These features are not present in the Igbo and Yoruba languages, which belong to the Kwa group of languages (see Hyman et al., 2019; Meyer & Wolff, 2019 for the linguistic description of the Niger-Congo and Afroasiatic language families).

This challenge in clearly distinguishing between IE and YE is consistent with the observations in the literature. Igboanusi (2006) argues that the high rate of migration, education, industrialisation, and urbanisation has brought together people from different parts of Nigeria, and the effect is the narrowing of the differences between Igbo and Yoruba Englishes. He adds that the differences between IE and YE are less observed at the acrolectal level but are clearly evident at the basilectal and mesolectal levels. Similarly, Jowitt (1991) maintains that the differences between IE and YE pronunciations are narrower than those of HE. The ethnic boundary between Igbo and Yoruba could be described in terms of Giles' (1979) concept of soft linguistic boundary, which means there are slight accent differences between the two varieties. The difficulty in differentiating between IE and YE indicates that perceptions can help detect a potential change in progress through ethnolinguistic recognition patterns (Stell, 2022b). It also indicates a koinéisation in progress where IE and YE are undergoing the process of levelling and simplification (Trudgill, 2003).

Despite this alternation in identifying YE and IE speakers, the respondents still associated them with GEB and verbal fluency. This observation is in line with findings from similar studies, which show that despite misidentifying the ethnic group of a speaker, the stereotypes associated with the speaker's ethnic speech are fairly accurately assigned by the participants (Oyebola, 2020; Zhang, 2010). For example, in their study, Milroy and McClenaghan (1977) observed that the stereotypes of participants who misidentified English varieties such as Ulster English and Scottish English were the same as those who correctly identified them. According to Edwards and Jacobsen (1987, p. 377), "errors in placing speakers do not invalidate judges' assessments". The same situation was observed by Zhang (2010), who reported that although a few Hong Kong respondents accurately identified the General American accent speaker, the speaker received high ratings. The findings of Zhang (2010) study and other studies reported here demonstrate that participants can still evaluate a variety based on the stereotypes frequently associated with it, even though they are unable to correctly identify it.

5.1.4.3 Accent as the dominant reason for ethnic categorisation

The third finding to be discussed is the identification of accents as the dominant reason for ethnic categorisation. Out of the eight categories relating to the reasons participants gave for classifying the speakers' accents into a particular ethnic group, 81%, 73%, and 75% of the participants reported accent (see Figure 5.5) as the main reason for classifying the speakers' accents into Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba ethnic groups. This finding was observed in two-way contingency table analyses of the three Nigerian Englishes and the results show that linguistic differences exist among the three varieties. This result supports the claim of Mgbo-Elue (1987) that a person can be easily identified by their speech, which can then influence societal stereotypes based on social class, race, or ethnicity. In her study in the Hong Kong context, Hansen Edwards (2019a) reported that the Hong Kong participants evaluated varieties of English based on speakers' accents. In phonological terms, accents tend to be crucial for people to identify varieties of speech.

A possible explanation for recognising the speakers' accents is Nigerian participants' familiarity with HE, IE, and YE varieties. Although most of them have not been to indigenous cities or states of speakers of varieties other than their own, their exposure to these varieties through traditional media (radio and TV), interpersonal relationships, and videos on social media enabled them to be familiar with other varieties. For instance, one of the participants in a side-talk with another participant in a focus group discussion said that the HE speaker spoke like the Nigerian President (at the time), who was also a Hausa/Fulani person. This shows that speakers' accent and ethnicity identification are based on awareness (Lindemann, 2003). Additionally, the prevalence of IE and YE speakers in Nigerian afro-music, radio, television, Nollywood films, and comedy may have aided the recognition of speakers based on accents. This recognition likely contributed to positive reasons for categorisations, such as verbal fluency and de-ethnicisation being attributed to such speakers.

The association between accent and ethnic categories demonstrates that when individuals rate speakers' accents, they do so based on their perception of the speakers' ethnic group and social status (Dragojevic et al., 2021; Hansen Edwards, 2019a; Hill, 2015; Holmes & Wilson, 2022; Preston, 1996; Tajfel, 1978). This deviates from the position that there is an absence of a "simple isomorphism between attitude towards ethnic groups and towards the languages of those groups" (Ryan et al., 1984, p. 143). As Ladegaard (1998, p. 269) rightly puts it:

Even though the judges are not native speakers of English, we may assume some degree of familiarity with the accents employed in this experiment, since they sometimes appear in the media. It is, therefore, possible that the subjects have some sort of stored, *subconscious information*, based on previously acquired media-transmitted stereotypes (italics in original).

Even without meeting the speakers of the voice stimuli face-to-face, the participants rated them based on the stored subconscious stereotypical information they had heard about people from the ethnic group, which the speakers' accents index.

5.1.4.4 Association between de-ethnicised speech and 'good' educational background

The next issue to be discussed is the significant association between de-ethnicised speech and GEB. Typically, the ethnic classification of speakers' accents into the de-ethnicised category stems from participants' inability to assign them to a particular ethnicity, presumably because traces of their mother tongue do not emerge in their English usage. The association between de-ethnicised speech and GEB implies that the greater the difficulty participants have in identifying the ethnic group of the speakers, the higher the chance of providing GEB as the reason. It is like an "apprenticeship process" (Fillmore, 1979) where more education tends to improve English usage. This observation aligns with the claim that acrolectal speakers of NgE have little influence from their L1 (Bamgbose, 1982; Jowitt, 2019). Acrolectal speakers tend to exhibit the belief system of *accent mobility* (a variant of social mobility) whereby they express their dissatisfaction with the accent associated with their ethnic group by enrolling in schools that can help improve their accent, a process Hirschman (1970: 108) refers to as "evolutionary individualism." However, enrolment in good schools does not imply that all educated Nigerians, like the speakers in this study, will have de-ethnicised features. Those who are educated but could not attain the level of de-ethnicisation would be "classified with speakers of the appropriate lower variety" (Bamgbose, 1982: 101).

There are several reasons why there is a relationship between de-ethnicised speech and GEB. First, to an average Nigerian, the ability to speak well correlates with how much education one has acquired. People may be disappointed when someone who claims to have acquired higher education does not speak in a way that matches their educational qualifications (Aboh, 2022). Therefore, when someone speaks without mother tongue interference, or with near-L1 speaker competence, the likely reason is GEB. Second,

participants' idea of L1 interference involves difficulty with vowels and consonants, which can be addressed through 'good' education, but "they do not realise that intonation can be *erroneous*" (Wells, 2006: 2, italics mine). This position indicates that participants' knowledge of L1 interference is limited to phonetic and phonological levels, as evident in their repetitive examples of speech sound interchange as the identifying features of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba Englishes. They have limited knowledge of the role of intonation and stress in indexing ethnic groups. In other words, they fail to understand the distinction between "phonological accent" (phoneme substitutions) and "phonetic accent" (a phonologically correct word that is mispronounced because of other factors like co-articulation or suprasegmental errors) (Gut, 2009). Nida (1949) concurs that individuals often judge the correctness of English usage based on their egocentric attitudes and limited knowledge.

The finding discussed here is consistent with previous findings in the literature that have found a relationship between education and 'good' English usage. One such study is Garrett et al. (2003), who found that educated speakers of Southwest Wales English were described as sounding cultured and having the potential to find top jobs. Stell (2022) also found that ethnically 'neutral' English in Namibia results from education, socioeconomic class and women-inspired language change. Studies on the effect of education on verbal fluency have also found that individuals with good education performed better in the verbal fluency task than those with poor education (de Andrade & Martins, 2011; Kempler et al., 1998). This finding shows that GEB helps to minimise or eliminate common L1 interference features, which results in "de-focusing away from 'ethnic-sounding' varieties towards an ethnically neutral variety" (Stell, 2022: 19).

5.1.4.5 Intuitive ethnic categorisation without specific linguistic examples

The fifth finding to be discussed is the intuitive-based ethnic categorisation and many participants' inability to provide reasons, or concrete examples of the linguistic features that influenced their identification of speakers. The study shows that participants who accurately categorised the speakers into ethnic groups found it challenging to justify the reasons behind their choice. This indicates that ethnic identification comes 'naturally' to people (Ladegaard & Cheng, 2014). A possible explanation for this inability to support the ethnic categorisation with reasons is participants' difficulty pinpointing linguistic features peculiar to the speakers. Robinson (1979, p. 218) reaches a similar conclusion that knowing the ethnic group of a speaker does not entail "being able to express this knowledge verbally". Similarly, Gleitman

and Gleitman (1979, p. 105) note, “to give a language judgment, one must take a prior cognitive process (linguistic performance) as the object of a yet higher-order cognitive process (reflection about language performance)”. This position corroborates Robinson’s (1979) idea that identifying a speaker precedes the ability to linguistically describe the speaker, because it is difficult to construct descriptions and explanations. After reflecting on the language performance of the speakers and categorising them into ethnic groups, it appears that the participants of the present study could not communicate the linguistic features upon which the reflection was conducted. Some people may have mastery in spotting the ethnic group of speakers but are incapable of linguistically describing their speech.

Another reason for this finding is that participants may not have thought about the features that characterise ethnic speech in Nigeria before. Therefore, when they were asked to justify their reason, they found it difficult to do so. The present study suggests that accent recognition and ethnic categorisation can be intuitive, and individuals may lack words to justify the reason for classifying a speaker into an ethnic group. This position contrasts with Gleitman and Gleitman’s (1979) claim that talking about language judgments is easier than retrieving and using one’s intuition when giving language judgments.

5.1.4.6 Association between verbal fluency and de-ethnicised speech

The final issue to be discussed is the significant association between verbal fluency and de-ethnicised speech for IE speakers. This significant relationship between verbal fluency and de-ethnicised speech implies that speakers whose ethnic groups could not be identified were perceived as more verbally fluent. In other words, their verbal fluency was critical in participants’ perception of their speech as ethnically ‘neutral’. This identified relationship between verbal fluency and de-ethnicised categorisation contributes to fluency research. As a concept related to communicative effectiveness (Bygate, 2009), much fluency-related research has linked fluency to the use of formulaic language, speech rate and rapidity, pause, idiomaticity, accuracy, coherence, and creativity in language use (see Fillmore, 1979; Götz, 2013 for an overview of fluency research). However, little research has linked de-ethnicisation to verbal fluency. In Outer Circle Englishes, like the varieties in Nigeria, it appears that the ethnicity of individuals with verbal fluency is difficult to ascertain, as the present study’s findings show.

Similar to the relationship between GEB and de-ethnicised speech, it appears that speakers who are perceived to have GEB are also perceived to have little or no nonfluencies in their

speech. Apart from good education, other factors that may contribute to verbal fluency are speakers' social status and relevant experiences, such as working in an organisation where verbal fluency is required (Segalowitz, 2010). Most Nigerians who grew up in urban areas may be said to possess 'native-like rapidity' (Lennon, 1990), making them speak 'better' than those in rural areas. In light of the linguistic and communicative competence speakers from non-Inner-Circle territories have in English, "native speakership should not be used as a criterion for excluding certain categories of people from language teaching, dictionary editing, and similar functions" (Paikeday, 1985, p. 88).

5.2 Effects of social variables on attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes

This section presents the quantitative results of the second research question, which examines the effect of social variables on attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE varieties. A series of one-way between groups multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) was performed to address this research question. The independent variables examined were gender (male and female), religion (Christianity and Islam) and ethnicity (Igbo, North, and Yoruba). The dependent variables were the participants' status, solidarity and quality of language ratings of the six speakers. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices (measured using Box's M) and Levene's test for homogeneity. The results of the assumption tests showed that only gender and speaker quality of language violated the homogeneity of variance-covariance. Hence, following Tabachnick and Fidell's (2019) recommendation of using Pillai's Trace instead of Wilk's Lambda when the homogeneity of variance-covariance test is violated because it is more robust, Pillai's Trace was reported for all the MANOVA tests. Given the series of MANOVA conducted, an adjusted alpha of .003 was used for the pairwise comparisons (see Section 4.11.2).

5.2.1 The main effects of gender on speaker evaluation

The gender variable had two levels (male and female) with a distribution of $n = 138$ (34%) for males and $n = 268$ (66%) for females. A series of one-way between groups MANOVA was performed to investigate gender differences in the participants' evaluations of the speakers vis-à-vis status, solidarity and quality of language. The results of the MANOVA test showed no significant main effect of gender on the evaluation of speakers in relation to status: $F(6, 399) = 1.638$, $p = .135$, Pillai's Trace = .024; $\eta^2 p = .024$ (i.e., a small effect).

However, the evaluation of speaker solidarity yielded statistical significance: $F(6, 399) = 3.072, p < .05$, Pillai's Trace = .044; $\eta^2p = .044$ (i.e., a small effect). The test of between-subjects effects demonstrated that only the IE male speaker showed a significant difference: $F(1, 404) = 12.107, p < .001$; $\eta^2p = .029$, which indicates a small effect. The male participants ($M = 3.29$) evaluated the IE male speaker significantly higher than the female participants ($M = 2.97$).

Lastly, the MANOVA results in relation to quality of language demonstrated significant differences $F(6, 399) = 3.102, p < .05$, Pillai's Trace = .045; $\eta^2p = .045$ (i.e., a small effect). The test of between-subjects effects demonstrated that three (HE, IE, and YE male speakers) of the six speakers had significant differences.

1. HE male: $F(1, 404) = 9.016, p = .003, \eta^2p = .022$ (small effect).
2. IE male: $F(1, 404) = 11.958, p < .001, \eta^2p = .029$ (small effect).
3. YE male: $F(1, 404) = 8.727, p = .003, \eta^2p = .022$ (small effect).

The female participants evaluated all male speakers significantly ($M = 2.83, 2.89, 3.24$) lower than the male participants ($M = 3.16, 3.25, 3.54$). Overall, the speakers received more favourable ratings from male participants than from female participants. The results also demonstrated that male participants rated male speakers higher, while female respondents rated them lower. This suggests that male participants showed solidarity towards male speakers more than female participants. The absence of differences in the ratings of the female speakers demonstrates that participants considered female speech more pleasant than male speech. The results demonstrate that our hypothesis H_{3a}, which proposed an effect of gender on the evaluation of HE, IE, and YE speakers is partially supported.

5.2.2 The main effects of religion on speaker evaluation

The religion variable had two levels (Christianity and Islam) with a distribution of $n = 344$ (84.7%) participants for Christianity and $n = 62$ (15.3%) for Islam. The HE male and female speakers were Muslims, while the other speakers were Christians. The results of the MANOVA test demonstrated a significant main effect of religion on the evaluation of speakers vis-à-vis status: $F(6, 399) = 3.630, p < .05$, Pillai's Trace = .052; $\eta^2p = .052$ (i.e., a small effect). The test of between-subjects effects demonstrated that two (HE male and HE female speakers) out of the six speakers had significant differences.

1. HE male: $F(1, 404) = 11.837, p < .001, \eta^2p = .028$ (small effect).

2. HE female: $F(1, 404) = 14.718, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .034$ (small effect).

Muslim participants evaluated these three speakers significantly higher ($M = 3.62, 3.36$) than the Christian participants ($M = 3.19, 2.83$).

In relation to solidarity, the results of the MANOVA test demonstrated a significant main effect of religion: $F(6, 399) = 2.803, p = .011$, Pillai's Trace = .040; $\eta^2_p = .040$ (i.e., a small effect). The test of between-subjects effects demonstrated that three (HE, YE male speakers and HE female speaker) out of the six speakers had significant differences.

1. HE male: $F(1, 404) = 11.069, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .027$ (small effect).
2. HE female: $F(1, 404) = 12.189, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .029$ (small effect).

The Muslim participants evaluated these three speakers significantly higher ($M = 3.41, 3.35$) than Christians did ($M = 2.99, 2.87$).

The results of the MANOVA test demonstrated a significant main effect of religion on the evaluation of speakers vis-à-vis quality of language: $F(6, 399) = 3.303, p < .05$, Pillai's Trace = .047; $\eta^2_p = .047$ (i.e., a small effect). The test of between-subjects effects demonstrated that four (HE, IE, YE male speakers, and HE female speaker) out of the six speakers had significant differences.

1. HE male: $F(1, 404) = 14.469, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .035$ (small effect).
2. HE female: $F(1, 404) = 15.042, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .036$ (small effect).
3. IE male: $F(1, 404) = 9.699, p = .002, \eta^2_p = .023$ (small effect).
4. YE male: $F(1, 404) = 11.059, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .027$ (small effect).

Muslim participants evaluated these four speakers significantly higher ($M = 3.41, 3.27, 3.37, 3.72$) than Christian participants ($M = 2.86, 2.66, 2.94, 3.27$). Overall, the results show that Muslim participants hold more favourable attitudes towards the speakers than Christian participants. The significant results on the three dimensions show that our hypothesis H_{3b}, which proposed an effect of religion on the evaluation of HE, IE, and YE speakers, has been confirmed.

5.2.3 The main effects of ethnicity on speaker evaluation

The ethnicity of the respondents as the independent variable had three levels: Igbo ($n = 169, 41.6%$), North ($n = 83, 20.5%$), and Yoruba ($n = 154, 37.9%$). The results of the MANOVA test demonstrated a significant main effect of ethnicity on the evaluation of speakers in

relation to status: $F(12, 798) = 5.636, p < .05$, Pillai's Trace = .156; $\eta^2p = .078$ (i.e., a medium effect). The test of between-subjects effects demonstrated that three (HE, IE male speaker and HE female speaker) out of the six speakers had significant differences.

1. HE male: $F(2, 403) = 8.542, p < .001, \eta^2p = .041$ (small effect).
2. HE female: $F(2, 403) = 20.259, p < .001, \eta^2p = .091$ (medium effect).
3. IE male: $F(2, 403) = 12.302, p < .001, \eta^2p = .058$ (small effect).

Post-hoc comparisons demonstrated that for the HE male speaker, the mean score for Igbo participants ($M = 3.05$) was significantly lower than that of Yoruba participants ($M = 3.47$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the Yoruba and North participants and the Igbo and North participants. With regard to the IE male speaker, the post-hoc test indicated that the mean score for Igbo participants ($M = 2.94$) was significantly lower than that of Yoruba participants ($M = 3.41$). Again, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the Yoruba and North participants and the Igbo and North participants. For the HE female speaker, the post-hoc test demonstrated statistical significance among the mean scores of all participants. The mean score for Igbo participants was significantly lower than the rest, while the mean score for Yoruba participants was statistically significantly higher. Taken together, these results show that Yoruba participants were more generous in their ratings than Igbo participants. Apart from consistently rating the HE male and female speakers lower than participants from other ethnolinguistic groups, the Igbo participants also rated the IE male speaker as the least attractive on status dimensions. One striking result is that Yoruba participants rated all other speakers higher than the Igbo and North participants, except for the YE female, who was rated higher by the Igbo participants.

Furthermore, the results of the MANOVA test demonstrated a significant main effect of ethnicity on the evaluation of speakers vis-à-vis solidarity: $F(12, 798) = 4.846, p < .05$, Pillai's Trace = .136; $\eta^2p = .068$ (i.e., a medium effect). The test of between-subjects effects demonstrated that four (HE, IE, YE male speakers and HE female speaker) out of the six speakers had significant differences.

1. HE male: $F(2, 403) = 12.760, p < .001, \eta^2p = .060$ (small effect).
2. HE female: $F(2, 403) = 17.382, p < .001, \eta^2p = .079$ (medium effect).
3. IE male: $F(2, 403) = 10.366, p < .001, \eta^2p = .049$ (small effect).
4. YE male: $F(2, 403) = 5.798, p = .003, \eta^2p = .028$ (small effect).

Post-hoc comparisons showed that for the HE male speaker, the mean score for Igbo participants ($M = 2.81$) was significantly lower than that of Yoruba participants ($M = 3.32$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the Yoruba and North participants and the Igbo and North participants. Regarding the IE male speaker, the post-hoc test demonstrated that the mean score for Igbo participants ($M = 2.87$) was significantly lower than the Yoruba participants ($M = 3.31$). Again, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the Yoruba and North participants and the Igbo and North participants. Similarly, the Igbo participants rated the IE male speaker as the least attractive on the solidarity dimension compared to the Hausa and Yoruba participants' rating of speakers from their own ethnolinguistic group. The post-hoc results also showed that, for the YE male speaker, the mean score of the Igbo participants ($M = 2.99$) remained statistically significantly lower than the mean scores of the Yoruba participants ($M = 3.30$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the Yoruba and North participants and the Igbo and North participants. Finally, for the HE female speaker, the post-hoc test demonstrated statistical significance among the mean scores of all participants. The mean score of the North participants was significantly lower than that of the rest, while the mean score of the Yoruba participants was significantly higher. Similar to the results from ethnicity and speaker status, Yoruba participants rated the speakers higher than the other participants.

In relation to quality of language, the results of the MANOVA test demonstrated a significant main effect of ethnicity on the evaluation of speakers in relation to quality of language: $F(12, 798) = 5.774, p < .05$, Pillai's Trace = .160; $\eta^2p = .080$ (i.e., a medium effect). The test of between-subjects effects demonstrated that four (HE, IE, YE male speakers and HE female speaker) out of the six speakers had significant differences.

1. HE male: $F(2, 403) = 16.610, p < .001, \eta^2p = .076$, a medium effect size.
2. HE female: $F(2, 403) = 28.747, p < .001, \eta^2p = .125$, a medium effect size.
3. IE male: $F(2, 403) = 16.906, p < .001, \eta^2p = .077$, a medium effect size.
4. YE male: $F(2, 403) = 11.895, p < .001, \eta^2p = .056$, a small effect size.

Post-hoc comparisons showed that for the HE male speaker, the mean score for Igbo participants ($M = 2.62$) was significantly lower than that of Yoruba participants ($M = 3.28$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the Yoruba and North participants and the Igbo and North participants. With regard to the IE

male speaker, the post-hoc test demonstrated that the mean score for Igbo participants ($M = 2.71$) was statistically significantly lower than the Yoruba participants ($M = 3.33$). Again, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the Yoruba and North participants and the Igbo and North participants. The post-hoc results also provided evidence that, for the YE male speaker, the mean score of the Igbo participants ($M = 3.12$) remained statistically significantly lower than the mean scores of the Yoruba participants ($M = 3.64$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the Yoruba and North participants and the Igbo and North participants. Finally, for the HE female speaker, the post-hoc test demonstrated statistical significance among the mean scores of all participants. The mean score of Igbo participants was significantly lower than that of the other participants, while the mean score of Yoruba participants was significantly higher. Similar to the results from ethnicity and speaker status and solidarity, Yoruba participants rated the speakers higher than other participants.

Overall, the mean scores of the main effects of ethnicity on participants' ratings of the six speakers demonstrate an evaluative hierarchy, as shown in Figure 5.6.

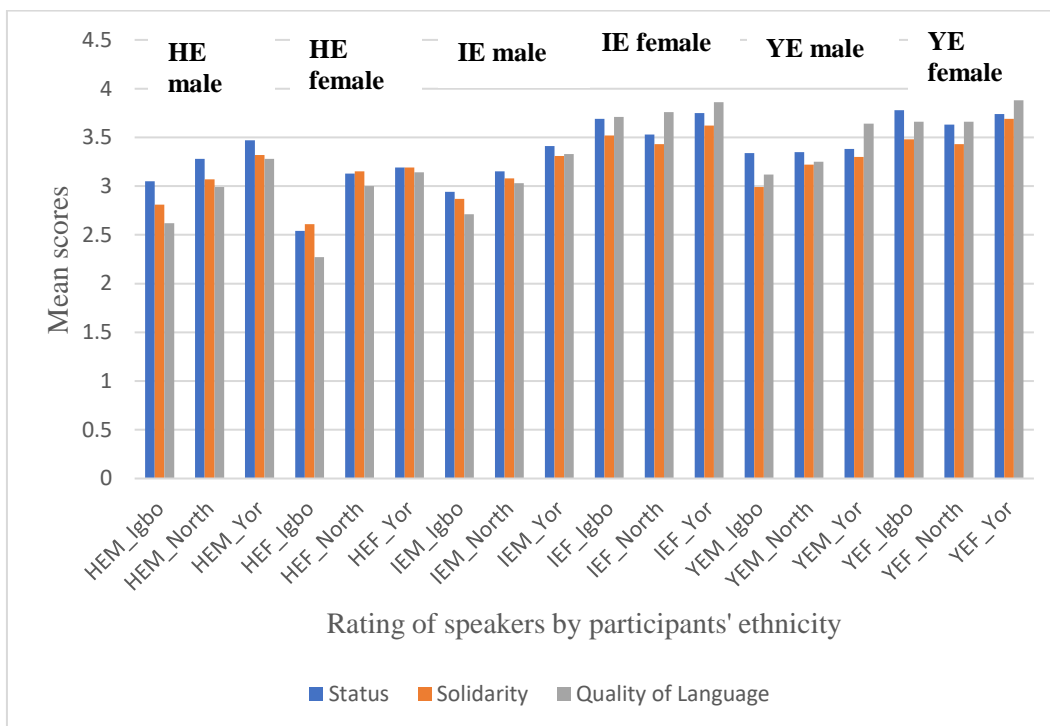


Figure 5.6 Ratings of the speakers by participants' ethnicity

HEM = HE male; HEF = HE female; IEM = IE male; IEF = IE female; YEM = YE male; YEF = YE female. 'Igbo', 'North' and 'Yor' attached to these labels indicate the Igbo, North and Yoruba ethnolinguistic groups' ratings of the speakers.

Figure 5.6 shows that participants from the three ethnolinguistic groups rated the IE and YE female speakers as the most attractive on status, solidarity, and quality of language dimensions. This result demonstrates a more favourable attitude towards female speakers in southern Nigeria. Except for the fact that North participants rated the HE female speaker third on solidarity, she was consistently rated as the least attractive on status, solidarity, and quality of language by all ethnic groups. The YE male speaker received more favourable ratings than the IE male, HE male and female speakers on the three dimensions. While the HE male speaker received more favourable ratings on status dimensions by the three ethnic groups on status, the IE male speaker received more favourable ratings than HE male speakers by the three ethnic groups on solidarity and quality of language. There was an inconsistency in the participants' ratings of speakers from their own ethnic group. For instance, as Figure 5.6 shows, the Igbo participants rated the HE and YE male speakers higher on status than the IE speaker, while rating the IE male speaker higher than the HE male speaker on solidarity and quality of language. The North participants rated the HE male speakers higher than the IE male speaker on status, but rated him lower than the IE and YE male speakers on solidarity and quality of language. On the other hand, the Yoruba participants rated the HE and IE male speakers higher than the YE male speaker on status and solidarity, but rated him higher on quality of language. The significant results on the three dimensions demonstrate that our hypothesis H_{3c}, which proposed an effect of ethnicity on the evaluation of HE, IE, and YE speakers, has been confirmed.

5.2.6 Qualitative findings: Gender and religious identities and language attitudes in discourse

One of the focuses of DP is to explore how speakers construct a category of persons using a particular or range of linguistic devices and resources (McMullen, 2021). This section analyses participants' responses in the FGDs concerning gender, religion and language use in Nigeria. The qualitative findings of the effect of ethnicity are not analysed here because they have been presented in Section 5.1.3.1, where participants discursively evaluated HE less favourably than IE and YE. The qualitative analyses serve as a triangulation of the quantitative results on the main effects of gender and religion on language use and attitudes.

5.2.6.1 Gender and language attitudes

In this part of the study, the emphasis is on analysing how participants in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context discursively constructed and negotiated gender and language use. The analysis of the focus group data revealed different representations of men's and women's speech, namely: women as more linguistically sophisticated than men, socialisation as an influence on men's and women's speech, and differences in men's and women's speech as a function of the anatomical differences of both genders. These representations are discussed below.

5.2.6.1.1 Women as more linguistically sophisticated than men

Participants in the focus groups argued that women are more linguistically sophisticated than men in terms of spoken English because they tend to codeswitch less than men, as is evident in the discussion below:

Excerpt 11

Context: Participants were discussing the English language use of their lecturers when they started comparing the linguistic behaviours of male and female lecturers, as shown in Excerpt 11. Key: Adaku, Jules, Amy and Ella = female; Moses = male. All the participants belonged to the Igbo ethnolinguistic group.

- 1 Adaku: Male and female lecturers do not speak differently at all
- 2 Jules: I agree with you
- 3 Ella: For me, speaking of our lecturers here, like we have said already,
- 4 the lecturers, you get to see that (1.0) the males they express themselves better
- 5 (1.0) when teaching, they even use Igbo sometimes to make sure that we get
- 6 what they are talking about (2.0) but from the females, I have not seen a
- 7 female lecturer *sha* except for our litera::ture lecturer [
- 8 Moses: [Which one?
- 9 Ella: The the one that taught us (2.0) last week [
- 10 Moses: [Who?
- 11 Ella: >Oral literature< [
- 12 Jules: [Yes yes]
- 13 Moses: (hisses)
- 14 Ella: [She is the one that uses Igbo when teaching sometimes, but

15 other females, they don't mix Igbo (1.0) when they are teaching, they always
16 go straight to the point, they are always going straight but the male eh
17 lecturers, they always express themselves making sure that everybody is going
18 with (1.0) what is going on, that is what I get, the females and the males (2.0)
19 females just want to:: look classy and sophisticated all the time

Adaku and Jules jointly assert that there is no difference between men's and women's speech, which might be their way of resisting innate linguistic differences between men and women. Ella's observation in lines 3-7 that female lecturers do not often code-switch from English to Igbo could be linked to broader societal expectations of gender roles which may influence language choices. It is possible that female lecturers use of only English, which is the official medium of instruction, is due to perceived expectations of professionalism. 'sha' in line 7 is a NgE expression which is equivalent to English 'anyway' and functions as an attention marker which indicates topic continuation (Unuabonah & Oladipupo, 2018). It is possible that Moses' question in line 8 is to confirm that Ella refers to the right lecturer to know if he will accept Ella's assessment. Moses interprets Ella's response in 9 as nonspecific enough; thus, his further query in line 10, to which Ella responds. Moses' hiss (line 13) can be interpreted as a disapproval of the language use of the lecturer in question. Jules' affirmative interruption supports Ella's argument that their oral literature lecturer's language behaviour differs from other female lecturers'.

Ella continues by stating that other female lecturers speak only English in class and "always go straight to the point" (lines 15-16), features she considers "classy and sophisticated" – indicating "female verbal superiority" (Cameron, 2011, p. 592). The directness of women's speech has also been found among the Malagasy of Madagascar (Keenan, 2008). The adverbial phrase "all the time" (line 19) indicates that women's desire to look more formal and sophisticated is a characteristic, which according to Ella, they strive to maintain consistently. It seems to formulate an idiomatic-sounding phrase (e.g., 'that is women for you,' they are always linguistically sophisticated, (Stokoe, 2010). Without explicitly representing men's speech as deficit, Ella confirms the quantitative results that while some aspects of men's speech can be positively evaluated because they help students understand class content, women's speech is more refined. This discursive positioning indicates that gendered expectations and stereotypes regarding language use may shape how male and female lecturers position themselves and perform their duties as educators. This

confirms Cameron's (2011) view that if women are constructed as 'naturally' modest or 'classy' and 'sophisticated' as seen in Excerpt 11, their speech will be presented as demonstrating modesty, classiness or sophistication.

By invoking gender as a category, the participants show that gender is perceived to be relevant in the ongoing interactional business. In Excerpt 11, it is observable that female lecturers, who are seen as classy and sophisticated in their language use, are considered the prototype of women's linguistic behaviour. Through a feature matching process (if the entity does not share the prerequisite features with the prototype, it will be excluded from the category), exceptions such as their oral literature teacher are treated as a deficit (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). We also observe in Ella's evaluation of their lecturers' language use in classroom settings that she does not include herself as a member of the group she evaluates, given that she is not a lecturer. However, it is possible that her membership of the female category may have impacted her positive evaluation of her female lecturers' speech. Her non-explicit derogation of male lecturers' speech aligns with SIT in that ingroup favouritism does not always entail outgroup derogation (Augoustinos et al., 2014).

The representation of women's speech as more pleasing and standardised than that of men is also demonstrated in another focus group, as presented in Excerpt 12.

Excerpt 12

This excerpt is a segment of participants' discussion in which they provided evaluative commentary on male and female speech. Before this excerpt, the participants discussed the association between gender and the use of English in Nigeria. The discussion took place among the North participants. Key: Alewo and Esther = female; Lucas and Jack = male.

- 1 Alewo: Guys have deep voice while the lady's voice are sharp and clear, light (1.0) so
- 2 there's a lot of difference in how the ladies speak and the guys speak
- 3 Esther: And (1.0) like as a lady like you will want to (0.5) speak very well, while guys,
- 4 most of them don't really care, they don't care but ladies you want to
- 5 tush yourself (use standardised forms) when speaking English (laughs)
- 6 Lucas: So, you know (1.0) girls, girls don't want to *ehee* be caught up in the middle, so
- 7 they they study harder than the boys (1.0) so that's why they are very they are
- 8 sound (1.0) and they speak with confidence in most cases and they speak without
- 9 eh, you know (2.0) being scared of making errors, so but for the guys, we just
- 10 speak because we want to speak

11 Jack: What I noticed is that some girls used to make use of intonations, but guy ↑,
12 they doesn't care, just go along with it ((the moderator noticed side talk and
13 asked one of them to talk))
14 Esther: (laughs) He made some, I'm trying to like, he said em "They didn't care" *abi*
15 (laughs)

Although Alewo provides only one example of the features of men's and women's speech, her use of "a lot of difference" (line 2) indicates that there are several differences in men's and women's language use. She constructs an essentialist discourse that suggests that men and women have inherently different ways of speaking based on their anatomical differences. Esther moves away from essentialist to socialisation discourse as she maintains that the difference between men's and women's speech results from women's desire to "speak very well" (line 3) and men's lack of interest in improving their speech. This confirms the findings of sociolinguistic research that women aim for standardised language, which is also more overtly prestigious (Holmes & Wilson, 2022), and according to Esther, there is a conscious effort by women to achieve this aim. The laughter in line 5 may be Esther's strategy of appealing to other participants to display mutual category knowledge.

Thus, Lucas supports Esther's assessment of men's and women's speech and states that women's effort and ability to speak a prestigious variety is observed in their dedication to their studies because they "don't want to be caught up in the middle" (line 6). By moving from gendered differences based on language use to the level of academic commitment, Lucas builds a gendered context out of a previously nongendered one (in relation to studying) and attributes women's fluency to their studiousness. Lucas' account re-echoes Ella's position in Excerpt 11 that women are consistent in their use of prestigious language. This consistency has increased women's confidence and reduced the likelihood of committing errors while speaking English. Lucas ends his conversational turn by stating that men do not care whether they make errors because their emphasis is on the content and meaning of what they say rather than the accent they use. This constructs men as those who focus on communication instead of meeting external linguistic standards or expectations. Lucas' statement can be seen as a subtle way to reinforce gender linguistic dynamics, demonstrating that men have fewer social expectations to speak 'good' English. These gendered expectations indicate that if women are expected to study harder and speak more confidently, women who deviate from these expectations may be stigmatised. This argument could

explain why Ella (Excerpt 11, lines 13-16) singled out her female lecturer, who deviated from other female lecturers. Jack reinforces this point as he maintains that women are more concerned about how they speak than men. His grammatical error “they doesn’t care” (line 12) elicited reactions from two female participants, which the moderator asks them to say so that others can hear. Esther identifies Jack’s mistake as the cause of their side talk. Her laughter at the beginning and end of her turn can be interpreted as a strategy to deride Jack and show her own linguistic superiority (Partington, 2006). This incident confirms the participants’ point that men do not care whether they make grammatical mistakes, while women are careful not to commit any errors.

It is noticeable how the participants in Excerpt 12 used the categories ‘guys’, ‘boys’, ‘ladies’ and ‘girls’. These categories may have been used because of the relatively young age of the individuals they index, given that the participants are young adults who discuss the language use of their peers. We can also see how the female participants use ‘ladies’ to refer to their gender and use ‘guys’ instead of ‘gentlemen’ to refer to men. Lucas and Jack opt for the category ‘girls’ instead of ‘ladies’. These lexical choices may reflect gender bias, power dynamics and social positioning of self and other. The categories (guys and boys) that represent men often collocate with phrases such as “deep voice” (line 1), “don’t really care” (line 4), and “speak because we want to speak” (line 10), while the categories (ladies and girls) that represent women are qualified by “sharp and clear” (line 1), “speak very well” (line 3), “tush yourself” (line 5), and “they speak with confidence” (line 8). These contrasting linguistic choices serve to upgrade the linguistic competence of women and downgrade that of men. We observe how these category-bound activities or features are constructed and attached to categories (Stokoe, 2010). From a social identity perspective, we observe that not only do the female participants (Alewo and Esther) positively evaluate women’s speech, male participants (Lucas and Jack) do the same to the disadvantage of their ingroup.

However, as Lucas and Jack’s statements indicate, nothing they say indicates that they are intimidated by women’s ability to speak English more fluently than men, which shows that they do not perceive female language proficiency as a threat to male dominance. This could help us explain why there was no statistically significant difference in participants’ ratings of the speakers on status dimensions, which included items such as wealth and intelligence. The discussion in Excerpt 12 supports the quantitative findings that male speakers were generally rated lower than female speakers on all dimensions. Male participants’ positive evaluation of women’s speech in the discussion could also explain why male participants evaluated female

speakers more favourably than female participants. Overall, the participants assessed women's speech as more linguistically sophisticated than men's speech.

5.2.6.1.2 Socialisation as an influence on men's and women's speech

Talbot (2003) points out that individuals are categorised based on the classification systems in our society, such as social status, group membership, gender, and personality traits, and draw on these categories to contrast, reduce, and simplify people or entities. This perspective on gender and language considers gender identity as "the internalization of social norms about gender that predispose individuals to act, talk, and think largely in accordance with them" (Weatherall & Gallois, 2003, p. 487). As the following excerpt exemplifies, several participants attributed the difference in men's and women's speech to how both genders have been socialised.

Excerpt 13

Key: May, Lyla and Ufedo (female); James (male). The discussion was conducted at a university in the North. This excerpt constitutes a portion of the participants' discussion about gender and English language use in Nigeria, during which they offered assessments of the language used by men and women. Prior to May's comment in line 1, a participant said that men and women speak differently.

- 1 May: For me, I do think that men and women speak differently (1.0) one, most men are
2 authoritative in the way they speak (1.0) then (0.5) for the women (1.0) the
3 gender women, they feel that they are soft-hearted and they are caring (2.0) so
4 with that tone a man speaks authoritatively (1.0) sometimes he tends to be harsh
5 but it is not in all cases
6 (6.0)
- 7 Lyla: Yes↑ I do think that men and women speak differently because men, when they
8 speak, they just go straight to the point, they don't go round, around, but when
9 women speak, they just (1.0) instead of them to say something (1.0) like
10 straightforward, they'll go beating around the bush, so so I think I think men and
11 women speak differently
- 12 Ufedo: Some men and women, they don't speak differently, some speak alike (1.0)
13 because there are some men that you will expect them to go straight to the point
14 and they are going around, around in circles, and then some women, they are this

15 kind of (1.0) bold and em (2.0) they are always straight to the point, they have
 16 this kind of confidence that whatever might be, might be, so it's not every woman
 17 or man that speaks differently, some have the same kind of speech em (2.0) what
 18 is called ↑ (1.0) structure, so that's just it ↓

19 James: I don't want to start stealing from what people have said already (1.0) it depends
 20 on the level of responsibility you have (0.5) if I happens to be a first born in a
 21 family setting and I have girls to be my em like junior ones, so you don't expect
 22 me to to think and calculate the way they think, so I will be more like (1.0) active
 23 in my own voice while they would be passive, yes, she used the word
 24 authoritative, yeah, so my thinking and the way I I reason things would be very
 25 different from the girls because coming down to Nigeria, Nigeria tends to okay,
 26 okay, if I get married, the, the, the husband would take care of the fee and
 27 everything, so they tend to, to, to below their self because of the culture, okay,
 28 okay, I am a wife, I don't have to cook, I don't have to do this thing, so the way
 29 men speak, they think more and they speak less, so that's what I think, yeah

May remarks that men and women speak differently, illustrated by how, she argues, authoritatively and harshly men speak and how soft-hearted women speak. These category-bound distinctive features can arguably be the result of cultural norms or socialisation in May's ethnolinguistic context, where men are expected to speak authoritatively and women, calmly. It is possible that May's use of the qualifiers "authoritatively" and "harsh" (Line 4) for men's speech and "soft-hearted" and "caring" (Line 3) for women's speech indicates that the latter is preferred to the former. This may help us explain why female speakers generally received more favourable ratings than male speakers in the VGE. This might be because one's socialisation process, owing to their associations with friends, parents, and neighbours, may impact one's attitudes (Banaji and Heiphetz, 2010). Lyla's argument that men's speech is 'precise' while women's speech is 'imprecise' could reflect cultural stereotypes about gender-based communicative styles, which may have been shaped by participants' socialisation. Lyla's description of women's speech as indirect deviates from Ella's assessment in Excerpt 6, in which she remarks that women's speech is direct, which exemplifies the variability observed in evaluating language behaviour in interaction (Ladegaard, 2020). This disparity also indicates that gendered speech representations may differ based on individuals' experiences. It can also be argued that since May is Igbo and

Lyla is Igala, there is “intercultural variation in the representation of language and gender” (Cameron, 2011, p. 587).

While May, in her stereotypical account of the difference between men’s and women’s speech, uses hedges such as “most” (line 1), “sometimes”, and “tends” (line 4), such markers were absent in Lyla’s account. She overgeneralises the precise and imprecise features to all men and women. Ufedo’s disagreement with Lyla may be a result of this overgeneralisation; thus, she argues that not all men are precise in their speech. Ufedo remarks that self-confidence is not only a characteristic of men’s speech but could also apply to women. She concludes that some men and women can have similar linguistic behaviours, which implies that the difference between male and female speech is flexible and does not apply to all individuals. As Ladegaard (2020) points out, participants in group discussions may have contradictory accounts owing to their different experiences, which could be a result of their engagements in their respective local communities of practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2011) or their level of prejudice.

The last part of the discussion involves James’ account of the impact of social expectations on gender differences. He remarks that there is an impact of one’s “level of responsibility” (line 20) on language use. This position indicates an intersection between one’s position in the family and gender in determining linguistic differences. I interpret this discursive construction as a product of socialisation in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context, where the older male siblings are expected to be more assertive than their younger ones, which is often considered a characteristic of a good leader (line 23). His use of the phrase, “and I have girls to be my em like junior ones” (line 21) constructs women as those who are (always) expected to be passive. This membership categorisation shows that men may not be passive even when they are not the firstborn, perhaps because they have been socialised to see themselves as more authoritative than women, a point May makes in line 3. James proceeds to draw on the stereotypes that married women are expected to be less self-confident owing to cultural expectations (line 27). He ends his turn by drawing on another cultural stereotype that men speak less because they need to think more (line 29) because of their responsibilities. We notice his change from men and women to husband and wife when orienting to the marital context (line 26) and combining the categories with their category-relevant activities (husbands taking care of fees). James’ use of the verb “I think” (line 29) to signal the end of his turn, which can be interpreted not as a marker of uncertainty or hesitation but of authority and assertiveness (Cuenca, 2023), and supported by his loud

pronunciation of 'Yes' in line 23. Noticeable in his account is the frequent use of a self-referential pronoun 'I', which Jackson (2011, p. 31) refers to as 'gendered I' which "can be rendered hearably gendered in the context of its production." Excerpt 13 highlights the complex ways in which gendered and cultural expectations, socialisation processes, and power dynamics shape language use by men and women.

In addition to stating that the differences between men's and women's speech are conditioned by cultural expectations and power dynamics, participants in another focus group referred to the use of humour as another aspect where differences between men's and women's speech exist, as Excerpt 14 illustrates.

Excerpt 14

All participants are male and the discussion took place at KSU. As in the preceding excerpts, participants discussed the English language of men and women, as they discussed the link between gender and English language use.

- 1 Edibo: Men and women (1.0) we speak differently, basically on gender, the way:: we
- 2 speak, we boys maybe like the way we have our fun, speak to each other, having
- 3 cruise is different, totally different from the way girls speak, if you (1.0) decide to
- 4 joke with girl like the way you joke with guys, it might turn to something else and
- 5 bring problem or (xxx)
- 6 Bowen: Due to what he said, but I may not say uhm girls and boys speak eh; some of
- 7 them speak the same thing, while some, they don't speak the same thing (1.0)
- 8 while we are, we guys, we hang around, we speak the way, if, the way girls spoke
- 9 English now, if we are speaking like them, it will turn to something else (1.0) but
- 10 the way (0.5) we are together, yabbing each other, saying cruise cruise ((jokes))
- 11 or other things, that's all
- 12 Odiba: In terms of communication I think (1.0) men have this sense or boys have this
- 13 sense of communication than women because they do speak as in they do interact
- 14 most often than women do, and again, we are talking about uses of English or
- 15 uses of spoken word (2.0) women are good in term of English, speaking, they are
- 16 very good in that but we guys, boys, we do use some pidgin English just to make
- 17 our interaction eh fun

Edibo points out that men tend to joke more with one another because joking with women “might turn to something else and bring problem” (lines 4-5). This implies that men tend to be less formal and friendly amongst themselves, and formal and less friendly to women. Following Edibo’s comment, Bowen constructs the difference between men’s and women’s speech as flexible and a question of degree, indicating that he does not believe in any orderly heterogeneity in men’s and women’s speech (Beaman & Guy, 2022). He re-echoes Edibo’s point that men joke more among themselves, as signalled by the phrase “yabbing each other, saying cruise cruise” (line 10), which describes jocular activities found among friends and peers. “Yabbing” is an NgE expression that refers to the act of making fun of someone in a playful or sometimes insulting way. The use of “cruise” shortly after “yabbing” means that this act of teasing someone should not be interpreted as insulting, but as a way of eliciting humour and creating a social bond (Pichler, 2006). By mentioning that when men tease women, that “will turn to something else” (line 9), Bowen constructs men as more communicatively competent than women in interpreting teasing as jokes. This stereotypical categorisation of women as unreceptive of jokes may help us explain the quantitative results, which show that male participants rated the IE male speaker more favourably on solidarity than the female participants. Edibo and Bowen’s accounts of men’s and women’s speech might arguably stem from the social behaviours they have internalised because of their culture and society. It is possible that they may have been socialised to believe that women do not appreciate jokes as much as men, a belief they may have also observed and experienced from interactions with women in their community.

Odiba asserts that in terms of the quantity of interactions, men interact more than women, but in terms of the quality of their language, women “are very good” (lines 15-16), given that men tend to use NPgE to make their discussions interesting and perhaps to achieve collective solidarity (Moalla, 2015). This account supports the VGE results where southern female speakers were rated the most attractive on the quality of language dimensions. The use of the quantifier “very” (line 16) indicates that women’s English proficiency level is higher than that of men. Odiba claims that men use NPgE more than women do. This claim is re-echoed in previous research on language attitudes and gender, showing that men show positive attitudes towards vernacular language than women and they speak it more (Holmes & Wilson, 2022). Odiba’s point is echoed by another male participant in one of the focus groups in a Yoruba speech community who remarks, “When a fellow guys talk to his fellow guys, they speak their ling, their pidgin and all those slangs they do speak a lot. But when females

are speaking with females, they do speak, but they speak more English.” This statement shows how gendered ingroup membership can impact communication styles (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Arguably, the difference in men’s and women’s speech patterns highlighted in Excerpt 14 may have been influenced by cultural norms, where men are socialised to speak in a way that allows them to joke around with others, while women may be socialised to speak ‘better’ English.

SIT argues that categorisation and social comparison have some consequences. In the accounts in Excerpts 13 and 14, the cluster of category-bound features with respect to gender-based linguistic behaviours contributes to three consequences. First, participants perpetuate stereotypes surrounding gender roles, where men are seen as providers. Second, language fluency for men is considered trivial but more important to women because it is one of the ways they may assert superiority in a patriarchal country such as Nigeria. Third, any potential undermining of men’s ‘poor’ language use is dismissed and reformulated as part of their disposition to use informal language use and adopt jovial behaviour.

5.2.6.1.3 Difference in men’s and women’s speech as a result of anatomical differences

While discussing the difference between men’s and women’s speech in the focus groups, participants attributed it to anatomical differences of both genders. The following excerpt illustrates this. Apart from Chike, who is male, the other two participants are female. The discussion took place at ESUT.

Excerpt 15

- 1 Chike: I would say that ehm men and women speak differently (2.0) because there is this
- 2 changes that occurs in puberty, girls start having lighter voice and men start
- 3 having bass (1.0) so when the guy is speaking, you always have that sense of bass
- 4 even in singing, the guys is always going to bass, but girls have this li::ght, light
- 5 voices and ehm you cannot compare it to the guy’s own (1.0) I think that’s the
- 6 slight difference between the two ehm sexes
- 7 Theresa: I really think that both the ladies and sorry, the men and women speak the same
- 8 language (1.0), I think, I mean, God created everybody, the same (1.0) together
- 9 and everything that we all have, despite the fact that maybe during some period
- 10 there may be different changes in us, but I still believe that we all speak the same
- 11 (0.5) language

12 Amaka: I think the male and female, they speak differently (1.5) because the male
13 voices are normally masculine while the female is feminine, and I believe, I enjoy
14 listening to a female speaker more than a male speaker
15 Mod: Why?
16 Amaka: Because the fact that her voice is em feminine, small, smooth, makes her more,
17 the voice is more attractive to listen to than the male voice, the male voice looks
18 like he is shouting at you but the female voice is more better to listen to

Chike's repetition of the contrast pair of light and bass voices can be interpreted as a strategy to emphasise his point or, perhaps, an indication of his inability to provide more difference, as evidenced in his use of "slight difference" (line 5). While Chike argues that the changes during puberty impact men's and women's speech, Theresa challenges this perspective, arguing that men and women speak the same language. Her use of "we all speak the same (0.5) language" (lines 10-11) makes it unclear whether she is referring to the language use of men and women in a broader sense, or she is referring to the specific 'light' and 'bass' voice distinction that Chike refers to. However, it is possible that her pause before saying "language" may have been an attempt to retrieve a better word to describe the point Chike makes. This can also be seen in line 8, where she pauses again after mentioning "the same language" and proceeds to use the verb "I think", perhaps to demonstrate her uncertainty (Brinton, 2008).

Amaka, in line 12, agrees with Chike's earlier comment that men and women speak differently because of differences in the pitch and tone of their voices, with men's voices being more masculine and women's voices being more feminine. This representation may serve the function of perpetuating the idea that gender differences common. She proceeds to evaluate men's and women's speech, arguing that she prefers "listening to a female speaker more than a male speaker" (line 14). It is possible that her preference is a result of her membership of the female category, which requires her to favour the ingroup over the outgroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Responding to my question in line 15, Amaka provides reasons for her preference for women's speech, stating that, whereas men's voices are loud and forceful, she argues, women's voices are smooth and attractive. Such evaluation arguably confirms the quantitative results, where participants rated female speakers' quality of language higher than male speakers, exemplifying the argument of the new deficit model of language and gender that women are 'superior' language users to men (Cameron, 2011). This

attitude is held by not only women but also men, as demonstrated in another focus group where one of the male participants, Jude, said:

Excerpt 16

Generally, imagine I am focusing on reading my book at the end and a girl walks in and be like, “Hello, I’m looking for someone” ((imitates a feminine voice)). The voice alone will attract the attention of *everybody in the class*. You understand? But maybe a guy walks in and said, “Hello, I’m looking for someone” ((with a deep voice)). You that is even facing that side will face another side.

Here, Jude describes the attractiveness of a woman’s voice, which can attract the attention of anyone despite how invested they are in what they are doing, while a man’s voice does not have the same effect. He uses hyperbole signalled by using expressions such as “generally” and “everybody in the class” to construct the extent to which women’s voice is preferred.

In addition to identifying anatomical features as the reason for the difference in men’s and women’s speech, another group of participants at LASUED indicated that these features impact how both genders speak in interaction, as the following excerpt illustrates. Apart from Max, who is male, Judy and Beth are female. One more male and female participant were in the discussion.

Excerpt 17

- 1 Judy: I believe there is a difference in the way male and female speak
- 2 Mod: Any instance↑
- 3 Judy: How far now↑ what’s up guy↑ like ((in a deep voice)) (laughs)
- 4 Students: (general laughter from men)
- 5 Mod: So if a girl should say=
- 6 Judy: =How far guy, like, you will definitely know that this one is like a tomboy,
- 7 like it’s like a guy (1.0) so, you know now, we girls be like “what’s up lady,
- 8 how you doing↑” ((in a low voice)), *eh* ((yes)), that’s how we do it
- 9 Mod: So any other opinion↑
- 10 Beth: The way females speak, like they speak softly while guys, their voice is very
- 11 like hard, or somehow *sha* and very audible
- 12 Max: There is a difference because females speak in a way that:: their voice
- 13 is so sweet (2.0) while the guys, when it comes to maybe you want to toast, or

14 you need to put your voice on a *kumkum* ((mild voice)), what's up babe how
15 are doing↑ you are looking so *fantabulous* ((changes his voice to a mild one))
16 (laughs)
17 Students: (general laughter by men)

Prior to this discussion, participants discussed the linguistic behaviour of men and women, prompting Judy's statement in line 1. Responding to my question in line 2, Judy provides an example of how men's deep voice affects how they speak (line 3). This mimicking of a man's voice spurs her to laugh, which elicits laughter from male participants. Although Judy's attempt at mimicking men's speech elicits laughter from the male participants, there is no laughter by the other female participants in the discussion. It is possible that Judy's laughter is self-deprecatory, owing to her perceived failure to mimic a man's speech (Rees & Monrouxe, 2010). The male participants' laughter may be a strategy for constructing Judy as incapable of speaking like a man and excluding her from their men's world. In line 5, the moderator wants to ask Judy to clarify whether how she spoke in line 3 is typical for women, but she interjects and categorises any woman who speaks that way as a "tomboy" (line 6) and exemplifies how a woman should speak. Her exemplification of a woman's speech did not elicit laughter, which seems to support the argument that her self-laughter in line 3 is self-deprecatory and that the male participants' laughter performs a superiority function (Partington, 2006). More so, her use of the pragmatic marker "ehee" (emphatic yes) as well as "that's how we do it" (line 8) serves as an authoritative declaration of how women should talk. This membership categorisation of men and women based on the manifestation of their speech features in interactions shows that gendered linguistic crossing, that is, "when a speaker uses a speech style that is indexically linked to a different social group" (Coupland, 2014, p. 297), is construed as a deficit.

Following the moderator's invitation for further contributions, Beth uses the predication strategy "soft" and "hard" (lines 10, 11) to describe men's and women's speech. It is possible that she notices that her use of "hard" to describe men's speech was face-threatening, hence her use of "sha" (Line 11), a NgE pragmatic marker used to mitigate FTAs (Unuabonah & Oladipupo, 2018). In addition to her use of "sha," she positively assesses men's speech, stating that it is "very audible" (line 11). According to her, men's "hard" voice makes them more audible than women. Max concludes the discussion by arguing that women's voice makes them naturally "sweet" when they speak, whereas men upwardly converge to this

‘pleasant’ linguistic form when wooing a lady because the perceived advantages of the convergent speech act outweigh the disadvantages (Giles et al., 1991). When a language, or any type of linguistic behaviour, is conceptualised as a sugary food using the adjective “sweet” in NgE, it can mean ‘desirable’ or ‘pleasing’ (Blench, 2005). ‘Fantabulous’, as used in Line 15, is a NgE expression, a blend of “fantastic” and “fabulous,” used to describe something gorgeous and outstanding. It shows that in addition to converging to the phonological features of women’s speech, men also draw from an array of local linguistic coinages to communicate their thoughts. A similar laughter structure in lines 3 and 4 immediately occurs after Max converges towards a woman’s speech pattern. As with Judy’s laughter in line 3, Max’s laughter may also be considered self-deprecatory, or what has been described as embarrassment laughter (Ladegaard, 2013) to reveal how men change their voice to gain women’s acceptance, or to laugh at his perceived failure to imitate a woman’s speech. The laughter by the other male participants ridicules Max for his attempt to speak like a woman.

Excerpt 17 shows how participants draw on the differences in men’s and women’s speech to show their impact on language use in interaction. The excerpt shows how the participants’ attempts to mimic the speech pattern of the opposite sex were negatively evaluated. The discussed differences between men’s and women’s speech in Excerpts 14 and 15 and the positive evaluation of women’s speech by several participants align with the quantitative results, where female speakers generally received the highest ratings on the quality of language.

5.2.6.2 Religion and language attitudes

As one of the variables of interest in this study, participants in the FGDs were prompted to talk about religion and language use in Nigeria. Christianity and Islam are the two major religions in Nigeria, with African Traditional Religion (ATR) considered a minority (Ndiribe & Aboh, 2022). None of the participants in this study identified ATR as their religion. The discursive constructions of Christians and Muslims in relation to their language use form the focus of this section of the thesis.

5.2.6.2.1 The discursive construction of Christians as more fluent in English compared to Muslims

During their discussions on the link between religion and English usage, participants (at LASUED) in the middle of the discussion started making evaluative comments about the English language use of Christians and Muslims, as illustrated in Excerpt 18:

Excerpt 18

Key: Ade, Joe, and Caleb are male, whereas Peace is female.

- 1 Ade: I am a Muslim o (1.0) but but Christians speak more English than Muslims
2 because number one, their (1.0) Bible is is written in English language and for
3 Muslim now, we are speaking another man's language, Arabic and Arabic is not
4 our language, it is a borrowed language, so (1.0) we try to speak, yes, English
5 language too is a borrowed language, but you guys are reading English language,
6 so you are more (0.5) well than we that are reading Arabic
- 7 Joe: Actually, you know, Christianity is not like you are learning new language (2.0),
8 like this Muslim people will be like the scripture they are using is not written in
9 their own mother's language or English language, it is written in Arabic, which
10 means they need to go and learn the language before they can understand, but
11 Christian ehm scripture is written in any languages, so which means it it give
12 people ehm this audacity or how to relate what is inside their own belief, which is
13 the scripture to what is happening around them
- 14 Caleb: And also, em if you if you are in the mosque sometimes most of the time they
15 speak in Islamic language, while if you are in most of church, most of churches
16 now, in all this urban area, you see that they will speak English throughout and
17 they mostly train their children (1.0) they train all their children in English (0.5)
18 that contribute a lot↓ and also °Bible words°, you see that they use some (xxx)
19 words and this thing. So that that contribute to the how Christian sound in
20 speaking English
- 21 Peace: Christians speak more than Muslims (2.0) because I have I have come across
22 different people like Muslims and Christians that are my classmates like in
23 primary school or in secondary school (1.0) the Muslims, I don't, I have not seen
24 any of my Muslim classmates that speaks more than my Christian classmates, so
25 that is my own

Ade begins the discussion by establishing his identity as a Muslim before implying that Christians speak English ‘better’ than Muslims. Before assessing the language use of Christians and Muslims, Ade’s initial identity construction, “I am a Muslim *o*” (line 1), can be interpreted as his way of communicating that his assessment is based on fact, not on his personal bias. This indicates that in intergroup communication, participants represent the outgroup positively and the ingroup negatively because of the perceived high status of the outgroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The identity construction could also mean that he communicates the relevance of his perspective as someone who understands the English language used by Muslims and Christians. The NgE pragmatic marker ‘*o*’ emphasises the certainty of his Muslim identity and demonstrates that evaluating Christians’ English language use more favourably than Muslims’ does not mean that he is not proud of Islamic membership. This evaluation of the Christians’ English usage more favourably than Muslims’ usage by a Muslim is in line with quantitative results which show that the Muslim participants generally rated the Christian speakers more favourably than the Muslim speakers (see Section 5.2.2).

Ade attributes Christians’ ‘better’ command of English to the fact that the Bible is written in English, whereas Muslims speak Arabic, which he describes as a “borrowed language” (line 4). Despite acknowledging that English is also a borrowed language (line 5), he concludes that since Christians are reading the English Bible and Muslims are reading the Arabic Koran, their chances of being fluent in English are higher, indicating that the degree and nature of religious commitment influences language variation (Baker-Smemoe & Bowie, 2015). Through his use of the pronouns “we”, “our” (lines 3, 4, 6) and “you” (line 5), he constructs the opposition between ingroup and outgroup, which plays a critical role in constructing intergroup differences (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). By employing the pronoun ‘you’, Christian participants are hierarchised and placed at the upper rung of English proficiency ahead of Muslims. Ade’s use of “we” and “our” positions him as not only assessing his own English usage but that of other Muslims in Nigeria.

Joe reinforces Ade’s position, arguing that Christians’ continuous use of English in the religious domain gives them an advantage over Muslims, who are expected to use a language different from English and their mother tongue (line 9). Caleb upgrades Joe’s assessment to include languages that serve as media of communication in religious settings, especially in urban areas, as one of the reasons Christians speak English ‘better’ than Muslims. Caleb adds that Christians’ early exposure to English plays a critical role in English language

competence (line 18), an opportunity that Muslim children may not have had. This indicates an ‘apprenticeship process’ (Fillmore, 1979), where early exposure to and continuous use of English improves English proficiency. Caleb’s use of qualifiers such as “sometimes” (line 14) and “mostly” (line 17) indicates that his position is not absolute or universal but rather based on his own experiences, a common feature in group discussions where participants strike a balance between generalisation and exceptions (Billig et al., 1988).

Peace’s assessment matches the evaluative direction of the previous participant’s assessment, as she draws on personal experience to support her position that Christians are more proficient in English than Muslims. Personal experience is a common strategy participants use in group discussions to legitimise membership categorisations because it is difficult to refute (Ladegaard, 2011b). Peace refers to her experience with her Muslim and Christian classmates to buttress her point. Participants’ agreement that Christians are more proficient in English than Muslims indicates that Afro-Islamic ethnic groups are yet to “capitulate to the pull of the English language as a medium of intellectual modernity,” hence their inability to have overtaken Christians in English proficiency (Mazrui, 1975, p. 66). By indicating that Arabic is central to Islam and English is central to Christianity, the participants imply that English is a ‘Christian language,’ exemplifying Kachru’s (2017) point that Muslims see English as a symbol of Western, Judeo-Christian culture and religion, hence their resistance to Westernisation, especially in Africa (Mazrui, 2004).

The difference between Christians’ and Muslims’ language use in the focus groups is amplified by attributing Christians’ ‘better’ command of English to colonialism. Seun’s statement, during a focus group at LASUED, illustrates this point.

Excerpt 19

1 Seun: The Christians tend to speak more English than the Muslims, why↑ because back
2 (0.5) ehm to the days of the colonies, the missionaries spoke English while the
3 Muslims, the people that came to colonise them, never spoke English, they speak
4 Arabs

Spolsky (2003) points out that Christians’ respect for English and Muslims’ respect for Arabic is one of the linguistic effects of religious activities in several postcolonial settings. Reference to history has been observed as one of the legitimation strategies individuals use to support their propositions (Aboh et al., 2024). Seun’s argument shows that her distinction is

not peculiar to Nigeria alone but generally to countries colonised by Britain and those influenced by Arab-speaking nations. For instance, in Nigeria, the northern protectorate, predominantly inhabited by Muslims, and the southern protectorate, mainly populated by Christians, were governed by the British from 1914 until Nigeria achieved independence in 1960. Despite the colonialists' establishment of schools and churches in northern Nigeria, the dominance of Muslims due to Usman dan Fodio's conquest of the area in 1804 and the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1812 made northern Nigerians more loyal to Islam than to Christianity (Falola et al., 2018). This is because Islam arrived in northern Nigeria in the 11th century, whereas Christianity arrived in Nigeria in the 16th century (Jowitt, 2019). Thus, the exposure of the North to Arabic for more than five centuries before the arrival of Christianity in Nigeria, the role of Arabic in religious identity (Ndiribe & Aboh, 2022), and the high vitality of Hausa in the region buttress Seun's point that Christians speak 'better' English than Muslims.

5.2.6.2.2 Christians' and Muslims' English usage as a function of ethnic background

In the focus groups, the participants also linked the differences between the English language use of Christians and Muslims to their ethnic backgrounds, as Excerpt 20 shows.

Excerpt 20

Participants discussed the link between religion and English usage in Nigeria when a participant mentioned that Christians are more proficient in English than Muslims. This leads to the discussion in Excerpt 20, which took place at ESUT. Anna and Oge are female, while Dan is male.

- 1 Anna: When you meet the Muslims, I have stayed with the Muslims, they tend to put
- 2 Arabic words (1.0) the way they pronounce Arabic words, that is (0.5) they tend
- 3 to speak their English like that, so I think Christians (0.5) speak more of English
- 4 than them, I think Muslims speak Arabic English if there is something like that
- 5 Dan: And also you get to find out that a greater percentage of, the population of,
- 6 Nigerians who are Muslims are from the North, so you get to find Hausa mixed
- 7 with their English, for example, a Muslim trying to say 'Five naira', the person
- 8 will say 'paip naira' or 'vandalisation', instead of using 'v', the person will use
- 9 'b', 'bandalisation', you understand, so I think first of all, their part of the country
- 10 because it's mainly populated by eh Islamic people (1.0) their language is

11 affected, but Christians, you get to find out that there are few Christians there, are
 12 more Christians who are not who don't even know what Arab means, and also
 13 because of the the part of the world that brought Christianity to Nigeria=you
 14 understand? We tend to mimic them both in the (xxx) and everything, and we
 15 tend to speak like them

16 Oge: Well, well, I think em Muslims are more dominated with the Northerners, so it is
 17 not really about the religion, if an Igbo person becomes a Muslim, I think he will
 18 speak English very well or a Yoruba person, just that the Northerners, they have
 19 this particular tongue, like, they want to say 'people', they will say 'fifle' (1.0)
 20 like "My fellow Nigerians↑" ((imitates Hausa English accent)), like they have
 21 this intonation (1.0) so that is what makes it look like their English is not clean,
 22 you can see a very educated Hausa man, his English would be okay, but that
 23 intonation will interfere in it

Anna's assessment (lines 1-3) re-echoes the argument that as individuals belong to a community of practice, they "develop linguistic patterns as they engage in activity in the various communities in which they participate" (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2011, p. 579). Her use of personal experience, as signalled by the first-person pronoun 'I' (lines 1, 3-4), is interpreted as a strategy to add credibility to her account. She proceeds to label the linguistic behaviour she describes as "Arabic English" and uses the phrases "they tend to" (line 1) and "I think" (line 4) to hedge her claims, indicating that her account is not absolute facts but her own observations and assessments.

Dan argues that Hausa also impacts the English language usage of Muslims and buttresses his point with linguistic examples involving the phonological interference of Hausa in English, such as in the pronunciation of 'five' and 'vandalisation' (lines 8-9). Through this association between religion and ethnicity, Dan demonstrates that the differences in the English language use of Christians and Muslims are not only a function of religion but also of ethnicity, thus exemplifying Germanos and Miller's (2015, p. 96) argument that "religious affiliation alone is not and has not been a key factor of major linguistic differentiation...it is always linked with other social factors." However, it is unclear from Dan's account whether the phonological interferences he foregrounds are only present among Hausa Muslims and absent among Hausa Christians. He implies that since Christians "don't even know what Arab means" (line 12), thus, they are less likely to share similar linguistic features with

Muslims. He concludes his turn by arguing that Britain's introduction of Christianity in Nigeria increased the tendency of Christians to speak English like the missionaries; thus, this is the reason Christians' English language proficiency is 'better' than Muslims', he argues.

Dan's association of religion with ethnicity is also given an upshot by Oge, who explicitly states that religion is not the sole determinant of linguistic differences between Christians and Muslims but also the ethnic affiliation of these individuals (lines 16-17). She argues that a Muslim from an Igbo or Yoruba ethnolinguistic group would "speak English very well" compared to a Northerner, whose linguistic behaviour is characterised by the substitution of speech sounds such as [p] and [f] (line 19) and HE accent, which can also be observed among educated Hausa people (line 22). Through the use of the linguistic expression, "so that is what makes it look like their English is not clean" (line 21), Oge draws upon the broader idea of purity that is often associated with water to indicate that there is a variety of English that is considered pure or refined, which the English variety spoken by the Hausa Muslims deviates significantly from. This 'unclean' feature of Hausa Muslims' English indicates that it is perceived as undesirable and, at the same time, demonstrates that Oge evaluates Igbo and Yoruba Muslims' English more favourably than Hausa Muslims' English. Oge's statement indicates that the difference between the English usage of Christians and Muslims is a complex phenomenon best understood by considering other social factors, such as ethnicity and level of education. This association indicates that linguistic discrimination is embedded within the sociohistorical and sociopolitical intersection of ethnicity and religion (May, 2023). Mazrui (2004, p. 75) reports that the Hausa Muslims he has encountered in the USA and Africa remark that "they are 'better' speakers of English than members of other ethnic groups in their respective nation-states of Nigeria and Kenya." Jowitt (2019) also speculates that educated Hausa Muslims would be more proficient in English than other ethnic groups because they were taught to acquire an RP-type accent, whereas Southern Christians were taught in a variety of accents, such as Scottish and Irish accents. However, the participants in Excerpt 20 submit that Southern Christians (and Muslims) are more proficient in English than Hausa Muslims.

In Excerpt 20, the participants create two borders involving Muslims and Christians on the one hand and Hausa Muslims and non-Hausa Muslims on the other. Hausa Muslims are identified as the outgroup; thus, the construction of their English language use as undesired. This distinction between Hausa Muslims and Yoruba or Igbo Muslims demonstrates that

participants show solidarity with members of their ethnic or regional ingroups, although they do not share the same religious membership.

The association between religion and ethnicity in Excerpt 20 was extended to evaluations of English language use by Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba in another focus group in a Yoruba-speaking community, as illustrated in Excerpt 21.

Excerpt 21

Context: Before this excerpt, the participants talked about the link between English usage and religion. The discussion proceeds to the participants' evaluation of English usage by Muslims and Christians, which leads to Judy's turn and subsequent contributions from other participants. Judy and Aina are female, while Max is male. Another male and female were present in the discussion.

- 1 Judy: Let me talk, Christians speak the best English (2.0) [You know we have English
2 Bible↑]
- 3 Max: [Even among the three tribes]
4 Igbos speaks better English than Yoruba and Hausa=Igbos they speak better
5 English than the Yoruba and Hausas, when they are speaking English [
- 6 Judy: [You know
7 we have English Bible, you know, we have English Bible, so that English Bible
8 like there are some English in the Bible, that it is not as if it is difficult *o*, but at
9 least it is English that it helps, yes, but in Islamic way now it's just Arabic, they
10 have their English Koran too, but they don't really use it, *shey* you understand↑
11 ((hope you understand)) like the Koran, so English helps in [
- 12 Max: [A Yoruba man (1.0)
13 that is very educated, there is no how you want to speak his English, there will
14 still be that Yoruba tone there (1.0) but an Igbo man, a well Igbo educated Igbo
15 man (1.0) the tone will not be there
- 16 Aina: The tone will be there
- 17 Judy: *Mhm*↑ shut up, you don't know what you are saying *eh* ((talking to Max))
- 18 Aina: The mother tongue will be there, the way they pronounce their words, the Igbo, if
19 you want to know that this person is a Igbo person, the way he pronounce his
20 words will be different from even Igbo and Hausa, you will know their language
21 through the way they talk

22 Judy: There is no tone in Yoruba, it is Igbo, you don't know what you are saying o, it's
23 Igbo, if Igbo guy is speaking, or Igbo, eh (1.0) surely you will see the tone
24 ((accent)) when he or she is speaking in English

Judy uses the phrase “let me talk” (Line 1) to signal to the current speaker that he should transfer his turn to her. In Goffmanian terms, it indicates that Judy wants to change her footing from a ratified addressed participant to a speaker (Goffman, 1981). With the little opportunity she has been given to talk, she evaluates Christians' English usage as the ‘best.’ While trying to provide a justification for her statement, which she begins by trying to confirm a core common ground among other participants about their knowledge of the English Bible, Max interrupts her by shifting the topic of discussion from the language behaviour of Christians and Muslims to describing the English proficiency of the three major ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria: Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. This shift may be interpreted as Max's association between religion and ethnicity. In Nigeria, the Hausa are predominantly Muslim, while the Igbo are mainly Christians, and there appears to be a relatively even distribution of Yoruba Christians and Muslims (Falola et al., 2018). Thus, when Muslims are mentioned, it may prototypically index people of the Hausa ethnolinguistic group. Max maintains that among the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, the Igbo people speak ‘better’ English than other ethnic groups (line 4), a point he emphasises through repetition in lines 4 and 5. In line 6, Judy interrupts him and continues her point in line 1, arguing that Christians' reading of the English Bible improves their proficiency in English. On the other hand, despite acknowledging that Muslims have an English Koran (line 10), she notes that their lesser use of it impedes their English proficiency.

Max interrupts Judy again and reverts to his evaluation of localised Englishes. In line 12, he upgrades his assessment, arguing that irrespective of a Yoruba person's level of education, his/her Yoruba accent will impact his/her English speaking. However, he states that there is no ethnic marker of speech among highly educated Igbo people (line 14). Aina refutes such a contrast pair, stating that an Igbo accent is present in acrolectal Igbo speech. Judy uses the discourse marker “Mhm” (Line 17) to signal disagreement and uses a face-threatening act, “shut up” (said with a high pitch), to show the extent of her disagreement with Max's position. These attitudes and counter-attitudes support the argument that “competitive religion and competitive ethnicity in Africa have sometimes met at the political stadium of ex-colonial languages” (Mazrui, 2004, p. 75). It is possible that Max did not reciprocate

Judy's impolite statement because he did not want to turn the discussion into a more negative interaction (Culpeper & Tantucci, 2021). Aina expands on her disagreement with Max, noting that distinct perceptible linguistic features characterise Igbo people's speech and differentiate them from the Hausa people. Judy concludes the excerpt by recategorising Max's earlier membership categorisation of Igbo people as those who speak the 'best' English. Instead, she remarks that the Yoruba people do not have any Yoruba accent in their English, while also noting that Igbo people speak English with an Igbo accent.

This excerpt shows how a discussion of the link between religion and English language usage can be associated with discourse about ethnicity and language. This indicates an interaction between religion and ethnicity in the discourse on English language usage in Nigeria. Although all participants in this discussion are Christians and Yoruba, there is evidence of an ingroup-outgroup distinction in the discussion of participants' own ingroup. Judy and Aina resist Max's negative evaluation of the linguistic features of their ingroup and jointly represent Yoruba as being more proficient in English than the Igbo. Based on Excerpts 20 and 21, I argue that, concerning the link between religion and English language use in Nigeria, two hypotheses arise: the *religion-unifactorial hypothesis* and the *religion-multifactorial hypothesis*. The former hypothesis shows that speaker religion alone triggers different evaluative responses in listeners. The latter hypothesis indicates that the different language-based evaluations of Christians and Muslims are due to a combination of religion and other social variables such as ethnicity, level of education, and L1 of speakers. Fishman (2006, p. 14) points out that linguistic behaviours and "values that are deigned to be religious are more diverse than any of us are currently aware of." It can be argued that Excerpts 20 and 21 provide evidence for the latter hypothesis, while Excerpts 18 and 19 support the former. Yaeger-Dror's (2015) conclusion supports the *religion-multifactorial hypothesis* that not only does religion serve as a significant sociolinguistic variable, but the evaluations of language varieties are also influenced by geolinguistic factors in complex ways. In support of the *religion-unifactorial hypothesis*, studies in Alsace, France (Vajta, 2013), and India (Kulkarni-Joshi, 2015) have shown that religion may be independently correlated with language choice and attitudes.

5.2.6.2.3 No religious-based difference in English usage

Whereas participants in several focus groups indicated differences between the English language use of Christians and Muslims, some argued that there is no religious-based difference in English usage, as Excerpt 22 shows.

Excerpt 22

Context: Participants in one of the focus groups that took place at a university in northern Nigeria discussed the link between English language usage and religion when one participant mentioned that Christians and Muslims speak English differently. This statement elicited the reactions presented in this excerpt. All the participants are men.

- 1 Adam: When we say Christian and Muslim speaking differently, I don't really buy the
2 idea because (1.0) it's when we say Christian and Muslim from that word, they
3 are religion, and so (1.0) religion don't really add to our manner of speaking, so if
4 if it still depends on background, ah if you if you say, okay, I'm a Muslim person
5 and you are a Christian (2.0) we should just say, okay, religion, now, virtually the
6 Koran now is been translated to English, so you can't tell me people that was
7 born and brought up in a like a:: good and (1.0) funded place, speaking in the
8 Koran pattern or in the vernacular, no, the Christian and Muslim, they are
9 speaking they should speak the same thing because we find in the setting of
10 school Muslims and Christians, so virtually they teach the same thing, they learn
11 the same thing, so they speak and reply in the same way, so that's just my own
12 Ben: I will like to add to this, saying Christian and Muslim speaking (1.0) differently,
13 that, I don't support the idea, why↑ because (0.6) if you are from a good
14 background, it doesn't tell the kind of religion you are, even though you are a
15 ritualist or even though you an herbalist, if you are from a good background, at
16 least your tone of language or your tone ((accent)) of English should be at least be
17 the best, not kind of religion bias
18 Oche: To me, I don't think they speak differently since anybody who has read Koran
19 and read Bible will know that these Holy Books talks about humanity (2.0)
20 because the same thing, Christianity they preach about peace, so I don't think
21 anyone who read it completely will want to say they think differently, for me,

22 they will speak the same thing, they speak peace, speak about humanity, peaceful
23 co-existence, so I don't think they speak differently

Adam disagrees that Christians and Muslims speak differently, which he verbalises with the commercial metaphor “I don't really buy the idea” (line 1). He argues that religion, as a social variable, does not impact language use; instead, it is one's background that impacts language use. He expounds his point by creating a hypothetical scenario (line 4), citing that there is an English Koran, which arguably could help Muslims in their English speaking skills. He reverts to his argument about the critical role that one's background plays in their English competence (line 7). Baker-Smemoe and Bowie (2009) found that members of different religions who live in the same neighbourhood may share the same linguistic behaviour despite their religious differences. Before Adam's use of the modal auxiliary “should” in (line 9), he appears to be confident in his response. However, the use of “should” indicates that he lacks personal experience of Christians' and Muslims' linguistic behaviour. This expectation of Christians and Muslims to have similar English competence is legitimised by referring to the fact that since both Muslims and Christians are taught the same content in schools, they are expected to “speak and reply in the same way” (line 11). His use of “so that's just my own” (line 11), a common phrase participants use to communicate that their statements are their personal opinions and should not be taken as absolute truth, signifies the end of his turn and creates a turn relevance point, which Ben aligns himself with Adam's point. In his theory of psychological reactance, Brehm (1966) notes that individuals experience reactance when a speaker constructs his/her position as final, thereby denying them the freedom to communicate their opinions. Thus, Adam's “so that's just my own” may be a way of giving other participants the freedom to align with him or provide counter-attitudes.

Ben reiterates Adam's position that religion does not contribute to differences in English usage but, instead, one's background. This stance supports the argument that religious membership is not a strong factor whose influence goes beyond lexical variation of religious terms (Labov, 2001). Ben adds that despite being a “ritualist” or “herbalist”, a person with good educational background would be proficient in English. His use of herbalists and ritualists as examples of one's background is instructive. In Nigeria's sociolinguistic context, ritualists and herbalists are stigmatised and low-class occupations. Invariably, Ben argues that although one comes from a low-class background and has good education, there will not be

any linguistic difference between him/her and someone from a middle- or upper-class background who also has access to good education. This argument supports Aboh's (2023a) finding that good education is associated with fluency. Oche extends the discussion to similarities in Christians' and Muslims' messages of peace, humanity, and peaceful co-existence (lines 23-23), which form the basis for him agreeing with Adam and Ben.

Evident in the above excerpt is the alignment of the participants in their assessment of Christians' and Muslims' speech as similar, which enables them to form ingroup coherence. The discussion follows a preference structure, where there are normative patterns for agreements. Through their discussions, the participants attempt to reduce the perceived differences between Christians and Muslims and to promote positive intergroup relations. This lack of religious-based difference in English usage deviates from the quantitative results, which indicate an overall significant main effect in the ratings of Muslim and Christian speakers.

5.2.7 Discussion

The second research question explored the potential effects of the social variables of gender, religion, and ethnicity on the participants' evaluations of six speakers of three Nigerian Englishes. The following subsections discuss the results of the effects of these variables on speaker evaluation.

5.2.7.1 Gender

Findings from the present study revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female participants' evaluations of the speakers on status, which indicates that both genders demonstrate similar attitudes towards the six speakers of the three Nigerian Englishes on the status dimension. This aligns with the results of previous studies that found no significant difference in speaker evaluation based on gender (e.g., Ugwuanyi & Oyebola, 2022; Zhang, 2010). Since the status dimension included items on education, self-confidence, leadership, wealth, and intelligence, it shows that male and female participants perceive that women are not seen as auxiliaries in these areas (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2011). This position corresponds with Cameron's (2011) argument that women are doing better in education, gaining employment easily, and increasing their involvement in leadership. This lack of a significant difference in status ratings may reflect the dividends of the second wave

and post-modern feminist movements, which demanded material and symbolic power for women (Talbot, 2010).

The lack of statistically significant differences between male and female participants on speaker status found in this study deviates from some studies that investigated gender differences in participants' evaluations of speakers on status (e.g., Bishop et al., 2005; McKenzie & McNeill, 2022). In their study of attitudes towards Northern (Sandancer, spoken in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne area) and Southern (London) English speech in England, McKenzie and McNeill (2022) found that female participants rated the status of Northern English speech more positively compared to male participants. The possible reasons for this contradictory finding are that gendered evaluations of speech are context- and time-bound (Cameron, 2011) and because different linguistic stimuli may produce different results (Prihodkine & Preston, 2015).

While the results of the present study indicated no significant difference in status, they revealed statistically significant differences between male and female participants' ratings on solidarity and quality of language dimensions. For the solidarity ratings, male participants rated the IE male speaker more positively than their female counterparts. Regarding the quality of language ratings, the results showed that the female participants evaluated all male speakers of HE, IE, and YE significantly lower than the male participants did. The absence of any significant difference between male and female participants' evaluation of the IE and YE female speakers in this study may indicate that participants perceive the Southern females' speech as a localised variety of NgE that is close to RP; hence, its positive evaluations as the 'correct language use' (Kutlu et al., 2022). In other words, the participants consider these speakers as 'sounding native' given that they speak like an Inner Circle speaker (Hansen Edwards, 2019a). This confirms the argument that women's speech is no longer seen as deficient but as the 'superior' one (Talbot, 2003). These results are consistent with sociolinguistic findings that women express more favourable attitudes towards the standardised variety while men support nonstandardised, vernacular varieties (Chan, 2018; Chien, 2018; Hansen Edwards, 2019b; Ladegaard, 2000; Ladegaard & Chan, 2023; Trudgill, 1972). For example, Chan (2018) examined Hong Kong students' attitudes towards Inner-Circle standardised Englishes (RP, SAE, Australian English) and Outer- and Expanding-Circle nonstandardised Englishes (Hong Kong, India, the Philippines, and China) and found that female participants rated Inner-Circle Englishes more positively than male participants, who evaluated nonstandardised varieties more favourably.

Previous language attitude studies in Nigeria did not find any significant differences between male and female participants' ratings of English varieties. As stated previously, the significant differences found in the present study may have resulted from the different participants and stimuli used. Other language attitude studies in Nigeria have included only male speakers as voice stimuli (e.g., Oyebola, 2020), whereas the present study used both male and female speakers, thus confirming the prediction that using both genders as stimuli may yield different results compared to studies that use only one gender (Giles, 1970). Additionally, including only endonormative Nigerian Englishes may have resulted in the different results found in other language attitudes in Nigeria, which included both endonormative and exonormative varieties of English (Ladegaard & Chan, 2023).

The results from the qualitative analysis of the focus group data also showed that both male and female participants evaluated women's speech more favourably than men's speech. However, evaluating women's speech as pleasing and prestigious resulted in a difference-as-deficit situation in which women who do not speak as 'sophisticated' as other prototypical women are negatively evaluated. Men's use of more localised forms could be interpreted in terms of their community of practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2011), where they have been socialised to prioritise being the breadwinner rather than striving to be more linguistically competent than women (e.g., Excerpt 9).

5.2.7.2 Religion

The study found a significant difference between the Christian and Muslim participants' evaluations of Nigerian Englishes on all dimensions. For status ratings, there was a significant difference in the ratings of the HE, IE male speakers and HE female speaker. The evaluation of speakers on the solidarity dimension showed that Christian and Muslim participants rated the HE, YE male speakers and the HE female speaker differently. Lastly, the quality of language results demonstrated significant differences in the HE, IE, YE male speakers and the HE female speaker ratings. Three consistent findings were observed from these quantitative results: (1) consistent differences in the ratings of HE speakers on all dimensions, (2) consistent no significant difference in the ratings of the IE and YE female speakers, and (3) Muslim participants' consistent ratings of all speakers higher than Christian participants. A possible reason for the consistently different rating of the HE speakers is the clear difference in their linguistic features, such as alternating /p/ and /f/ as well as /b/ and /v/, possibly attributed to the influence of their first language, Hausa, and religious language,

Arabic, as demonstrated in the focus groups. It is possible that Muslim participants rated the HE speakers higher than Christians out of solidarity because they see them as a Muslim ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). On the other hand, Christians might have rated HE speakers lower because their speech deviates largely from the ‘exemplar model’ (Pierrehumbert, 2006) they have encountered, possibly attributed to their early and constant exposure to English more than Muslims. This result aligns with that of Yilmaz (2020), who found that participants (Kurdish speakers in the US) in her study were able to differentiate Sunni speakers (seen as religious) from Alevis speakers (perceived as nonreligious) and, in turn, evaluated the former more positively than the latter.

For the second finding (consistent no significant different difference in the ratings of IE and YE female speakers), as already mentioned in the preceding section, it is possible that participants perceive the IE and YE female speech as equivalent to standard localised (British) English; thus, the absence of any significant difference in Muslim and Christian participants’ ratings of them on all dimensions. In this case, Christians might have perceived the YE and IE female speech as close to the standardised exemplar variety, RP (Bamgbose, 1982), making them rate the speakers similar to Muslim participants. As May (2023) points out, individuals with L1 user competence in English are more privileged than those without it. The third finding shows that, where there are significant differences, Muslim participants rated all speakers more positively than Christian participants, suggesting that Muslim participants perceive their English proficiency as lower than Christians, hence their generosity in rating all speakers higher than Christian participants. The Muslim participants’ higher ratings of Nigerian Englishes than Christians’ indicates that although Arabic is the language of Islam, Muslim participants have positive attitudes towards NgE, probably because of the function of English in Nigeria as a language of upward social mobility and prestige (Aboh, 2022).

One surprising result is the significant difference in Christian and Muslim participants’ ratings of the IE and YE male speakers on quality of language. It is expected that because the IE and YE male speakers are Christians, there will be no difference in their speech ratings. Since most southern Nigerians are Christians, Christian participants are expected to use their status as an ingroup to evaluate them positively. One possible explanation for this surprising result is that the IE and YE men’s social networks, such as friendship groups (Milroy, 1987), may have impacted their English proficiency, thus creating a significant difference between their quality of language and that of female Christians. Additionally, since women are

generally more active in religious activities in Nigeria than men (Hendriks et al., 2012) (during the collection of voice stimuli, female southern speakers reported being more active in religious activity than male southern speakers), and results have shown that individuals who are more active in church tend to use the standardised form more than those who are less active (Baker-Smemoe & Bowie, 2015), and this may explain why Christian and Muslim participants rated the IE and YE male speakers differently. Further research is required to examine this possibility. It is also possible that there is an interaction between gender and religion in participants' evaluations of the IE and YE male speakers, given that men have been found to be perceived as less proficient than women.

The findings from the focus groups showed that the participants constructed Christians as more proficient in English than Muslims, which concurs with the quantitative results. As discussed by the participants, this is because of Christians' early and consistent exposure to English in schools, homes, and religious settings, while Muslims are more invested in Arabic. This supports the argument that most religious groups respect the founder's language (Ferguson, 1982a), and this language loyalty impacts their linguistic behaviour (Spolsky, 2003). The construction of Christians as being more proficient in English than Muslims shows that there is a perceived difference between Christians' and Muslims' speech, a phenomenon Hary and Wein (2013) have conceptualised as 'religiolect'. They define 'religiolect' as "a spoken and/or written language variety employed by a religious (or secularised) community, typically of a specific region" (p. 85). In other words, religious affiliation impacts linguistic behaviour. A similar finding was reported by Baker-Smemoe and Bowie (2009), who compared the production of vowel contrasts (*hot-caught*, *pin-pen*, *bag-beg*, *fail-fell*, and *pool-pull-pole*) by Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) and non-Mormons in Utah County, USA. Based on the judgments of vowel pair contrasts produced by 28 participants (14 Mormons and 14 non-Mormons) by three raters unfamiliar with Utah English, the findings showed evidence of differences between Mormons' and non-Mormons' linguistic behaviour. In the second principle of his decalogue of the theoretical perspectives on the sociology of language and religion, Fishman (2006) notes that the linguistic variation across religious groups exists both intra-societally and inter-societally, and has the propensity to change over time. If we situate this principle in the context of the differences between the English language usage of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and based on Baker-Smemoe and Bowie's (2009) findings, we may argue that linguistic differences can exist between and within religious groups.

In the focus groups, participants constructed Christians' and Muslims' English usage as a function of ethnic background, demonstrating that both ethnicity and religion impact varieties in complex ways (Fishman, 2006; Yaeger-Dror, 2014). Germanos and Miller (2015) reached a similar conclusion that religious affiliation on its own is not a critical factor in causing linguistic variation, and that its impact is usually intertwined with other social factors. Participants referred to ethnicity markers of Hausa Muslims' speech, such as the substitution of [f] and [v] by [p] and [b], and the influence of Arabic to buttress this interaction of ethnicity and religion on linguistic behaviour. In this case, participants confirmed their negative evaluation of the HE variety. This evaluation deviates from the assertions in Mazrui (2004) by Afro-Muslims (Hausa and Swahili) in Nigeria and Kenya that they speak 'better' English than other ethnic groups. One possible reason for participants' resistance to religion as the sole feature responsible for linguistic differences may be due to their social networks (Milroy, 1987) or communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), that members of both religious groups interact with regularly. For instance, Christians in Nigeria go to Church on Sunday and Muslims go to the Mosque on Friday, which is one day a week. The duration for which they stay in churches or mosques and interact with people from their ethnic groups may differ significantly. It is assumed that they spend more time with members of their ethnolinguistic group than with members of the same religious group; thus, they are more likely to adopt and use linguistic features that index their ethnolinguistic groups than those that index their religious affiliation. Further research is required to confirm or refute this assumption.

We observe in Excerpt 21 that participants did not align in their evaluation of Igbo Christians as being more proficient in English than Yoruba Muslims, which exemplifies the "ambivalence of stereotyping and possible co-existence of conflicting 'good' and 'bad' stereotypes of a group" (Talbot, 2003, p. 471). In other words, different people may have different evaluations of the same language performance (Prikhodkine & Preston, 2015). This may explain why some participants reported no difference between Muslims and Christians in terms of English usage. The contradictory positions between participants who noted a religious-based linguistic difference and those who reported no difference exemplify the notion of ideological dilemma that characterises the evaluation of linguistic behaviour (Billig et al., 1988). The dilemma arises from the conflicting and seemingly paradoxical beliefs that all humans share a common essence yet are also inherently unique and distinct. This creates a situation where any attempt to make generalisations about Muslims' and Christians' 'religiolects' can be challenged by individual exceptions (Weatherall & Gallois, 2003).

5.2.7.3 Ethnicity

When considering the effect of participants' ethnicity on the evaluation of the speakers, the VGT results showed that the three groups (Igbo, Igala, and Yoruba) significantly differed in the evaluation of all the speakers, except the IE and YE female speakers. This result aligns with those of previous studies that showed the effect of ethnicity on the evaluation of varieties (McKenzie & McNeill, 2022; Oyebola, 2020; Zhang, 2010). For instance, McKenzie and McNeill (2022), in their study involving 91 Northern, 104 Southern, and 36 other UK participants, found that Southern participants rated Southern English speech significantly higher on status than Northern participants, while Northern participants rated Northern English speech significantly more favourably than Southern participants. This finding shows that the Southern and Northern participants rated the ingroup variety more favourably than the outgroup. However, both the quantitative (VGT) and qualitative (focus group) findings of the present study show that participants evaluated the outgroup's variety more favourably than that of the ingroup. For example, the Northern participants rated the HE speakers less favourably than the IE and YE speakers on solidarity and quality of language in the VGT. The Yoruba participants rated HE and IE speakers more highly on status and solidarity, while the Igbo participants rated the HE and YE male speakers more favourable than the IE male speaker on status, and they rated the IE male speaker less favourably than the YE male speaker on solidarity and quality of language.

The findings discussed here are inconsistent with those of previous studies studying attitudes towards ingroup and outgroup varieties. The pattern found in several previous research studies shows that the ingroup rate their own variety more positively than the outgroup (Cargile & Giles, 1998; Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a; Giles et al., 1977; Giles & Marlow, 2011). Giles et al. (1977) introduced a concept known as 'psycholinguistic distinctiveness', which refers to an ingroup's search for speech markers to construct a positive ethnic identity. Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2022a) found that Americans rated SAE higher than the other nine varieties used in their study. They also found an evaluative hierarchy in the rating of speakers of these other varieties, where European varieties such as German- and French-accented English were rated more favourably than Arabic, Farsi, and Vietnamese accent English. In social identity terms, this is because in forming social identity, individuals tend to strive for a positive sense of self compared to the outgroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). One of the ways to enhance this positive sense of self is through language because "language binds people into a community of shared understandings and hence

identity” (O’Rourke, 2010, p. 19). The departure of the present study from these findings in the literature shows that positive stereotypes can be constructed about ‘the other’ (outgroup members) in the Nigerian context.

The reason for the positive other-representation, or ‘ethnorelativity’ (Bennett, 2013), observed in the present study among Northern participants is possibly the perception of their English as more localised than IE and YE (Igboanusi & Peter, 2005). On the other hand, IE and YE evaluations of each other’s variety as more favourably than their own variety may be because of the geographical proximity and the cultural and linguistic similarities between the Igbo and Yoruba. A similar scenario was observed by Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006), where the Danish participants preferred an RP speaker to American and Australian speakers, possibly because Danish and British English cultures are more similar and the countries are geographically closer, including that both countries belonged to the European Union at the time. The Igbo and Yoruba appear to consider themselves to be united and perceive that preferring an outgroup’s variety does not imply betraying their own ethnic group (Giles, 1979). This positive other-representation can also be interpreted based on the ethnic groups’ perceived illegitimacy and instability. Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that when social groups perceive their superiority as illegitimate, “neither the ‘inferior’ nor the ‘superior’ groups will show much ethnocentrism”. It is also possible that the more favourable evaluation of the outgroup’s variety is due to participants’ misrecognition of the speakers, which may have affected their ethnic-based ratings of the varieties (Yook & Lindemann, 2013).

5.3 Correlation between attitudes towards varieties and cultures

This section presents the results of the correlation analyses between attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE varieties and attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures. It focuses on determining the relationship between language attitudes and cultural perspectives pertaining to the three major ethnolinguistic groups examined in this study. This section is organised into three subsections: presentation of the quantitative descriptive and correlation analyses, followed by a detailed presentation of participants’ discussions about the cultures of the three groups in the focus groups. This section concludes with a discussion of the findings.

5.3.1 Quantitative results of attitudes towards NgE varieties and cultures

Given that attitudes towards varieties could also be a function of attitudes towards the speakers and cultures of the varieties in question (Kircher & Zipp, 2022; Ladegaard &

Sachdev, 2006), the third research objective was to examine the relationship between participants' attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE varieties and attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures. Specifically, in light of the language-culture discrepancy/consonance hypotheses reported by Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006), a decision was made to test the hypotheses in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context. To elicit participants' attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE cultures, participants were asked to select which of the three cultures they were most attracted to (see Figure 5.7). Culture was defined to the participants as the norms and behaviours mainly associated with particular groups of people. Participants were also asked to indicate their preferences regarding the food, music, fashion, and movies associated with each culture. They were then asked to rank the three cultures based on their overall preferences and designate their first, second, and third choices. This method allowed for the assessment of participants' specific attitudes towards the salient aspects of each culture, and their overall evaluative ranking of the cultures from most to least favoured.

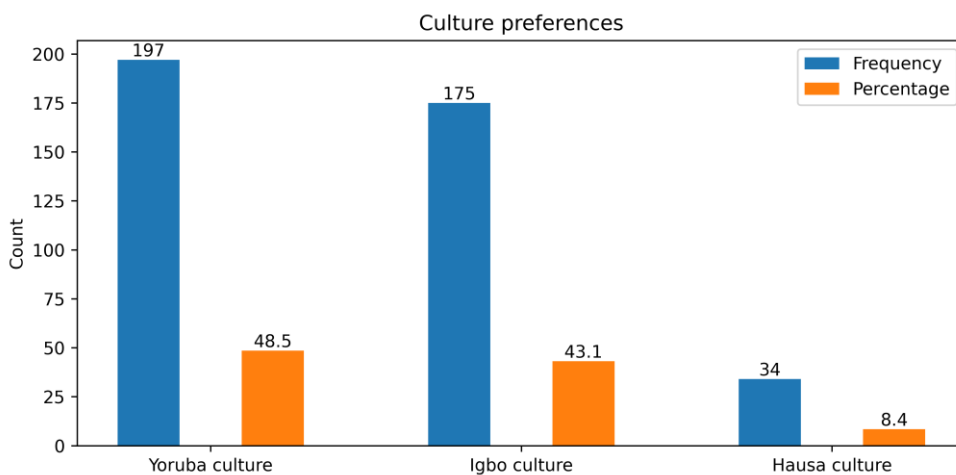


Figure 5.7 Participants' preferences for Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba cultures (N = 406)

In terms of participants' overall preference for the three cultures, frequency and percentage analyses indicated that the majority of the participants (197, 48.5%) reported that they were most attracted to the Yoruba culture, while Hausa culture was reported as the least attractive (34, 8.4%). However, many participants (175, 43.1%) indicated that they preferred Igbo culture. These results are consistent with those of the VGE, which reported that the YE variety received the most favourable ratings compared to HE, which was rated as the least attractive. When we consider the descriptive results in Figure 5.7, they appear to be more supportive of the language-culture consonance hypothesis than the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis since the participants' evaluate the YE variety and Yoruba culture more favourably than IE and HE varieties on the one hand, and Igbo and Hausa cultures on

the other. While descriptive statistics provide initial insights into patterns within the data, more robust inferential analyses are required to formally examine the relationships between attitudes towards varieties and cultures. Before conducting the correlation analyses, further analysis of participants' cultural preferences was conducted based on their own ethnolinguistic group membership. The results showed an ingroup favouritism effect, whereby participants preferred their ethnic culture to outgroup cultures (see Figure 5.8).

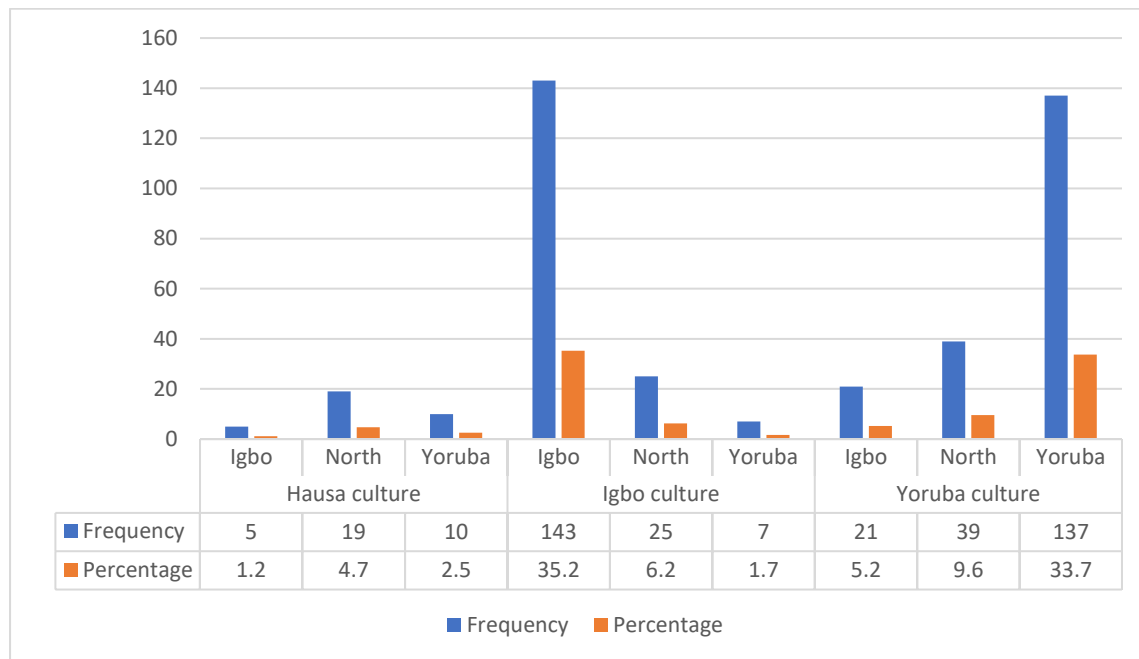


Figure 5.8 Preferences for Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba cultures by participants' group membership

Figure 5.8 shows that Igbo participants preferred Igbo culture, Yoruba participants preferred Yoruba culture, and North participants preferred Hausa culture when evaluating relative attitudes towards the cultural practices of the three groups. This finding demonstrates that participants' ethnolinguistic identity influenced their cultural attitudes, with participants showing positivity biased attitudes towards the cultures of their own ethnic ingroup. However, the degree to which this preference occurs differs. Participants who identified as Igbo showed more positive attitudes towards their own culture than other groups. Although Northern participants recorded a higher preference for Hausa culture than Igbo and Yoruba participants, Hausa culture was the least preferred (4.7%) when compared to Igbo (35.2%) and Yoruba (33.7%) cultures. Results in Figure 5.8 appear to be more supportive of the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis than the language-culture consonance hypothesis when compared to the results on the effects of ethnicity on language attitudes (see Section

5.2.3). This may be because participants tended to rate the varieties of the outgroup more favourably than the ingroup, whereas they preferred the culture of the ingroup to that of the outgroups.

To test the generalisability and robustness of the above results, correlation analyses were conducted with participants' attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE rating scores and their attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures rating scores as the dependent variables. For the Igbo participants, Kendall's tau rank correlation coefficient was used to explore the relationship between attitudes towards IE and Igbo culture ($\tau_b = .034, p = .576$), attitudes towards HE and Hausa culture ($\tau_b = -.018, p = .766$), and attitudes towards YE and Yoruba culture ($\tau_b = .039, p = .515$), and no statistical significance was found. These results show that attitudes towards the three varieties and the speakers' cultures are independent, which demonstrates that changes in one are not correlated with changes in the other. Thus, the results support the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis, where positive attitudes towards varieties are not correlated with a preference for the cultures of the speakers.

For participants who identified as Yoruba, Kendall's tau rank correlation coefficient was used to explore the relationship between attitudes towards IE and Igbo culture ($\tau_b = .062, p = .309$), attitudes towards HE and Hausa culture ($\tau_b = -.012, p = .847$), and attitudes towards YE and Yoruba culture ($\tau_b = -.064, p = .308$), and no statistical significance was found. These results demonstrate that attitudes towards the three varieties are not associated with attitudes towards the cultures of the speakers, which also support the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis.

Finally, the results of Kendall's tau rank correlation coefficient for Northern participants' attitudes towards IE and Igbo culture ($\tau_b = -.017, p = .827$), attitudes towards HE and Hausa culture ($\tau_b = .091, p = .256$), and attitudes towards YE and Yoruba culture ($\tau_b = -.105, p = .193$) yielded no statistical significance, which indicate that there is no double positive or negative attitude towards these varieties and cultures. Overall, the results of the correlation analysis indicate that no group of participants consistently showed either negative or positive attitudes towards any NgE variety and the cultures of the speakers of the variety. Thus, the results support the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis, which states that there is no correlation between attitudes towards language and the culture of the group that speaks the language. This is not surprising as quantitative results (see section 5.2.3) showed that participants tended to rate the outgroup variety more favourably than the ingroup variety

while the results in Figure 5.8 indicate that participants showed more positive attitudes towards ingroup culture than that of the outgroup. Based on the correlation results, our hypothesis H₄, which proposed a correlation between attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents and attitudes towards the culture of their speakers is rejected. The following section presents the findings of the focus group discussions to triangulate with the quantitative VGT data.

5.3.2 Qualitative findings: The discursive construction of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba cultures

As a reminder to the readers, the qualitative data presented in this section are derived from participants' discussions about the cultures of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The social psychological themes analysed were selected based on their recurrence in the participants' discussions as they respond to the prompts. To highlight the attitudes associated with participants' ethnic groups, the analysis specifies the group in which each theme featured most prominently.

5.3.2.1 Yoruba participants: Contradictory attitudes and promoting ingroup favouritism

Excerpt 23 shows how one of the participants from the Yoruba ethnolinguistic group discursively constructed contradictory attitudes between the Hausa people and culture on the one hand, and the Hausa language on the other. Before this excerpt, Kunle made the following stereotypes: the Hausa like business, the Igbo like money, and the Yoruba "honour their tribe" and value respect. Apart from Seun, who is female, all other participants are male. The discussion took place at LASUED.

Excerpt 23

- 1 Ade: For me, I accept everything my colleague just said, because Yorubas, they really
- 2 take care of their (1.0) tradition, they don't joke with that, and number two, for
- 3 the Igbos, they are very, very, they really like money a lot, and they are very,
- 4 they really love business, for the Hausa (1.0) ah, what I can say about the Hausas
- 5 is that they are just, (2.0) Hausas are, you can see they are just one kind that
- 6 somebody cannot explain (2.0) because they are, they behave like chameleon a
- 7 lot, so I can't even say a lot about Hausa at all::
- 8 Seun: (laughs)

- 9 Kunle: But you said you like Hausa earlier↓
- 10 Ade: Yes *nah*, I said I like Hausa because I just like the language, I don't say I like
 11 them (1.0) I said I like the language, so let's know what we are going, you know
 12 their characters because Hausa you can't know Hausas finish, you can't know
 13 Hausas finish, you can just know little one you see about Hausas
- 14 Mod: Can you explain more↑
- 15 Ade: I really like Hausa language because my mother speaks Hausa and she really
 16 understand Hausa a lot, and sometimes she speak it to me like but I won't
 17 understand what she's trying to say, and my elder brother too, he hear a little
 18 about Hausa, but me I don't even hear at all, so I normally want to speak it with
 19 them but I can't, but for Hausas, I have stayed with like three Hausas before, ah,
 20 they really hurt a lot

Ade provides stereotypical categories of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, stating that the Yoruba value their tradition, the Igbo are money-minded, and the Hausa are unexplainable. Ade's categorisation indicates how individuals use the few people they have encountered to make generalisations about particular ethnolinguistic groups. In this case, stereotypical beliefs about a group of people are 'cognitive shortcuts' (Garrett, 2010), where individuals belonging to a cultural group are classified in a subjective category where others belonging to the same group have been previously classified positively or negatively (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Although culture is a problematic term owing to the debate about its static or dynamic nature (see Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006), if culture is understood as people's way of life, it can be argued that Ade's description of the alleged predominant behavioural inclinations of people from these ethnic groups could be interpreted as depicting aspects of their respective cultures.

The use of the animal metaphor "they behave like chameleon a lot" (line 6) conveys semantic associations of changeability, lack of firm identity or loyalty, and possibly the implied trickiness of the Hausa. The metaphor, which serves as a rhetorical strategy to convey negative traits about the Hausa in an indirect, vivid way, represents them as being difficult to grasp fully, unpredictable and deceptive. Ladegaard and Cheng (2014) point out that when talking about the Other, individuals emphasise the differences between the ingroup and outgroup and use them to make negative statements about the outgroup. Note that it is

only the Hausa ethnolinguistic group that Ade evaluated negatively. He evaluated the Yoruba and the Igbo positively, which may indicate that Ade's evaluation results from his personal experiences with the members of these groups, as signalled using 'I' (lines 4, 6). His non-use of 'we' and consistent use of 'they' when referring to the Igbo, the Hausa and even his own ethnic group, Yoruba, shows that Ade dissociates himself from the negative outgroup and ingroup stereotypes he constructs, which is a common strategy in intergroup discourse (Ladegaard, 2020). However, based on his membership categorisation of the ethnolinguistic groups, there is a subtle implicit polarisation into criticising the Hausa and present the Yoruba and Igbo as favourably distinct (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Seun's laughter (line 8) may function as social laughter, used for ingroup alignment or derision laughter to ridicule individuals with dispreferred behaviour (Giles & Oxford, 1970).

Kunle reminds Ade that he had said earlier that he liked Hausa (line 9). Ade clarifies that he likes only the Hausa language and not the Hausa people. By clarifying that he admires the Hausa language but remains critical of the Hausa people, Ade conveys an ideological dilemma between a positive evaluation of the language and largely negative stereotypes of the indigenous speakers. He extends his previous chameleonic metaphorical conceptualisation of the Hausa by stating that one cannot fully grasp the knowledge of the Hausa because of their alleged changing nature. Ade's contradictory attitudes towards Hausa as an ethnolinguistic group, and as a language, exemplifies Ladegaard and Sachdev's (2006) language-culture discrepancy hypothesis, which states that there is no correlation between attitudes language and the culture of the group who speaks the language. In contrast to the common view that positive or negative attitudes towards a language correlate with the same attitudes towards speakers of the language in question (Kircher & Zipp, 2022), Ade's discursive positioning indicates that it is possible to respond favourably to a language while disliking speakers of that language (Hansen Edwards, 2019b). In his subsequent turn (lines 15-17), Ade reveals that his positive attitude towards the Hausa language comes from the familial relationship with his mother and brother who exposed him to Hausa. This shows that Ade's evaluation of the Hausa language and culture is mediated through interpersonal social bonds and experiences and underscores the role relational factors play in shaping attitudes towards languages, cultures, and speakers. To buttress this point, in line 19, Ade utilises his personal negative experience with three Hausa people as a basis for his negative attitude towards the Hausa. Personal experience has been observed as a common legitimation strategy in group discussions because it is difficult to dispute (Dasli & Sangster, 2023). This

evaluative strategy provides insights into how individuals employ reductive mechanisms and false uniformity in intergroup evaluations.

It is noticeable in Ade's account in lines 4 and 19 that he uses the Yoruba pragmatic marker 'ah', which has gained acceptance in NgE, when providing negative assessments of the Hausa. The use of 'ah' can be interpreted as a negative emotive-filled pragmatic marker that Ade uses to communicate his negative affect towards the Hausa. This indicates that individuals use emotionally negative words in their first language (Dewaele, 2010) and an L1 discursive particle to introduce a negative expression they want to communicate in a second language. A close examination of Ade's contradictory attitudes towards the Hausa language and people supports the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis.

Another feature that characterises the Yoruba focus groups is ingroup favouritism, realignment, and subtle outgroup criticism, as illustrated in Excerpt 24.

Excerpt 24

Context: Participants discussed the cultures of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria when they began making stereotypical comments about people from these groups. Ajayi and Abiola are male, while Bimbo and Aina are female. The discussion took place at LASUED.

- 1 Ajayi: Igbos are industrialists, they work a lot
- 2 Bimbo: Yes
- 3 Ajayi: Industrialists of the country, they are the one, anything bringing out money, they
4 want to do business (1.0) they want to do business, but in terms of education (1.0)
5 I would say their ratio it's maybe 40% of them are educated, the Igbos, but for
6 Yoruba o I would say 80% is educated and want to be educated, the Yorubas but
7 the Hausas education is not their own way
- 8 Aina: Like what he has said, the Igbo, they are really hard working like anyway, they
9 know how to earn money normally and they don't really take education serious,
10 like Yorubas Yorubas, they are very like most of them are educated, education is
11 their priority while the Hausas, they don't even think about education or stuff like
12 that
- 13 Abiola: Yoruba is the best, while Hausa do fight for religion, Igbos do fight for money
14 (2.0) they can kill their fellow human being because of money, Hausa can kill

15 their fellow man because of religion, while Yoruba people do like backbiting,
16 backbiting, they can even kill their fellow man because of their, maybe junior
17 ones, maybe ah “*Taye ti ni owo ju Kehinde lo, je kin din ogo e kun*” ((Taye is
18 richer than Kehinde, let me reduce Taye’s destiny/glory)) (general laughter) all
19 those kind of stuffs and it’s very bad for a parent to go into:: a polygamous family
20 like marry two or three wife in Yoruba land and you are still living in the same
21 room, *won ma ko ina ogun ti e o*↑ ((were you cursed?))

In this excerpt, the Yoruba participants present positive stereotypes of the outgroup (‘industrialists’ lines 1 and 3) and then gradually move from positive to negative stereotypes, eventually assessing the ingroup as the best (line 13). In line 1, Ajayi portrays the Igbo as industrialists and hardworking, which Bimbo affirms. He reaffirms his assessment, citing that their interest in business more than any other ethnic group makes them the “industrialists of the country” (line 3). Ajayi gradually transforms the positive stereotype to a negative one, as signalled by using the disclaimer lexeme “but” (line 4), demonstrating that their interest in business has affected their educational attainment. By qualifying the educational status of the Igbo and Yoruba ethnolinguistic groups using a number game strategy (lines 5-6), Ajayi projects a sense of factuality that helps legitimise his stereotypical claims and subtly criticises the outgroup. In other words, ‘we’ are educated while ‘they’ are not (lines 5-6). He ends his turn by representing the Hausa as being uninterested in education. In Ajayi’s evaluations of the industriousness of the Igbo, he does not directly contrast the Igbo with the Yoruba, unlike his explicit comparison between the Igbo and Yoruba when discussing educational attainment (line 8). This strategy supports the position that individuals emphasise the outgroup’s weakness to construct a positive ingroup identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Ajayi’s positive representation of the Igbo’s entrepreneurial traits and negative stereotypes about their lower educational attainment exemplify Ladegaard’s (2011) finding that in informal discussions about cultural Others, interlocutors tend to balance negative outgroup stereotypes with positive ones to achieve equilibrium in the group. These mechanisms indicate that while individuals emphasise the positive traits of the outgroup, they also find an opportunity to demonstrate more favourable characteristics where the ingroup excels in order to enhance a positive ingroup identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Aina (lines 8-12) affirms Ajayi's categorisation, reiterating that the Igbo prioritise business over education, unlike the Yoruba who value education. The Hausa are summarily dismissed as not valuing education. Her use of the intertextual phrase "like what he said" (line 8) validates Ajayi's stereotypes, thereby indicating group consensus. Participants' alignment in their categorisation of the Igbo as entrepreneurial may be because of the Igbo's known unique way of wealth creation and poverty reduction through an apprenticeship system (Obaeko & Adeola, 2021). In this apprenticeship system, which dates back to the early 70s, an Igbo entrepreneur recruits one or more Igbo males (within the age range of 16-18) who would learn his business for seven years, after which a business will be established for the apprentice. The newly established entrepreneur would recruit another male(s) about two or three years after starting his own business and would set up a business for the recruited apprentice(s) after their seven years of service.

Abiola (lines 13-21) upgrades Ajayi and Aina's negative assessments of the Hausa and Igbo by stereotyping the Igbo as individuals who prioritise money and engage in violent acts, and the Hausa as religious fanatics. While several Yoruba participants align with their peers to evaluate the Yoruba positively, Abiola does not follow this norm. Despite acknowledging that "Yoruba is the best", he critiques Yoruba's alleged backstabbing (line 15), jealousy and wickedness (line 17), as illustrated with the Yoruba expression, and their preference for polygamy (line 19). In line 17, the pragmatic marker "ah" can be interpreted as an emotive-filled marker of disapproval. While describing the negative stereotypes of Yoruba, Abiola dissociates himself from his ingroup by referring to the Yoruba as "they", "their" (line 16) and "you" (line 20), demonstrating that he is not part of the ingroup negative traits he describes. This indicates that people tend to generalise the negative traits of the outgroup to all its members, but when they talk about the ingroup, they position themselves as exceptions. Abiola's representations of the three ethnolinguistic groups reflect his conceptual framework, that is, his conceptualisation of groups and their human nature (Moscovici, 1984).

The general laughter (line 18) may be a form of social laughter to mark ingroup alignment, indicating that other participants did not consider his criticism of the ingroup as a form of disloyalty. This alignment echoes Kperogi's (2023) position that when stereotypical territorialisations of crimes and negative stereotypes are uttered by 'outsiders', they are often viewed as offensive and disrespectful; however, when uttered by 'insiders', they are tolerated and occasionally even appreciated. However, in their study of Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, and Overseas Exchange Students' discussions about the Other, Ladegaard and

Cheng (2014) found that when an ingroup member realigns his/her identity and comments on 'Us' as an outgroup, it leads to some degree of animosity in the group. A possible reason for this contradictory finding may be that whereas the participant in their study was critical of the ingroup and aligned with the perspective of the outgroup, Abiola was only critical of the Yoruba and said nothing positive about the outgroups. Thus, Ajayi's declaration that Yoruba is the best may be an attempt to convey that, despite any negative stereotypes of the Yoruba, they do not compare to the alleged more egregious actions of the Igbo and Hausa groups. It may also imply that the negative stereotypes he attributes to Yoruba are not significant enough for him to change his ethnic and cultural identity.

These descriptions of the low educational status of the Hausa compared to the Igbo deviate from the findings of the correlation analyses, which found no significant correlation between attitudes towards language and culture among the Yoruba participants. Excerpts 23 and 24 showed that Yoruba participants demonstrated negative attitudes towards the Hausa ethnolinguistic group. The combination of the discursive constructions of the Hausa, and the results of Yoruba participants' evaluation of the HE variety, shows that a negative preference for the HE variety correlates with a negative preference for the culture of that variety, an aspect which Ladegaard and Sachdev's (2006) language-culture consonance hypothesis did not capture. The dual negative evaluation indicates that consonance does not only involve positive attitudes towards language and culture; rather, it can also include negative attitudes towards language and culture. Furthermore, the quantitative results showed that Yoruba participants evaluated the two IE speakers more favourably than Igbo participants on status, solidarity, and quality of language, indicating that they hold positive attitudes towards IE variety. However, the explicit representation of their lower educational status and categorising them as individuals who prioritise money and engage in violent acts indicate that Yoruba participants do not like their ingroup culture. Based on these findings, it can be argued that Yoruba participants' attitudes towards IE and Igbo culture support the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis, which states that preference for a particular variety does not correlate with preference for the culture of the variety in question. In this way, the VGE and qualitative findings support the correlation analyses, which found no significant difference between attitudes towards culture and language.

5.3.2.2 North participants: Social hierarchy and using personal experience to support the evaluations of the cultural Other

In the focus groups involving North participants, especially from the Igala ethnolinguistic group, they demonstrated an awareness of social hierarchy, as Excerpt 25 shows.

Excerpt 25

Context: After discussing the English language use of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, the participants talked about the culture and stereotypes of these groups. OP = other participants; Ameh and Enejo are male, while K & P (Kwale and Peace) and Sia are female. The discussion took place at KSU.

- 1 Ameh: Actually (2.0) the way the culture of an Hausa man (1.0) that of Igbo and Yoruba
2 are different (3.0) because the Hausa person, they are always they dress decently
3 all the time (2.0) because that has been their own custom and tradition right from
4 the time (1.0) while that of the Yoruba as well, they also yes (2.0) most times
5 during their (1.0) wedding ceremony, so they appear neat as well, even outside
6 that they are also decent, but compared to Igbo at times, it normally occur (1.0)
7 their decency normally occur during their wedding
- 8 Enejo: When you talk about education, the first person that has an education is Yoruba
9 (1.0)
- 10 K & P: yes ((simultaneously))
- 11 Enejo: it's Yoruba, but when we talk about agriculture, when we go to agriculture (1.0) it
12 is Yoruba, when we talk about marketing that is trading, it is for what Igbo, then
13 when we talk about governing, the Hausa man will never allow any another
14 person to be his leader (2.0) that is that is their ethnic character they has, as I had
15 to understand, so definitely the ethnic groups' characters are not the same, but as
16 per Igala, we know quite okay, despite we are the minority, but as long as the
17 Hausa has taken themselves to the up, equally, the Igala people are equally up
- 18 OP: ((applaud in agreement))
- 19 Sia: I will start with the Yoruba speaking people (2.0) the Yoruba speaking people are
20 this set of people that they spend anyhow, one, they are not prudent at all, and
21 then they live this life of, I party, they love partying and they love pepper (1.0)

22 they love pepper (laughs), then this ehm, should I say, okay, the Igbo people (1.0)
23 are very, very prudent, in fact, my love for the Igbo people is that wherever they
24 are, the environment does not limit them, they always find something to do in
25 that environment, they are industrious, that is just one thing about them, the
26 Hausa people, they are very good in agriculture and they are their neighbours'
27 keeper, they cannot see their brother doing something and they won't support

In this excerpt, participants engage in a co-constructive process of stereotyping and generalising the cultural practices and what they claim to be personality traits of the Hausa, Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba ethnolinguistic groups. They form rigid ingroup and outgroup stereotypical categories signalled by the ethnic labels, such as “Hausa man” (line 1), “Hausa person” (2), “Igala people” (line 17), “Yoruba speaking people” (line 19), and “Igbo people” (line 23), which indicate that they treat ethnicity as a salient social category. Ameh (line 1) begins his account with “Actually”, which could function as a delay marker used to create time to think of what to say (Li, 2015). Prevalent in his turn is the occurrence of eight pauses longer than 0.5, which may be related to the fact that he is constructing ethnic categories, which is an FTA. These pauses may function as a strategy to retrieve less face-threatening claims when evaluating ethnic groups. It is also possible that he utilises the pause to think of what to say, given that individuals tend to pause in focus groups when discussing an issue that requires deeper reflection, or something they do not discuss often (Barbour, 2018; Hornsby, 2022). After explicitly naming the three major ethnic groups (line 1), Ameh focuses on the mode of fashion of these groups as the basis for his stereotypical evaluation. He formulates a mode of fashion hierarchy by categorising the Hausa as the most modestly dressed, which he realises using extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986), such as “always” (line 2), “all the time” (line 3) and “right from time” (lines 3-4). This legitimization strategy indicates that the modesty in the dressing of Hausa people is fixed, according to Ameh, and inherent to Hausa culture, a point he intensifies with the adverbial phrase “because that has been their own custom and tradition right from [the beginning of] time” (lines 3-4). This also reflects the accentuation effect, where similarities among group members are perceived as greater than they actually are (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Ameh ranks the Yoruba's mode of fashion as the second best dressed cultural group, citing that their modesty mostly occurs during their wedding ceremonies. He stereotypes the Igbo cultural

group as the least modest, asserting that they only dress conservatively during wedding ceremonies and are less modest in their daily attire.

Enejo's account (lines 8, 11-17) shifts the assessment from the mode of fashion to issues bordering on education, agriculture, business, and politics, and he acknowledges the existence of a social hierarchy among the three ethnic groups based on these domains. Although he avoids overt prejudicial statements, the essentialist contrasts between groups contain an implicit logic of inherent superiority or inferiority between ethnic and cultural identities. Regarding education and agriculture, he stereotypes the Yoruba ethnolinguistic group as 'superior' in these areas (lines 8 and 11), while the Igbo are 'superior' in business (line 12). Kelly and Peace affirm his categorisation of Yoruba as being superior in education (line 10). In terms of politics, he positions the Hausa at the top of the hierarchy and engages in an essentialist discourse, citing that it is in the "ethnic character" of the Hausa to always be at the top. Noticeable in Enejo's explicitly prejudiced discourse of hierarchisation (Lines 8, 11-15) is the absence of hedges and mitigations, which suggests the normalisation of the social hierarchy (Ladegaard & Cheng, 2014). The last part of his account involves acknowledging the minority status of his own ethnic group, Igala, and affiliating his minority group to the majority, the Hausa ethnolinguistic group, which positions the successes of the dominant Hausa as shared successes that benefit his own Igala community (lines 16-17). This alignment of Igala with Hausa is supported by other participants (line 18), demonstrating a shared belief of solidarity between the Igala and Hausa people. From a social dominance orientation, this discursive positioning indicates that when members of a minority group consider their current identity to be less prestigious, in response to the social competition for positive identity, they may affiliate themselves with a majority ethnic group (Sidanius, 1993). It also shows that among the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba ethnolinguistic groups, the participants consider Hausa as an ingroup; hence, their expression of favouritism towards Hausa people and culture. It is possible that Enejo's use of "we" in his evaluation of the three ethnolinguistic groups is to present his assessments as common knowledge rather than personal opinions, which may add credibility to his account. This is because individuals do not usually want to present themselves as biased, or having negative attitudes (Billig, 1996; Potter, 1998).

In the last part of the excerpt (lines 19-27), Sia adopts a three-part list to negatively stereotype the Yoruba people based on their extravagance (line 20), love for parties, and pepper (line 21). Sia's laughter (Line 22) serves as a face-saving device; she committed a

face-threatening act (FTA) against the Yoruba by verbalising their alleged negative characteristics, and she laughs to mitigate the FTA (Ladegaard, 2013). Giles and Oxford (1970) argue that laughter can follow a ‘sly dig’ and perform a defensive function as it reduces the force of the preceding derision. She expresses a positive disposition towards the Igbo people because of their frugality (line 23), doggedness, and industriousness (lines 24-25). This membership categorisation of the Igbo demonstrates that individuals can emphasise the good deeds of outgroups to which they do not belong. In other words, individuals can find merit in the larger collective identities and activities of outgroups while maintaining their position as observers who are not members of those groups. Sia’s rhetorical distancing, realised by her consistent use of “they” and “their”, positions her as an outsider assessing the personality traits and cultural attributes of the three groups. The contrast pair (prudent versus nonprudent, lines 20 and 23) performs an essentialist function where stereotypes and broad traits are associated with all members of ethnic groups. She ends her turn with an evaluative hierarchy of stereotypes, stating that Hausa people are good in agriculture (contrary to Enejo’s assessment) (line 26) and have a higher level of camaraderie than other cultural groups (line 27).

Another form of social action prominent in North participants’ discussion is using personal experience to support their evaluations of the Other, as Excerpt 26 illustrates:

Context: Participants discussed their attitudes towards the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba people and their cultures. Nessa is female.

Excerpt 26

- 1 Nessa: An Hausa man, they do have ehm (5.0)
- 2 Mod: They do have what↑
- 3 Nessa: They do have respect, but not all of them, some Hausa, Hausa man has this pity
- 4 for someone, a Yoruba man, I haven’t have any experience with a Yoruba man
- 5 before, but if it is an Hausa man, yes, I know about that because my mom is a
- 6 trader, she do sell for all this Hausa people (1.0) but some, most of the Hausa
- 7 people they do like (2.0) they are::: a bit bad, but some of them, they are good,
- 8 but I don’t know about the Yoruba people
- 9 Mod: What about the Igbo people↑
- 10 Nessa: Igbo people are so:::, heh, I have stayed with an Igbo woman, I have stayed with

11 an Igbo woman, so (0.4) I don't really like Igbo people, that's me, I don't really
12 like them
13 Mod: What did the woman do to you↓
14 Nessa: She was treating me so badly, which I don't like, maybe it's because I was poor
15 and I was not Igbo

In this excerpt, we see positive and negative stereotypes between Hausa and Igbo ethnolinguistic groups, with reference to Nessa's personal experience. As observed in Excerpt 26, Nessa's long pause in line 1 can be interpreted as a strategy for retrieving less face-threatening evaluations of the ethnolinguistic groups. In her assessment of the Hausa ethnolinguistic group, she strikes a balance between the expression of positive stereotypes, "they do have respect," and "Hausa man has this pity for someone" (lines 3-4) and negative stereotypes, "they are::: a bit bad" (line 7). The lengthening of "are:::" and her subsequent use of the diminutive "a bit" may serve as a strategy to soften the criticism. She hedges her positive and negative assessments of Hausa with "but not all of them" (line 3), "some" and "most" (line 6), presenting her characterisations as measured rather than overgeneralisations. She remarks that her assessments of Hausa people are drawn from her encounters with them in her mother's shop (lines 5-6), evident in her multiple use of "I". Her use of personal experience serves to legitimate her account (Van Leeuwen, 2007) and manage her identity as unprejudiced. However, due to her lack of personal experience with the Yoruba, she does not assess them (line 8), indicating that she does not make unfounded assessments.

When prompted by the moderator, she provides specific negative stereotypes of the Igbo people based on her personal experience with one Igbo woman she has lived with. While using hedges to avoid the fallacy of hasty generalisation when assessing Hausa people, Nessa uses her experience with one Igbo person to generalise her dislike for all Igbo people, signalled by the use of the nomination strategies "Igbo people" and "them" in "I don't really like Igbo people" (line 11) and "I don't really like them" (lines 11-12). This explicit negative assessment exemplifies the claim that participants make orientations about people and cultures they know rather than implying their likes or dislikes (Zhu, 2015). Nessa engages in a victim narrative where she positions herself as a victim and the Igbo woman as an aggressor, and thus, anchors her negative stereotypes of the Igbo on how badly she was treated. She constructs her socioeconomic status and ethnic identity as possible reasons for how she was treated (lines 14-15).

From the discursive constructions of the three major ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria in Excerpts 25 and 26, we can see that the North participants demonstrated favouritism towards the Hausa people and culture more than the Igbo and Yoruba. This indicates that these participants construct Hausa as an ingroup. When we compare this positive representation of the Hausa people and culture to the North's lower evaluation of the HE variety, it can be argued that the results support the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis more than the language-culture consonance hypothesis. In other words, a positive preference for Hausa people and culture does not correlate with a positive preference for HE variety. This conclusion is also supported by the correlation analyses, which found no significant difference between North's attitude towards HE variety and Hausa culture. Thus, the participants prefer Hausa culture but they do not aim for HE variety.

5.3.2.3 Igbo participants: Constructing positive ingroup distinctiveness and equilibrium of negative and positive representations

The notion of positive ingroup distinctiveness foregrounds a certain sociological awareness of intergroup relations, which implies some kind of group stratification in which the differences between ethnic groups are made more visible. Constructing positive distinctiveness is evident in the Igbo participants' discussions, as Excerpt 27 shows.

Excerpt 27

Context: The participants were discussing the culture of the three major ethnic groups. They talked about interethnic marriages and the possibility of raising a child with little or no identity crisis. Oge criticised interethnic marriages, while Nedu noted that they bring unity to Nigeria and promote intercultural competence. Oge's reaction resulted in the following interaction. Nedu is male, whereas Oge is female.

- 1 Oge: I honestly think that coming to culture (2.0) Igbo culture is em (3.0) I don't think
- 2 it's blendable with Yoruba culture (1.0) although it's more blendable with
- 3 Yoruba than Hausa
- 4 Nedu: Do you know Igbo is the only ethnic group that is inviting↓
- 5 Oge: Why will you say inviting↓
- 6 Nedu: Igbo culture is very inviting.
- 7 Oge: How
- 8 Nedu: Because we don't discriminate, we don't push away, you see a Yoruba person

9 coming into an Igbo man's house and then he would take the person as his
10 brother, that's why we co-exist, even when you go to Lagos, you will see that the
11 Igbos, where they are majorly like they can still co-exist with both the Hausas and
12 the Yorubas in that same area (1.0) Igbos tend to learn
13 Oge: Yeah (1.0) and you think that the Hausas they are not accommodating↑
14 Nedu: I won't say they are accommodating because (1.0) let me tell you something now,
15 for instance now, houses in Anambra
16 Oge: Yeah
17 Nedu: Good, do you know of any Yoruba man that has built a house in Anambra or any
18 Hausa man that has built house in Anambra
19 Oge: No
20 Nedu: But you can beat your chest that an Igbo man has house or houses in Lagos and
21 Abuja
22 Oge: Yes, definitely
23 Nedu: So what does that tell you↓
24 Oge: You know this thing you are talking about now is what makes, from what I have
25 heard, they said that it's because of this nature of Igbo people that is why Hausas
26 and Yorubas kind of feel threatened in quote by Igbos, that's why the whole issue
27 of not allowing an Igbo person rule or that kind of thing came into play because
28 they feel Igbos are wiser or stuffs like that
29 Nedu: Yeah

The interaction reveals the positive ingroup stereotypes negotiated and co-constructed by Oge and Nedu, where they assert the superiority of the Igbo over the Hausa and the Yoruba with respect to hospitality and developing wherever they live, including Igbo and non-Igbo lands. Oge begins the excerpt by establishing the cultural distinctiveness of Igbo culture from other cultural groups. However, she acknowledges that Igbo culture is more comparable to Yoruba than to Hausa. Nedu's question in line 4 can be interpreted as a strategy to reinforce Igbo distinctiveness and challenge Oge's preceding statement that there is a similarity between Igbo and Yoruba culture. This reinforcement of ethnic distinctiveness echoes Moscovici and Perez's (1997) point that individuals or groups establish social distances to

make similar others dissimilar. Nedu's use of "only" (line 4) serves to emphasise the differences between Igbo and other ethnic groups, ignore the similarities between them and allow him to implicitly criticise the alleged inhospitality of other ethnic groups without being overtly face-threatening (Ladegaard & Cheng, 2014). In line 5, Oge questions Nedu's claim, prompting him to expound his argument. Using a two-part list, Nedu then explains that Igbo culture is inviting because Igbo people "don't discriminate" and "don't push away" (line 8), stereotypical attributes which allow them to co-exist with the Hausa and Yoruba (line 11). The use of the negations conveys categorical certainty about the behaviour of the Igbo and highlights how an individual can enhance the face of the ingroup by homing in on who they are not as a strategy to emphasise the negative attributes of the outgroup (Said, 1978). Thus, Nedu suggests that the Hausa and the Yoruba discriminate against and are hostile to foreigners. This membership categorisation positions the Igbo as inclusive and accommodating.

A noticeable rhetorical strategy in Nedu's account (lines 8-12) is his change of footing, realised by the shift from the pronoun "we" (line 8) to "he, his, they" (lines 9, 11). The use of "we" can be argued to perform two functions. First, it may function to emphasise his belonging to the Igbo ethnic group and indicate that all the members of the group share the characteristics he attributes to the Igbo. Second, Nedu may have used it to enhance the credibility of his representation of the Igbo. By speaking as a member of the group, Nedu implies that he has first-hand knowledge of Igbo cultural values, strengthening his stereotypical account that Igbo people are hospitable and nondiscriminatory. Nedu's switch from "we" to "he, his, they" occurs when he starts to talk about the attributes of Igbo people in Lagos to signal that he does not currently live in Lagos. His account is perhaps due to his experience when he visited Lagos, as he stated in the latter part of the discussion. This pronoun shift may also be a strategy to signal that the attributes of the Igbo he describes are not peculiar to him, but instead shared by several Igbo people, even in non-Igbo lands. This stake inoculation reinforces the persuasiveness of his argument and contributes to the assertion of ingroup distinctiveness and superiority (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

In line 13, Oge agrees with Nedu's explanation and questions his construction of the Igbo as the only accommodating ethnic group. Oge's choice to first acknowledge Nedu's point of view and communicate her disalignment in the form of a question (comprising the modal verb "think") instead of overt disagreement can be interpreted as a politeness strategy to minimise confrontation and threat to Nedu's face. It highlights the collaborative and

contested nature of the construction of ethnic identities in discourse and exemplifies Billig's (1996) argument that all members should be able to probe the weaknesses of their ingroup members' positions. Her polite language aims to maintain a friendly affiliation with Nedu despite their potentially diverging perspectives on Hausa culture. This politeness shows that when discussing the Other, ingroup members consider the face of other interactants despite there being little or no social distance between them. The latter part of the discussion (lines 14-22) involves reinforcing ingroup alignment concerning the hospitality of the Igbo. Nedu exemplifies his argument by stating that the Igbo are the only ethnic group that builds on nonindigenous lands. By emphasising this attribute of the Igbo, Nedu orients to the construction of the positive distinctiveness of the Igbo ethnic group, asserts ethnic superiority, and naturalises the representation of the Igbo as tolerant. From a social identity perspective, the more the ingroup is thought to be similar to various outgroups, the more its members feel the need to make their ingroup appear more favourable and distinct by highlighting intergroup differences (Ladegaard, 2011b; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The legitimation strategy signalled by referencing the authority of tradition or practice (Van Leeuwen, 2007) of the Igbo people to develop their host communities by building houses helps achieve consensus and harmony between Oge and Nedu. This harmony spurs Oge to extend the discussion by referencing how the perceived intelligence and wisdom of the Igbo people might make the Hausa and Yoruba feel threatened (line 26). It is noticeable how Oge utilises what she heard about the enterprising and distinctive nature of the Igbo as the basis for accepting Nedu's argument, exemplifying the premise that there is an internal, mental representation of social stereotypes which is shared through language and established during socialisation (Augoustinos et al., 2014; Devine & Sharp, 2009). Given that Oge and Nedu belong to the same group, this may have contributed to her acceptance of Nedu's stance. As Billig (1996, p. 268) argues, "No common-ground might be sought with the enemy, but greater demands may be placed upon showing identification and loyalty with one's fellows". By referring to what she heard, Oge inoculates against accusations of prejudice when making problematic generalisations about the Hausa and Yoruba. Following discursive psychology and social identity theory, which focus on how rhetorical strategies and linguistic resources are used to construct different social and ethnic identities by attributing stereotypical characteristics to them and providing accounts that legitimate these identities as 'real', Excerpt 27 highlights how Oge and Nedu draw on personal experiences, anecdotes and group stereotypes to construct the ethnic distinctiveness and ethnic superiority

of their ethnic ingroup based on the dimensions of inclusion, economic success and intellectual advancement compared to the Hausa and Yoruba ethnolinguistic groups. The interaction reflects Moscovici and Perez's (1997) concept of categorical prejudices, which emphasises how individuals create distance between themselves and the outgroups through categorisation. It exemplifies the comparison principle of social identity theory that in intergroup contexts, ingroup members orient to enhancing their positive social identity and self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Another dominant social action performed by the Igbo participants is the formation of equilibrium by balancing the positive and negative representations of the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, as illustrated in Excerpt 28.

Excerpt 28

Context: Participants were discussing the mode of fashion of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria and stereotyped the Yoruba as fashionable. Goddy mentioned that because of Yoruba's good fashion, he was contemplating marrying a Yoruba lady. However, he also remarked that their alleged dirtiness discouraged him because of his experience when he visited Lagos. Didi noted that dirtiness depends on individual personality, not ethnicity. Miracle asked why the characteristic 'dirty' is only associated with the Yoruba. Goddy responded that it is because of people's personal experience with the Yoruba in Yoruba land, such as Lagos, where one will see a Yoruba woman selling food close to a dirty drainage, not minding customer satisfaction. Goddy's statement led to the following exchange. Goddy is male, while Didi and Miracle are female. The discussion took place at the university in Igbo land.

- 1 Miracle: That's the thing (1.0) the language [for the Yoruba] is (1.0) not
- 2 accommodating at all
- 3 Didi: (laughs)
- 4 Miracle: Honestly, I feel like, coming down to the Igbos, if you meet a market seller
- 5 that can't speak English (1.0) you will see the person trying so hard (1.0)[
- 6 Goddy: [to
- 7 communicate with you]
- 8 Miracle: [yes, to make you understand what she is selling,
- 9 *nke a abuo* ((two of this)), doing hand like this ((gestures by raising her index

10 and middle finger)), if you enter a Yoruba market, the woman doesn't want to
 11 know what you are saying

12 Didi: She does not actually want to know

13 Miracle: She will even hiss (hisses)

14 Didi: (laughs)

15 Goddy: *jade, jade* ((leave, leave))

16 Miracle: *Ehee, jade jare* ((leave please)), she go just para give you like (1.0)
 17 ((she will even be annoyed with you))

18 Goddy: She will ask you if you were the person that gave her money to start business

19 Miracle: It is one of their cultural traits I don't like (2.0) and they like to show off too
 20 (2.0) while the Igbos em I feel like the Igbos is the culture that don't like to be
 21 cultural (2.0) especially the educated ones (1.0)

22 Goody: Let me tell you, Igbo is disrespectful

23 Miracle: Okay↑ (1.0) yes, yes Igbo is very disrespectful (1.0) thank you, coming to that
 24 cultural aspect, I feel like the Yoruba culture[

25 Goddy: [Exactly, they respect very very
 26 well, they will lie down

27 Miracle: [The greeting, for every single thing you do in
 28 Yoruba

29 Goddy: [*Ekú ijoko, Eku jo meta*] ((Yoruba forms of greetings))

30 Miracle: [*pele oo*] ((well done or sorry))

31 Goddy: *eku* this *eku* that but Igbo man to respect their king *sef* (1.0)

33 Miracle: You are going too far *sef* [

34 Goddy: [Because I remember my king for village,
 35 if e de drive car me and am fit de even de struggle for road
 36 ((if he is driving, I may not yield to him to pass on the road))

37 Miracle: You are going too far, as a king maybe probably some people will respect you,
 38 but let's start with an old woman carrying big market load, an Igbo person
 39 fit tell am "*Mma shiftigodunu one side first ka m gafere*" (laughing)[
 40 ((can tell her "Madam, shift to the side let me pass"))

- 40 Goddy: [Shift
 41 first let me pass
 42 Miracle: A Yoruba person will first greet her for actually standing
 43 Goddy: *Pele ma* ((sorry madam))
 44 Miracle: Then greet her for carrying something on her head (1.0) there is always a
 45 greeting for a particular thing (1.0) that the person does
 46 Goddy: Then they go come carry am for the woman
 47 ((Then they will carry it for the woman))

Miracle selects the alleged unaccommodating linguistic behaviour of the Yoruba as the dimension to express her negative stereotype. Her use of “at all” (line 2) can be interpreted as an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986), which frames the lack of accommodation as total and absolute and intensifies her negative evaluation of the Yoruba. Didi’s laughter (line 3) may function as a stake inoculation to minimise Miracle’s negative stereotype of the Yoruba and a strategy to subtly distance herself from Miracle’s assessment without directly disagreeing with her. Miracle’s use of “honestly” in line 4 may be a way of reinforcing the factuality and seriousness of her stance. It shows that the behaviour of the Yoruba she assesses is not something to be joked with. She contrasts this behaviour with her own ingroup, which she notes would endeavour to communicate nonverbally with a potential buyer, even if the seller cannot speak English. This implicitly frames the Igbo as more welcoming. Goddy’s interruption (lines 7-8) after Miracle’s short pause (line 5) demonstrates that, in focus group discussions, when a participant agrees with a current speaker, in case of pauses, the nonfloor holder helps the current speaker by collaboratively completing the sentence, but if the nonfloor holder disagrees, we might expect him/her to use the opportunity to communicate his/her disagreement and express a counter-attitude. The participants jointly contrast the effort of the Igbo seller to be cooperative in the market discourse with the indifference of a Yoruba counterpart who would ask the buyer to leave (line 15) and allegedly exhibit acts of impoliteness (lines 13 and 18) if the buyer does not speak Yoruba. In their study of buyer-seller interactions in three large markets in Southwest Nigeria (predominantly occupied by the Yoruba), despite finding that market discourses are characterised by codeswitching between English, Yoruba, Pidgin, Igbo, and Hausa, Alo and Soneye (2014) also found that these interactions include pragmatic strategies such as swearing and abuse by the sellers when the buyers price below the real value.

Miracle then submits that Yoruba's alleged lack of accommodation, especially in the context of market discourse, is "one of their cultural traits" (line 19) she detests, demonstrating that there are other positive aspects of Yoruba's behaviour and culture. To strike equilibrium, she also highlights the negative aspect of the educated Igbo, which is their indifference to their culture. In the latter parts of the discussion not presented here, Miracle further explains that by not liking to be cultural, she implies that educated Igbo people do not have a strong loyalty towards the Igbo language. This assessment aligns with the finding that the Igbo tend to shift from their culture and language to English (Nwaozuzu, 2015). Goddy affirms Miracle's negative assessment of the Igbo, arguing that "Igbo is disrespectful" (line 22). The phrase "let me tell you" (line 22) can be interpreted as a strategy Goody uses to signal the alleged factuality of his assessment. This could indicate that his stereotype is something that he would not ordinarily admit to in the presence of an outgroup member because of its potential face threat to the ingroup. In a sense, people already know the negative stereotypes of their ingroup but normally verbalise positive stereotypes to enhance the image of their ingroup (Billig, 1996). Miracle processes Goddy's assessment, signalled by the upward intonation she uses in pronouncing "Okay" (line 23), followed by her repetition of "yes", indicating her alignment with Goddy's evaluation. She quickly contrasts the disrespect of the Igbo with the respectfulness of the Yoruba (line 24). Through this contrast, she moves the discussion away from the negative evaluation of the Yoruba to a positive evaluation, thereby forming equilibrium between the positive and negative representations of the outgroup.

Goddy and Miracle, in the subsequent turns (lines 27-31), co-construct the alleged politeness of the Yoruba, especially with respect to greetings and respect for the elderly, which is realised both verbally and nonverbally. To add credibility to their stereotype, they provided instances of such greetings (line 29). "Eku ijoko" is used when someone is sitting down, which can be loosely translated as "Well done for sitting down". It can be used when someone enters an event (e.g., a meeting) where people are already sitting down. Its counterpart, "Eku iduro", is used when greeting someone who is standing. "Eku jo meta" means "It has been a while". "Meta" in Yoruba means "three", and for the Yoruba, when someone has not seen the other for up to three days, it is considered a long time. While the participants begin the excerpt with a positive stereotype of the Igbo and a negative stereotype of the Yoruba, they end by reversing their initial positions and stating the positive aspects of the Yoruba and the negative aspects of the Igbo. Drawing from personal experience, they

argue that the Igbo might disrespect their King (line 34) and how the Yoruba greet and help the elderly more than the Igbo (lines 37-40, 42-46). This membership categorisation has been echoed in research on the Yoruba, who use greetings as one of the bases for determining a polite and well-behaved individual (Odebunmi, 2015). In his theory of social comparison processes, Festinger (1954) argues that a group might drive upward in its comparison by comparing itself to a referent outgroup that displayed more of the features the ingroup lacks (respect among the Igbo participants in this case). Furthermore, the formation of equilibrium in their representations positions the participants as low-prejudice individuals. Augoustinos et al. (2014) maintain that whereas high-prejudice individuals consistently activate and discuss negative stereotypes, low-prejudice individuals are likely to focus on positive and negative features of different ethnic and cultural identities.

It is noticeable in Excerpt 28 that the participants codeswitched between NgE (used for most parts of the discussion), Igbo (lines 9, 39), Yoruba (lines 15-16, 29-31, 43), and NPgE (lines 35, 39). By using Igbo and Yoruba expressions, the participants arguably add credibility to their accounts and show that their assessments are based on their personal experiences with the Igbo and Yoruba, not on speculation. Codeswitching to these indigenous languages enables the participants to demonstrate the linguistic practices they attribute to the Igbo or Yoruba. It also allows them to communicate concepts more efficiently in their actual usage, given that translating them may weaken their authenticity and illocutionary force (Austin, 1975).

The formation of equilibrium is also observed in the participants' discussion of the Hausa ethnolinguistic group, whom they stereotyped as 'united' and 'backwards' owing to their Islamic religion, as Excerpt 29 shows. The discussion took place at the university in Igbo land.

Excerpt 29

- 1 Miracle: I also think that the Hausa, their religion keeps them together (1.0) you know
- 2 in Nigeria as a whole now, I feel like they are the most united ones
- 3 Didi: And it is true, because even churches, churches are having issues now within
- 4 themselves, different churches
- 5 Miracle: Different churches my dear, different denominations from far and wide, why?
- 6 Didi: It might even be the same church o but different branches (1.0) so the Hausas

- 7 they have a very big advantage
- 8 Miracle: It is one thing I admire them for (1.0) but I also think that that religion is the
- 9 reason why they are backward
- 10 Didi: (laughs)
- 12 Miracle: Tell me how, what else[↑] you give birth to a child and instead of sending the
- 13 child to school, you are sending the child to an Islamic school
- 14 Goddy: I think brainwashing is common in the North and that's why they have lost
- 15 their culture, religion came in and took away everything
- 16 Miracle: I think that the religion is the only culture that I can give to them now

The discussion begins with a positive evaluation of Islam, which is the dominant religion in Hausa land, which the participants argue has promoted unity among the Hausa (lines 1-2) compared to the different denominations in Christianity, which have allegedly resulted in disunity among the Igbo and Yoruba. After positively assessing them for their unity, Miracle, using the disclaimer marker 'but', balances her positive stereotype with a negative one, and claims that the same religion makes them backward. This discursive positioning exemplifies what Ladegaard and Cheng (2014, p. 166) conceptualise as "illusionary positives", in which participants gradually transform a positive assessment into a negative one. When this occurs, the negative assessment tends to be emphasised more often than positive assessment. It also corroborates the argument that our validations can turn into criticisms and our criticisms into validations (Billig, 1996). Didi's laughter (line 10) can be interpreted as derision laughter used to ridicule the Hausa (Giles & Oxford, 1970) and align with Miracle's assessment. Spurred by the affiliative laughter, Miracle claims that Hausa's alleged backwardness manifests in their decision to enrol their children in Islamic schools (line 13), an action which Goddy attributes to brainwashing. Not only does the alleged brainwashing make them enrol their children in Islamic schools, but Goddy claims that Islamic religion has eroded Hausa culture. The participants stereotypically equate Islamic education to backwardness because they believe that it inhibits the Hausa from learning English and cuts them off from globalisation, points they make in the latter part of the discussion (not presented here). Perhaps because the participants believe that Christian schools expose students to modernity and English, it may explain why they did not negatively stereotype Christians who enrol their children in Christian schools.

The balance of positive and negative representations of both the ingroup and outgroup indicates that outgroup derogation does not always entail absolute ingroup favouritism. Participants' negative stereotypes of their own group can be tolerated, especially when the outgroup is not within the audiovisual range of the discursive setting (Kperogi, 2023). In other words, the participants often support each other, ensuring that equilibrium is mutually accomplished. The interactions in this section exemplify the co-construction of identity and culture through linguistic strategies, negotiated alignment, and the formation of equilibrium between positive and negative stereotypes across groups. Based on the ingroup favouritism in Excerpt 27 when compared to the ethnorelativity in Excerpt 3, where the Igbo participants noted that the Yoruba speak the 'best' English, as well as the balance between negative and positive stereotypes in Excerpt 27, we can conclude that the qualitative analyses align with the quantitative results which found no correlation between attitudes towards culture and language of the three major ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria.

5.3.3 Discussion

The third research question explored the correlation between attitudes towards the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures and attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents. The analyses found no correlation between attitudes towards culture and attitudes towards languages for the three ethnolinguistic groups, which support the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis. The results show that a positive/negative attitude towards a variety does not entail a positive/negative attitude towards the culture of the speakers of the variety in question. Notably, these results align with those of Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006), who found that 96 Danish participants showed positive attitudes towards American English accent but a negative attitude towards American culture. The finding corroborates Hansen Edwards' (2019b) argument that negative attitudes towards a variety do not necessarily entail negative attitudes towards the speakers of the variety in question.

However, the absence of correlation deviates from the position in the literature that attitudes towards particular varieties indicate the attitudes held towards users of the varieties in question (e.g., Dragojevic et al., 2021; Kircher & Zipp, 2022). A possible reason for this deviation is that the participants in the present study may view the varieties separately from the cultures. Additionally, the language-culture discrepancy can be explained by Ade's account in Excerpt 23, line 10, which shows that individuals can have positive attitudes towards a variety because of the social distance or solidarity that exists between them and the

person(s) who introduced the variety to them, or from whom they were regularly exposed to the variety. Thus, individuals can have negative attitudes towards the culture of indigenous speakers of the variety in question based on their personal experiences and stereotypes.

Drawing upon the concepts of ‘latitude of acceptance’ (all attitudes an individual finds acceptable) and ‘latitude of rejection’ (all attitudes an individual finds unacceptable) proposed by Sherif et al. (1965) in their social judgment theory, the language-culture discrepancy this study identified can be explained by the lack of overlap between the ranges of attitudinal positions expressed by the participants towards the HE, IE, and YE varieties and the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba cultures, as represented in Figure 5.9. In other words, the most positive attitudes towards varieties did not correlate with the most positive attitudes towards cultures, and the most negative attitudes towards varieties did not correlate with the most negative cultural attitudes.

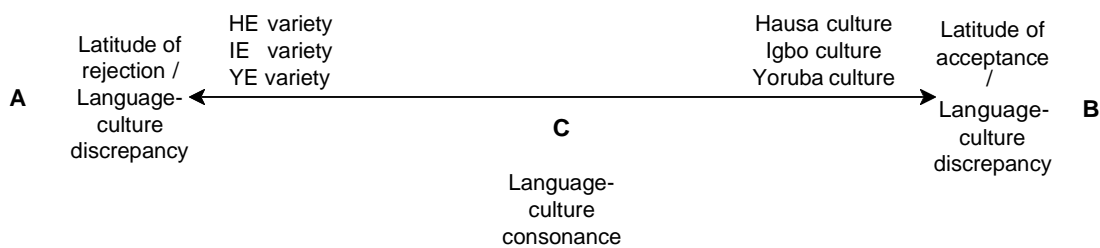


Figure 5.9 Latitude of language-culture discrepancy/consonance

Figure 5.9 indicates that attitudes towards varieties and cultures are at the two ends of the continuum (A, most negative attitudes) and (B, most positive attitudes), indicating a discrepancy between them. The range of acceptance/rejection for varieties did not match the range of acceptance/rejection for cultures among the participants. A language-culture consonance is realised when attitudes towards varieties overlap at point C, indicating a midpoint between the points of rejection and acceptance. This latitude of language-culture discrepancy/consonance model provides a conceptual basis for hypothesising and measuring how attitudinal latitudes could shift along the continuum over time. It illustrates how individuals can hold favourable attitudes towards people of a cultural-linguistic background and appreciate aspects of that group while still showing unfavourable attitudes towards aspects of the linguistic and cultural behaviours of the group in question (Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006).

The study also explored how participants discursively constructed the linguistic and cultural identities of the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba groups and found that the Igbo participants formed equilibrium by balancing the negative and positive representations of the three ethnolinguistic groups. This indicates that participants present attitudes that were different from those initially expressed in the discussion. This finding aligns with Ladegaard (2011b), who studied how Hong Kong students talk about people from America, the Philippines, Pakistan and Mainland China and found that in their discursive construction of outgroup stereotypes, the students reached some form of equilibrium in their representation of Americans. They represented them as strong, creative, arrogant, and snobbish. As observed in the current study, Ladegaard (2011b) found that verbalising positive and negative stereotypes about the Other can occur across individuals and within individual speakers. A possible reason for this equilibrium is participants' desire to present themselves as low-prejudiced individuals who acknowledge the positive and negative characteristics of a given group (Augoustinos et al., 2014). This could also result from a change in the rhetorical context, especially with respect to changes in the dimension or domain of evaluation. Billig (1996) argues that the presentation of contradictory stereotypes should not always be interpreted as a case of genuine attitude change because alterations of attitudes are context-based. Another plausible reason for the equilibrium is the relaxed and nonconfrontational nature of the discussion because the participants are friends and identify as an ingroup. Billig (1996) notes that attitudinal expressions can be hardened if a confrontation rather than a discussion is anticipated.

The equilibrium found in the discussions highlights the variability of language and cultural attitudes compared to the stable and relatively static attitudes found in traditional questionnaire-based methods (such as MGT and VGT) used to elicit language attitudes. These traditional methods reveal relatively uniform attitudes across individuals and groups (Ladegaard, 2020). The absence of variability in these methods may be due to the predefined attitudinal constructs and personality traits identified by the researcher. While acknowledging the merits of these traditional methods, discursive-based approaches to attitudes are crucial, as they enable analysts to understand how attitudes/stereotypes and counter-attitudes/stereotypes are negotiated and co-constructed in discourse across individuals and within individual speakers (Bellamy, 2022). This is because participants tend to reveal counter-attitudes when they are aware that they engage in face-to-face discussions due to the changes in interactional contexts (Cialdini et al., 1976; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2017). In

such situations, participants would observe that the arguments they had assumed to belong to their latitude of rejection belong to their latitude of acceptance (Billig, 1996).

The focus group data analysis also revealed an affinity among Igala participants towards the Hausa ethnolinguistic group. As exemplified in Extract 20, Enejo, while acknowledging the minority status of his ethnic group, asserts that the dominance of Hausa entails the dominance of Igala, a perspective supported by other participants in the group. This discursive alignment with Hausa identity and dominance demonstrates that in contexts of social stratification, minority groups who perceive their group to be low in status may identify with a reference group, which they consider to be more prestigious, powerful, and legitimate (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). By aligning with Hausa, the Igala participants do not aim to change their Igala identity but to enhance it in the context of social comparison. The reasons for aligning with Hausa instead of with other major ethnolinguistic groups, such as Igbo and Yoruba, can be attributed to geography and religion. It can be argued that for Igala participants, the Hausa might be perceived as an ingroup member compared to the Igbo or the Yoruba. Geographically, Igala and Hausa lands are located in northern Nigeria. Such geographical commonalities can foster interactions and connections between the two ethnic groups. In terms of religion, both the Igala and the Hausa are predominantly Muslims (Ali, 2021). This religious connection can also contribute to a sense of shared identity and unity between the two groups, further explaining why Igala participants aligned with the Hausa. From an ethnolinguistic vitality perspective, it seems that a high level of ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ vitality of the Hausa (Bourhis et al., 2019), owing to their political power and position and being the most populous ethnolinguistic group in Nigeria (Aboh, 2023b), may be sufficient factors in determining the alignment of Igala participants with the Hausa.

The ingroup favouritism and subtle outgroup criticism observed in the focus group data support the finding that in intergroup contexts, individuals create us-them dichotomies and tend to represent the ingroup more positively than the outgroup (Ladegaard & Cheng, 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The creation of intergroup distinctiveness was prominent in the Yoruba participants’ discussions about the Igbo and Hausa. In this group, the Igbo and Hausa were constructed generally as uninterested in education. While the Igbo were constructed to be “40% interested in education”, the Hausa were represented as having little or no interest in education (see Excerpt 24, lines 5-7). This indicates that some groups may be openly derogated during social comparisons, whereas others may experience subtle criticism (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Thus, participants can indirectly maintain ingroup coherence and

positive ingroup identity by zeroing in, either directly or by subtle indirect means, on the negative stereotypes of comparable outgroups (Ladegaard, 2011a). As mentioned earlier (see Section 5.1.4.1 about education in Hausa land), the possible reason for the Yoruba participants' derogation of the Hausa more than the Igbo is the historical context of education in the regions. Western education was first introduced in southern Nigeria before northern Nigeria, and because of Islamic religion being prominent in northern Nigeria where the Hausa people live, they are more inclined to Islamic education where Arabic is emphasised, more than Western education where English is emphasised (Aboh, 2023b; Jowitt, 2019). Another reason may be the geographical proximity and intercultural contact between the Yoruba and Igbo, which may promote greater perceptions of an ingroup alliance between these ethnicities compared to views of the more distant Hausa.

Augoustinos et al. (2014) note that the consequences of social comparisons between ingroups and outgroups are most important to social identity theory. Given Nigeria's multicultural and multilingual nature, stereotypes and ethnic profiling may result in intercultural conflict, which jeopardises the unity of Nigeria. This is because negative intergroup stereotypes are a major hindrance to peaceful co-existence across ethnolinguistic groups (Ladegaard, 2012). The participants in this study engage in an essentialist discourse where the differences between their own group and the outgroup are highlighted and outgroups stereotyped as deficient and abnormal rather than unique. The outgroup derogation observed in the focus groups indicates the potential failure of the 'One Nigeria' ideology. 'One Nigeria' is a mantra aimed at promoting the unity of Nigeria despite its multiethnicity and plurilingualism. If this ideology is to succeed, there is a need to move away from verbal pyrotechnics to an action-oriented approach to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and improve intercultural competence among Nigerians through education and interdependence (Aboh et al., 2024). Such intercultural competence awareness would not eliminate cultural stereotypes, but it would hopefully foster understanding, empathy, and respect among different ethnolinguistic groups in Nigeria (Byram et al., 2001).

5.4 Results of attitude-behaviour relations

This section reports on the research findings of participants' linguistic behaviour based on their production of schwa, which appeared 23 times in the speech elicitation paragraph 60 selected participants read (see Section 4.4.4). As stated earlier, the speech elicitation task enables us to check whether participants' production aligns with or deviates from the variety

they evaluated positively or negatively (i.e., attitude-behaviour relationship). The first part of this section focuses on descriptive statistics of the different perceptual realisations of schwa. Based on these results, we will then conclude whether there is a relationship between participants' linguistic behaviour and their language attitudes. The second part this section concentrates on the variations in the productions of schwa across ethnicities and genders. The final part of this section presents a discussion of all the findings.

5.4.1 Realisations of the occurrences of schwa

To assess actual linguistic behaviour, 20 participants (10 male and 10 female) from each ethnic group (Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba) (60 in total) who participated in the speech elicitation task were asked to read a passage which was analysed using Praat. Figures 5.10-5.12 capture screenshots of the spectrograph showing select participants' production. In addition to extracting the F1 and F2 values, the duration (in milliseconds) of the participants' production of the 23 occurrences of schwa and their actual realisations of the sound were obtained. Schwa was chosen because the Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba languages lack schwa in their phonemic inventories. Hence, it will help to clearly differentiate how the participants adapted to, or approximated, the production of schwa in English. The occurrences of schwa were categorised into three types: a_schwa (e.g., Stella, and, a, at), e_schwa (e.g., the, pressure, litre, brother), and o_schwa (e.g., of, to, champion, station) based on their morphological representations.

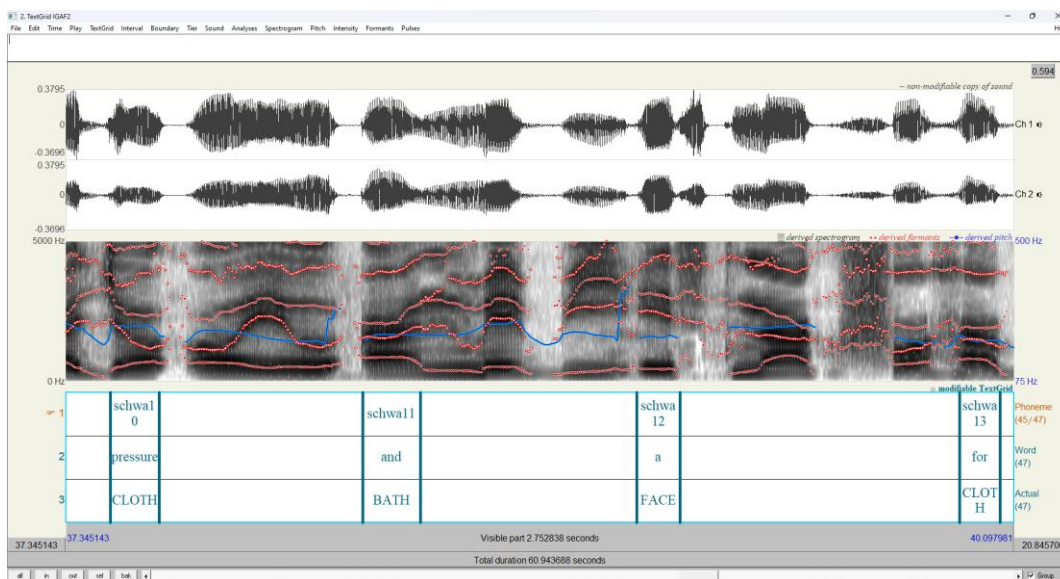


Figure 5.10 Textgrid showing annotation of words produced by an Igala female speaker

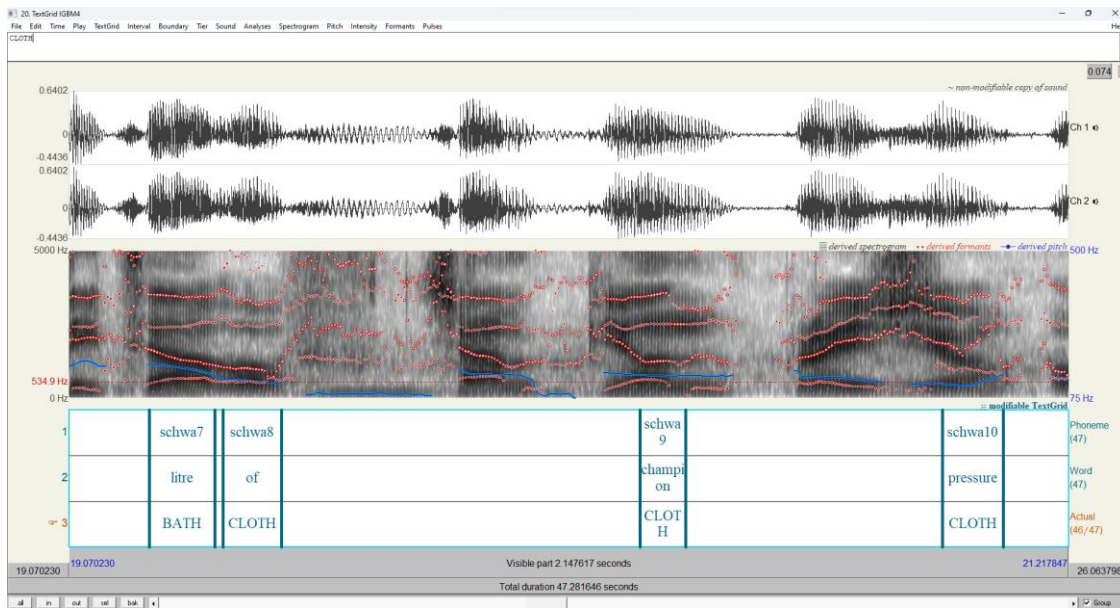


Figure 5.11 Textgrid showing annotation of words produced by an Igbo male speaker

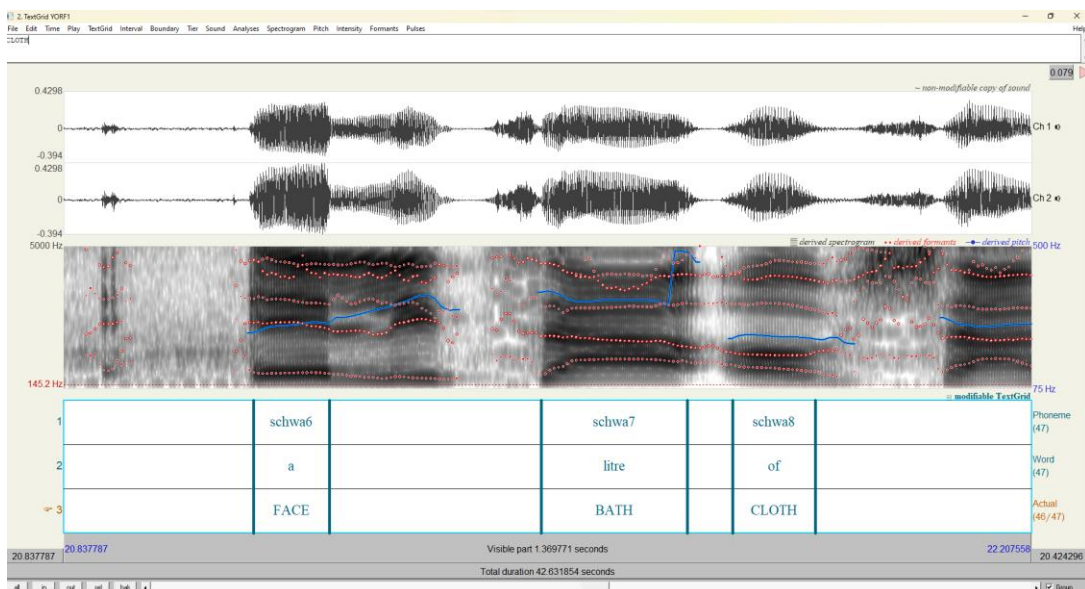


Figure 5.12 Textgrid showing annotation of words produced by a Yoruba female speaker

Figure 5.13 shows the results of the perceptual analysis of the participants' realisations of schwa. The results demonstrated ten vowel approximations, ordered from the highest frequency to the lowest: CLOTH /ɒ/ (473), BATH /a/ (419), FACE /eɪ/ (364), GOOSE /u:/ (57), FLEECE /i:/ (54), KIT /ɪ/ (6), O (4, absent in English but present in Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba), THOUGHT /ɔ:/ (1), CURE /ʊə/ (1), and SCHWA /ə/ (1). Figures 5.14-16 summarise the realisations of the 1,380 schwa tokens produced by the selected 60 participants, indicating that a_schwa and e_schwa types were mainly realised as BATH and

FACE vowels by the three ethnic groups. The high realisation of the e_schwa as FLEECE by the Yoruba participants was because they predominantly produced ‘the’ as [di:].

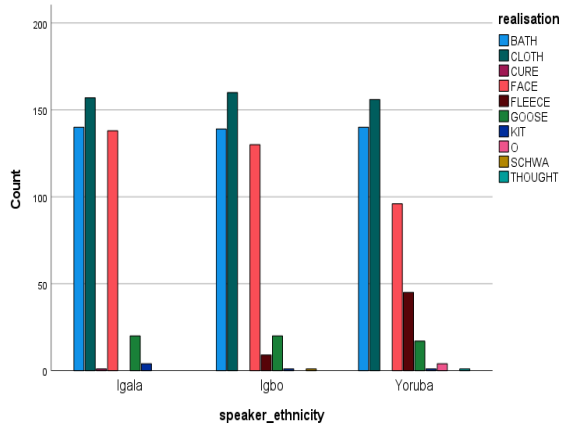


Figure 5.13 Overall schwa realisations

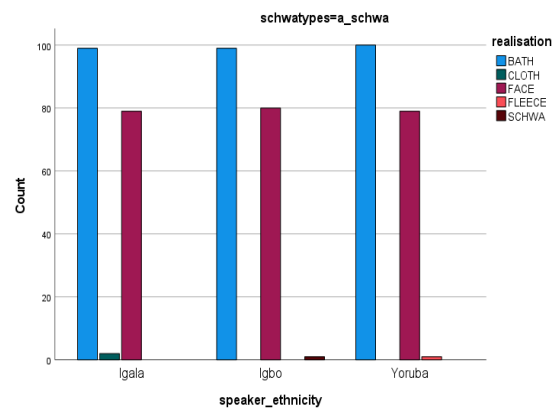


Figure 5.14 Realisations of a_schwa

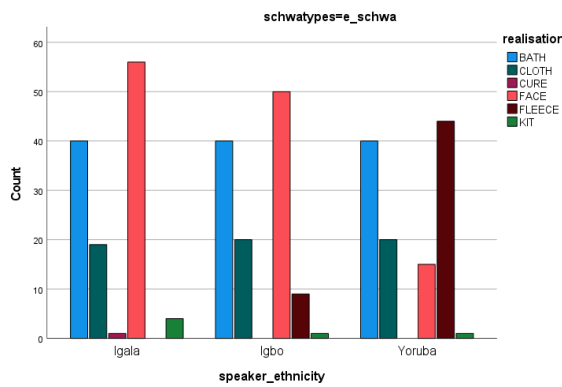


Figure 5.15 Realisations of e_schwa

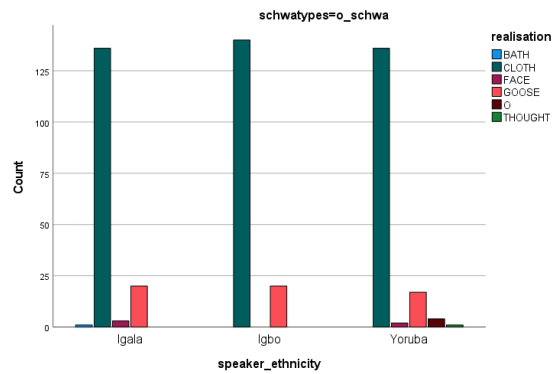


Figure 5.16 Realisations of o_schwa

(For the presentation of the distribution of the realisations of schwa types across the three ethnic groups in tabular format, see Appendix I).

The high occurrence of CLOTH vowel for the e_schwa by all participants is owing to the realisation of ‘pressure’ as [prefʊ]. o_schwa was predominantly realised as a CLOTH vowel in words such as ‘of’, ‘station’ and ‘for’ and realised as GOOSE, particularly in their production of ‘to’. Figure 5.13 also shows that the accurate production of schwa occurred only once, that is, in an Igbo participant’s production of ‘and’, exemplifying the absence of schwa in the L1 phonemic inventory of the participants. Perceptually, Figure 5.13 shows that there is a relative similarity in the realisations of these schwa types across the ethnic groups. The realisations of these schwa types align with Jowitt’s (2019) description that whereas Yoruba and Igbo speakers of English realise ‘e’ and ‘o’ schwa types as predominantly FACE and CLOTH, Hausa speakers of English realise both of them as BATH. He also notes that -

ure endings as in ‘pressure’ classified under ‘e_schwa’ in this study are realised by several Hausa speakers of English as [ju:a]. This realisation is absent in the production of ‘pressure’ by all the participants from the three ethnic groups. Participants’ realisations of schwa demonstrate that they reflect YE and IE features. These results show that the participants’ actual linguistic behaviour, when compared to the overall results of the VGE (see Section 5.1.1), align with YE and IE, which they evaluated more favourably than HE. Therefore, participants’ attitudes towards NgE varieties are also reflected in their actual linguistic behaviour.

It is important to note here that with respect to the overall realisations of schwa by gender, there were no obvious differences between male and female realisations, as shown in Figure 5.17.

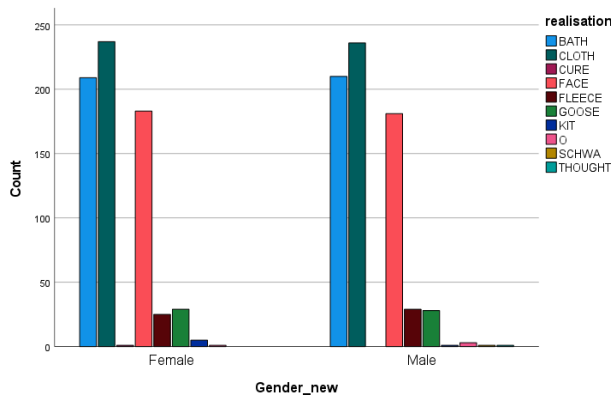


Figure 5.17 Overall realisations of schwa by gender

While female participants rated the YE and IE female speakers more favourably than male participants (see Section 5.2.1), there was no observable difference in the actual linguistic behaviour across genders. This result shows that attitudes about linguistic behaviour may not always be reflected in actual linguistic behaviour, especially when gender is concerned.

5.4.2 Variations in the productions of schwa across ethnicities and genders

In addition to the analysis of the perceptual realisations of the 23 instances of schwa in the speech elicitation paragraph, this section reports on the normalised F1/F2 means for the schwa vowels realised by the participants based on their ethnicities and genders. In the sociophonetics literature, F1 indicates vowel height, while F2 denotes fronting (Cox & Docherty, 2024).

5.4.2.1 Acoustic variations across ethnicities

To assess the level of variation among the three ethnic groups, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of individual schwa realisation patterns was conducted. PCA is appropriate for visualising the relationships of proximity and distance between ethnolinguistic groups. Figure 5.18 shows the output of a PCA performed on each participant's normalised F1/F2 means for the realisation of schwa.

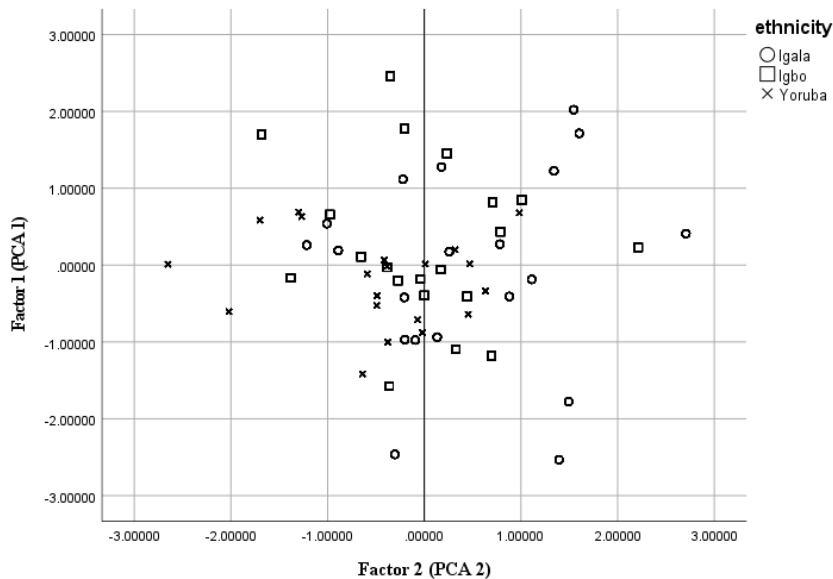


Figure 5.18 PCA1 and PCA2 for interethnic variation in schwa realisation patterns

Following (Stell, 2022b, 2022a), although the plot does not show clear clusters, a closer look at the negative side of the *x*-axis comprises more members of the Igbo (11) and Yoruba groups (15) than the Igala (7). However, the positive spectrum of the *x*-axis is mostly comprised of Igala (12) and Igbo (9) and fewer Yoruba (5). Based on the smaller gap between Yoruba and Igbo on the negative side of the *x*-axis up to the positive side on the *y*-axis (reflecting F1 values), we can hypothesise that there is not much difference between Yoruba and Igbo regarding vowel height when pronouncing schwa. The lower occurrence of Igala individuals on this part of the graph indicates a difference between Igala and Igbo on the one hand, and Igala and Yoruba on the other. For the positive side of the *x*-axis up to the positive side on the *y*-axis (reflecting F2 values), due to high occurrences of Igala and Igbo, it can be hypothesised that there is no difference in the Igala and Igbo production of schwa with respect to fronting. We may expect to observe a difference between Igala and Yoruba, as well as between Igbo and Yoruba.

The results of the one-way ANOVA tests confirmed these hypotheses. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the differences in the F1 and F2 mean values of the participants' production of schwa. The independent variable, ethnicity, included three levels: Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba. The dependent variables were the F1 and F2 mean values. For the F1 variable, the ANOVA results were significant: $F(2, 1377) = 43.34, p < .001, \eta^2 = .059$. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the F1 means of the three groups. Tukey's post-hoc test indicated that the F1 for Igala participants ($M = .13, SD = .08$) 95%CI [.12, .14] had significantly lower values than the Igbo ($M = .17, SD = .07$) 95%CI [.16, .18] and the Yoruba participants ($M = .16, SD = .05$) 95%CI [.16, .17]. There was no significant difference between the F1 scores of the Igbo and Yoruba participants ($p = .70$).

The F2 dependent variable also provided significant results, $F(2, 1377) = 73.99, p < .001, \eta^2 = .097$. Tukey's post-hoc test indicated that the F2 for Yoruba participants ($M = -.18, SD = .04$) 95%CI [-.19, -.18] had significantly lower values than the Igala ($M = -.14, SD = .07$) 95%CI [-.14, -.13] and the Igbo participants ($M = -.14, SD = .05$) 95%CI [-.14, .13]. There was no significant difference between the F2 values of the Igala and Igbo participants ($p = .96$). On the one hand, the lower F1 values found among Igala participants indicate that they produced the 23 schwa instances as more closed vowels than the Igbo and Yoruba participants. On the other hand, the significantly lower F2 values among the Yoruba participants demonstrate that they realised the schwa as a more back vowel than the Igala and Igbo participants.

5.4.2.2 Acoustic variations across genders

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate whether there is an acoustic difference between males' and females' F1 and F2 mean values. The independent variable was gender, while the dependent variables were the normalised F1/F2 means of the schwa productions. The test for the F1 means was significant $t(1378) = -14.98, p < .001$ (two-tailed), Cohen's $d = .06$. Male participants ($M = .18, SD = .05$) 95%CI [-.06, -.04] on average had higher F1 scores than female participants ($M = .12, SD = .07$) 95%CI [-.06, -.04]. The higher F1 scores of male participants indicate that they realised the schwa as a more open, lower vowel compared to the female participants' lower F1 scores, indicating a higher/more closed vowel realisation. The results of the *t*-test with the F2 values as the dependent variable were not significant ($p = .40$), indicating no difference in the fronting/backness of both genders' realisations of schwa.

5.4.3 Discussion

The results of the perceptual analysis of the participants' realisations of schwa showed ten different variants of schwa: CLOTH, BATH, FACE, GOOSE, FLEECE, KIT, O, THOUGHT, CURE, and SCHWA. These variants of schwa in NgE echo similar variants found in previous studies on the realisation of schwa by Nigerians. Previous studies (e.g., Olaniyi & Josiah, 2013; Uchegbu-Ekwueme & Chika, 2023) found that Nigerians realised schwas as /e, a, ə, i, ə, o/. The variants found in the present study that were not reported in previous studies include KIT, GOOSE, THOUGHT, and CURE vowels. These variants indicate that schwa, which often occurs in unstressed syllables in RP as a weak vowel, is predominantly realised as a strong vowel, thus contributing to the incorrect placement of stress among Nigerian speakers of English (Melefa & Okenmuo, 2023). As noted in the present study, previous studies have also found that CLOTH, BATH, and FACE vowels are the most common variants of schwa in NgE (Adegbite et al., 2014; Akinjobi, 2006). The studies also align with our findings that schwa graphically represented as 'a', 'e', and 'o' is commonly realised as BATH, FACE and CLOTH vowels by acrolectal speakers of NgE. The rare realisation of RP schwa by the Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba participants could be explained by the lack of schwa in their L1 phonemic inventory. It is also possible that the observed approximations result from faulty analogy where Nigerians tend to pronounce English sounds based on how they are graphemely represented (Adepoju, 2014).

The results of attitude-behaviour relations based on participants' ethnicities demonstrated that their attitudes about the linguistic behaviour of HE, IE, and YE speakers were also reflected in their own actual linguistic behaviour. These results deviate from those in the literature, which found no clear linguistic attitude-behaviour relations (Ladegaard, 2000; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006; Lawson & Sachdev, 2000). For instance, Ladegaard and Sachdev (2006) found that out of 21 Danish participants who indicated aspiration for an American accent, only two actually spoke with an American accent. Similarly, in his study on attitude-behaviour relations of Danish students in rural and urban communities, Ladegaard (2000) correlated the participants' attitudes towards nonstandard varieties of Danish and Standard Danish and their grammatical, phonological, and prosodic behaviours. Based on the correlation results, he found no significant relationship between reported language attitudes and actual linguistic behaviour. A possible reason for the discrepancy between the results of the present study and those mentioned here is that attitude and behaviour depend on context and situation (Kircher & Zipp, 2022). The assessment of linguistic behaviour based on

participants' realisations of a single phonological variable (schwa), as opposed to Ladegaard's (2000) multiple grammatical and phonological variables, may have also contributed to the discrepancy in the results.

Additionally, the attitude-behaviour relations found in this study could also be explained by the fact that the languages of the three ethnicities (Igala, Igbo, and Yoruba) belong to the same language family (Niger-Congo). By belonging to the same language family, we may expect them to exhibit relatively similar linguistic features. Thus, we may argue that contrary to the common view that attitudes directly affect behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), behaviours may predict attitudes (Augoustinos et al., 2014). Our participants tend to evaluate speakers of varieties who have similar linguistic behaviours as themselves favourably in their efforts to achieve consistency and balance. Similarly, Hansen Edwards (2024) found that individuals use the linguistic features of the group(s) whose language they favourably evaluated. From a cognitive dissonance theoretical perspective (Festinger, 1957), we can argue that participants' favourable evaluation of the IE and YE speakers is a way of reducing dissonance (discrepancy) and maintaining consistency between their attitudes and linguistic behaviour. More so, participants' difficulty producing the RP schwa exemplifies Ajzen's (1988) notion of perceived behavioural control, which states that some behaviours are more challenging while others are easier.

Contrary to expectations, the perceptual analysis of male and female linguistic behaviour showed no difference, deviating from the language attitude results where female participants were less generous in their ratings of the male speakers. The nonreflection of language attitudes in the actual linguistic behaviour of female participants could be plausibly explained by the absence of schwa in the phonemic inventory of NgE and Nigerian languages (Jowitt, 2019). It points to the possibility that the language change in progress involving the defocusing away from ethnic-sounding speech to a more RP-like variety (Aboh, 2023a) does not yet apply to schwa, which could be explained by the minimal presence of an exemplar variety in the Nigerian context or settlers' speech community (STL) strand that could act as a target where schwa is part of the phonemic inventory (Schneider, 2007). However, in the South African context, owing to the presence of an exemplar variety (White South African English, WSAE), Mesthrie (2017), in his sociophonetic study of schwa, found that middle-class Black women acquired the schwa in WSAE more than men. Mesthrie (2017) noted that this 'crossover' to WSAE schwa was possible because of Blacks' enrolment in model-C schools formerly reserved for Whites.

The F1 means of the Igala participants were significantly lower than those of the Igbo and Yoruba participants, indicating that they realised schwa as a more closed vowel than the other two groups. This shows that Igala speakers realise front vowels (such as FACE and BATH, which are variants of schwa found in the study) with a narrower articulatory position than Igbo and Yoruba speakers. However, for the F2 means, Yoruba participants were significantly lower than the Igala and Igbo participants, demonstrating that they realised schwa with more back vowels. This finding shows that YE speakers articulate schwa more posteriorly in the vocal tract. Given the impact of L1 on English vocalic productions, it is plausible that Yoruba back vowels are more posterior than the back vowel realisations in Igala and Igbo. These results highlight the acoustic distinctions between the three ethnolinguistic groups, which should be explored further in future studies. These distinctions point to their linguistic characteristics as different NgE varieties and strengthen our understanding of NgE phonologies.

The acoustic results also showed that, on the one hand, male participants were more likely to realise the schwa as a more open, lower vowel than female participants. This finding demonstrates that men are more advanced than women in terms of schwa opening and lowering. Women's more closed realisation of schwa indicates that none of the genders is 'crossing over' (Mesthrie, 2017) to RP. This shows that the sociolinguistic findings that females are the pioneers of a shift towards the standardised variety (Labov, 2010) do not yet apply to the production of schwa in the Nigerian context, which could explain why there is no difference in male and female realisations of schwa in terms of backness or fronting. The presence of a difference in F1 means, and its absence in F2 means of male and female participants' analyses of linguistic behaviour highlights the complexity of attitude-behaviour relations (see Ladegaard, 2000). In the VGE, we found that female participants showed more positive attitudes towards the YE and IE female speakers and claimed to be more linguistically sophisticated than men in the FDGs (see Excerpt 11). However, the fact that the acoustic results showed that none of the genders produced schwa as a central vowel demonstrates that it is feasible for groups to have different attitudes but relatively similar linguistic behaviours.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the major findings of the study; highlighting its theoretical, methodological, social, and pedagogical implications; noting its limitations; and offering suggestions for future research on language attitudes.

6.1 Major findings of the study

Drawing on data from 406 participants, this study examined the social evaluation of three Nigerian Englishes using a mixed methods research design. Specifically, the study investigated Nigerian students' attitudes towards Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba Englishes on status, solidarity, and quality of language dimensions. The study also explored the association between ethnic categorisation and reasons for categorising speakers of NgE accents into ethnic groups. The analysis of the data showed that YE was the most favourably rated variety, while HE received the lowest ratings. The results demonstrated that YE was perceived to have a higher quality of language than HE and IE. The study found that a vast majority of the participants accurately identified the ethnic group of the speakers based on their accents. The study found a significant association between ethnic categorisation and reasons for categorising speakers of NgE accents into ethnic groups. The findings show a change in progress from ethnic-sounding speech to de-ethnicised speech among acrolectal Igbo and Yoruba speakers of English and support the claim that perceived speaker fluency influences ethnic categorisation and language attitudes.

The second research objective examined the effects of social variables such as gender, ethnicity, and religion on language attitudes. The results showed that these variables significantly impacted the evaluation of HE, IE, and YE varieties. Male participants were more likely to rate male speakers more favourably than female participants. There were no significant differences in the male and female participants' ratings of the IE and YE female speakers, demonstrating that both genders found the linguistic behaviour of these female speakers appealing and 'sounding native'. Muslim participants were more likely to hold more positive attitudes towards all varieties than Christian participants. IE and YE speakers received more favourable ratings than HE speakers. The focus groups findings identified three strategies of the construction of gender and language attitudes in discourse (i.e., women as more linguistically 'sophisticated' than men, socialisation as an influence on men's and women's speech, and differences in men's and women's speech as a result of anatomical differences) and three strategies of religion and language attitudes (i.e., Christians as more

fluent in English than Muslims, Christians' and Muslims' English usage as a function of ethnic background, and no religious-based difference in English usage).

Another aim of the study was to investigate the correlation between attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes and the cultures of the speakers of the varieties in question. The results of the correlation analyses found no significant differences, supporting the language-culture discrepancy hypothesis. Qualitative analysis of participants' discussions in focus groups about Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures indicated that the dominant themes that emerged include: contradictory attitudes and promoting ingroup favouritism, social hierarchy and using personal experiences to support the evaluations of the cultural Other, and constructing ingroup positive distinctiveness and equilibrium between negative and positive representations.

The last research objective explored the relationship between participants' language attitudes and their actual linguistic behaviour. The study found a relationship between attitudes and behaviours by comparing the VGE ratings with 60 selected participants' realisations of schwa. While the acoustic analyses of the F1 mean values across participants' ethnicity showed that Igala participants realised schwa as a more closed vowel than the Igbo and Yoruba participants, the analysis of the F2 mean values demonstrated that Yoruba participants realised schwa with a more posterior position in the vocal tract than the other two groups. With respect to gender, the results found that male participants realised schwa as a more open, lower vowel than female participants.

6.2 Implications

This section highlights the theoretical, methodological, pedagogical, and social implications that are brought about by the current study.

6.2.1 Theoretical implications

The findings of the study indicate a reconceptualisation of Kachru's (1992) three concentric circles. The classification of Nigeria into Outer Circle English because of its status as a former British colony needs to be revisited. This classification was performed on the basis that Nigerians are expected to have English as at least a second language and, therefore, should be fluent in it. The status of English in northern Nigeria, especially among the Hausa, indicates that English is still expanding in those areas as if it were a *foreign* language (Ugwuanyi, 2021). This shows that a country broadly categorised into the Outer Circle may

still have individuals in some parts of its territory who exhibit the characteristics of English speakers from the Expanding Circle (Canagarajah, 2014; Peterson, 2020; Schmitz, 2014). More so, given that 31% of the participants in the current study reported English as their first language, it shows the weakness of generally categorising Nigeria into the Outer Circle and the use of “English as a second language” to describe the status of English in Nigeria (Gut, 2007; Kperogi, 2015). We might use “English as an International Language (EIL)” to describe the sociolinguistics of English in Nigeria because it “recognises the international functions of English and its use in a variety of cultural and economic arenas by speakers of English from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds who do not speak each other’s mother tongues” (Marlina, 2014). The rate of L1 speakers of English further demonstrates the need to reconceptualise and retheorise the classification of Nigeria into the Outer Circle on the sole basis of being an ex-British colony. This rate also supports the proposal that “the whole mystique of native speaker and mother tongue should probably be quietly [or even loudly] dropped from the linguists’ set of professional myths about language” (Ferguson, 1982a, p. vii) because of their outdatedness (Dewaele et al., 2022) and denigration of the so-called Outer and Expanding Circles English varieties, which contributes to linguistic marginalisation (Davies, 2003; Peterson, 2020).

A critical issue raised in the extant literature is the need for the decolonisation of multilingualism and applied linguistics (De Fina et al., 2023; Ndhlovu & Makalela, 2021; Phipps, 2019). By decolonising language, we delink notions of language, multilingualism, and its application in social and educational domains from colonial thoughts and legacies and provide opportunities for new knowledges (Ndhlovu & Makalela, 2021). The findings of this study reflect the need for decolonisation, especially in language attitude research. The asymmetry found between political power and linguistic prestige in the evaluation of the HE variety provides another perspective to ethnolinguistic vitality theory, which argues that the variety spoken by individuals with more prestige is evaluated more favourably than others. This demonstrates that language practices in Nigeria are characterised by complex modes of diversity. Such asymmetry exemplifies Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s (2018) point that African scholars should aim for epistemic liberation by avoiding the imposition of Western knowledge on African issues. Epistemic liberation involves “thinking from the South” and making available silenced ethnic and local knowledges about language (De Fina et al., 2023, p. 821). Therefore, language attitude research in the Global South needs to be explored based on the

language practices and experiences of individuals in the studied context, not on an *a priori* colonised model.

Scholars of NgE focus mainly on the common characteristics of English spoken by a ‘typical’ Nigerian. Few of these scholars have explored the peculiar features of English along ethnic/regional lines (Igboanusi, 2006; Jowitt, 2019; Olaniyi & Josiah, 2013). Given that there are different varieties of English in Nigeria, which resulted in different evaluations towards the varieties used in the present research, this study strengthens the need to talk about ‘Nigerian Englishes’ based on the multilingual realities in Nigeria, which can aid in a more nuanced enquiry into the ethnic varieties of English in Nigeria.

The participants’ difficulty distinguishing between IE and YE indicates a language change in progress in the speech of the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups in southern Nigeria. The numerical advantage of speakers from these ethnic groups and their dominance in the media and entertainment industries indicate a potential variety levelling and de-focusing away from ethnic speech, especially in southern Nigeria (Aboh, 2023a; Igboanusi, 2006). One potential implication of this finding for world Englishes and language attitudes is that it may help to understand the factors responsible for the preference for a local or international variety of English. Within the Nigerian context, although 56% of the respondents in the current study preferred British English at the international level (spoken by the former colonial rulers), it did not change their preference for YE at the national level. This implies that despite participants’ aspirations towards an international English variety, they are still concerned about the ownership of an NgE variety (Hansen Edwards, 2017; Ugwuanyi, 2021).

As evidenced by this study, the inclusion of an item asking participants to state the reasons for assigning speakers to ethnic/social groups enables language attitude research to go beyond identifying the level of accent recognition to highlighting the sociopsychological processes that underlie accent recognition and the ethnic categorisation of accents. Exploring the association between ethnic categorisation and its underlying reasons can help in understanding the complex nature of accent recognition.

Religion, as a sociolinguistic variable, is underexplored in language attitude research. By examining the effect of religion on attitudes towards HE, IE, and YE accents, this study extends language attitude research and introduces two hypotheses (i.e., religion-unifactorial and religion-multifactorial) which can potentially be used to explain the role religion and other sociolinguistic variables, such as ethnicity and social class, play in language attitude

research and linguistic behaviour. It is recommended that these hypotheses be tested in other sociocultural contexts to examine their generalisability.

6.2.2 Methodological implications

Studies have found that attitudes towards accents are informed by attitudes towards speakers of the accents in question (Hill, 2015; Holmes & Wilson, 2022; Preston, 1996; Tajfel, 1978). This claim can be argued to be impressionistic within language attitudes research as not many studies integrate VGTs with questionnaires about the culture and identity of the speakers. This integrative approach provides empirical evidence against the claim that attitudes towards languages correlate with attitudes towards the culture of the speakers of the languages.

Only a few studies have assessed the cognitive, affective, and behavioural components of language attitudes (e.g., Kristiansen, 1997; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006). Studies on language attitudes have predominantly focused on the cognitive and affective components. Examining the language behaviour of the participants through FGDs and SET helps in correlating reported and performed (i.e., behavioural) language attitudes. The use of a mixed methods approach for data triangulation helps to accommodate the multidimensionality of language attitudes (Garrett, 2010).

Studies (Chien, 2018; Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a; Garrett et al., 2003) that included ethnic or social categorisation of speakers in the VGT do not often require participants to include the reasons for categorising the speakers' accents into a particular ethnic group or race. Therefore, the inclusion of the open-ended question eliciting reasons for ethnic categorisation offers new insights into the factors that help participants identify the ethnolinguistic affiliation of speakers and which factors are significantly associated with ethnic/social categorisation.

On the one hand, previous studies on language attitudes have adopted principal component analysis (PCA) (a dimensionality reduction technique used to identify patterns in data and transform them into a new set of linearly uncorrelated dimensions) to assign traits into status and solidarity dimensions (Bayard et al., 2001; Chien, 2018; McKenzie, 2010; Oyebola, 2020). On the other hand, many language attitude studies do not report the results of PCA (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a; Garrett et al., 2003; Ladegaard & Sachdev, 2006). The use of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (a statistical method used to test the construct validity of a measurement model) to assess the fitness of the traits under the status, solidarity,

and quality of language dimensions is relatively new in language attitude research. The results of the CFA confirmed the robustness of these dimensions in assessing language attitudes in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context and beyond.

The methodological implications of this study are expected to enable subsequent language attitude researchers in the African context and beyond to adopt methods and research instruments that appropriately capture the multidimensionality of language attitudes in order to arrive at robust and comprehensive findings that accurately account for attitudes in particular sociolinguistic contexts.

6.2.3 Pedagogical implications

The favourable ratings of Yoruba and Igbo Englishes demonstrate how familiar and acceptable these varieties are to the participants, indicating that they accept them as legitimate varieties of English (Hansen Edwards, 2019b). More so, the nonrealisation of RP schwa in the SETs showed that the 60 participants speak NgE. This indicates the acceptance and use of endonormative norms and the nativised features of English in Nigeria (Schneider, 2007). In light of this, it appears unfair for Nigerian students who speak NgE and are taught by teachers who also speak NgE (Jowitt, 2019; Ugwuanyi, 2021) to be assessed based on exonormative norms (RP), to which they have no daily access (Jenkins, 2007; McKenzie, 2010). As Makoni (2003, p. 145) succinctly captures it:

Most learners of African languages, mother tongue and second languages alike, find themselves confronted with a sharp divide between the official language, as embodied in current written texts, and the speech used in the everyday drama of life, moment by moment, situation by situation.

This disconnect between everyday language use and the classroom model of English has resulted in Nigerians' poor performance in English tests and examinations nationally and internationally (IELTS, 2021). With the growing body of literature on the linguistic description of NgE (Jowitt, 2019), a NgE-based pedagogical model arguably needs to be introduced. Introducing a NgE-based pedagogical model is a step towards a "socially realistic linguistics" where New Englishes are not perceived as corruptions or grammarless but reflections of speakers' creativity and forms of human communication (Winford, 2003, p. 21). To achieve this, Nigerians need to be critically conscious of their linguistic realities and resist linguistic domination perpetuated through the overemphasis on exonormative linguistic

norms and Western colonial values in the educational system (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Freire, 2020).

Furthermore, understanding the attitudes of Nigerians towards Nigerian Englishes needs to be a crucial component in teacher training education in Nigeria. While teachers are expected to improve their students' English language proficiency, they should also be aware that English is not the first language of many students but just one part of their linguistic repertoire. No student needs to be discriminated against or punished because of his/her accent, given that everyone speaks with an accent (Orelus, 2023). Teachers should provide a good learning environment that improves students' motivation and willingness to communicate in the classroom. Xu (2017) proposes three meta-cultural competence strategies teachers should adopt in English as an International language context. The first is that they need to acknowledge that there are many varieties of English. Second, they need to anticipate different varieties of English in their classroom. The third is that teachers need to have sufficient exposure to world Englishes to enable effective communication in the learning context.

6.2.4 Social implications

At the international level, it has been observed that students at some prominent universities in the UK are derided based on their social backgrounds and the way they speak (Parveen, 2020). In Australia, Dovchin (2020) found that international students from Vietnam, China and Somalia face ethnic accent bullying and linguistic stereotyping, which have resulted in low self-esteem, fear of speaking English, social withdrawal, and even suicidal thoughts. Studies have also observed that nonstandardised working-class accents are downgraded by British people and that one's accents can even determine the level of success a candidate will attain during job interviews (Levon et al., 2020). This shows that accent bias has negative practical implications for employment. Based on the findings of this study, it is hoped that Nigerians will be aware of the importance of linguistic tolerance and the dangers of linguistic discrimination, which is found to be a "proxy for racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and elitism" (Peterson, 2020, p. 34). One of the respondents in the focus group discussions recounted how she developed an inferiority complex when her secondary school classmates discriminated against her for not speaking 'correct' English. Such an experience has made parents pay exorbitant fees for their children to acquire a British accent (Agbo, 2018). The current study may help to enlighten Nigerians that fluency in English is not a measure of

intelligence, nor an indicator how much a person is worth, and accept NgE as a legitimate variety of English. This study may also encourage them to prioritise content over speech style.

The findings of this research also highlight the need for the inclusion of a social activism component in language attitude research where we not only research *on* participants but *for* and *with* them (Ladegaard & Phipps, 2020). Thus, language attitude researchers need to not only understand the dynamics of language attitudes but also advocate for social activism that promotes linguistic diversity, inclusion, and equality (Orelus, 2023). I submit that social activism can be achieved in different ways: propagating the importance of linguistic tolerance in traditional and new media, sensitising people in rural and urban areas and different institutional settings regarding the importance of linguistic inclusivity and respect for accent diversity. Moreover, readings on linguistic tolerance can be included in school curricula across all levels in Nigeria. Doing so can contribute to a more equitable and just society in which linguistic diversity is celebrated and valued. We may not expect instant or holistic change, but a small change in the right direction may be a first step towards ensuring linguistic tolerance and inclusivity.

6.3 Limitations and directions for future research

Its contributions notwithstanding, this study has some limitations. Firstly, only three Nigerian Englishes were examined. Future studies should examine these three varieties *vis-à-vis* other varieties spoken by minority ethnic groups (e.g. Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022a). Secondly, this study was conducted in university settings and may not capture the attitudes in nonacademic and rural settings, given that social context mediates language attitudes (Creber & Giles, 1983; Kircher & Zipp, 2022). Future studies may explore the influence of social context on Nigerians' attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes. Thirdly, the participants are young people in their 20s and 30s. Similar studies may include older participants to investigate whether Nigerians' attitudes towards different Nigerian Englishes vary across age groups (e.g., Coupland & Bishop, 2007; McKenzie & McNeill, 2022). It is also important to recognise the limitation of the study's instruments. For instance, only educated speakers were used as voice stimuli. It is plausible that the varieties would have been judged differently if uneducated speakers had been used. Therefore, future research should consider including uneducated speakers, such as traders and unskilled workers as voice stimuli. In line with the present study that examined language attitudes in discourse, it would also be worthwhile if

future language attitude studies explore how attitudes towards language varieties are constructed in discourse (Bellamy, 2022). These studies may also examine the occurrences of laughter and their communicative functions in individuals' accounts of linguistic discrimination. This study did not analyse individuals' experiences of linguistic discrimination, and future studies may examine the how Nigerians narrate their experiences of accent bias in discourse (Orelus, 2023). Despite these limitations, the discussion so far shows that the study has yielded new insights into attitudes towards Nigerian Englishes in particular and language attitude research in general. Therefore, this study offers new perspectives on how Nigerians evaluate Nigerian Englishes and it has the potential to inspire further research on accent and social evaluation in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context and beyond.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Distribution of the realisations of the schwa types across the three ethnic groups

Schwa _types	Ethni city	Realisations (using Wells, 1982 labels)										Total
		BA TH	CLO TH	CU RE	FA CE	FLE ECE	GO OSE	KIT	O	SCH WA	THOU GHT	
a_schw a	Igala	99	2	0	79	0	0	0	0	0	0	180
	Igbo	99	0	0	80	0	0	0	0	1	0	180
	Yoru ba	100	0	0	79	1	0	0	0	0	0	180
	Total	298	2	0	238	1	0	0	0	1	0	540
e_schw a	Igala	40	19	1	56	0	0	4	0	0	0	120
	Igbo	40	20	0	50	9	0	1	0	0	0	120
	Yoru ba	40	20	0	15	44	0	1	0	0	0	120
	Total	120	59	1	121	53	0	6	0	0	0	360
o_schw a	Igala	1	136	0	3	0	20	0	0	0	0	160
	Igbo	0	140	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	160
	Yoru ba	0	136	0	2	0	17	0	4	0	1	160
	Total	1	412	0	5	0	57	0	4	0	1	480
Total	Igala	140	157	1	138	0	20	4	0	0	0	460
	Igbo	139	160	0	130	9	20	1	0	1	0	460
	Yoru ba	140	156	0	96	45	17	1	4	0	1	460
	Total	419	473	1	364	54	57	6	4	1	1	1380

a_schwa (stella, a, and, at); e_schwa (the, litre, pressure, brother); o_schwa (of, champion, station)

Appendix II: Ethics approval letter from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University



To Ladegaard Hans Jorgen (Department of English and Communication)
From Ahrens Kathleen Virginia, Chair, Departmental Research Committee
Email kathleen.ahrens@ Date 28-Mar-2022

Application for Ethical Review for Teaching/Research Involving Human Subjects

I write to inform you that approval has been given to your application for human subjects ethics review of the following project for a period from 18-May-2022 to 31-Jul-2024:

Project Title: Accent and Social Evaluation: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Language Attitudes, Stereotypes and Listener Bias in University Settings in Nigeria
Department: Department of English and Communication
Principal Investigator: Ladegaard Hans Jorgen
Project Start Date: 18-May-2022
Project type: Human subjects (non-clinical)
Reference Number: HSEARS20220328002

You will be held responsible for the ethical approval granted for the project and the ethical conduct of the personnel involved in the project. In case the Co-PI, if any, has also obtained ethical approval for the project, the Co-PI will also assume the responsibility in respect of the ethical approval (in relation to the areas of expertise of respective Co-PI in accordance with the stipulations given by the approving authority).

You are responsible for informing the PolyU Institutional Review Board in advance of any changes in the proposal or procedures which may affect the validity of this ethical approval.

Ahrens Kathleen Virginia

Chair

Departmental Research Committee (on behalf of PolyU Institutional Review Board)

Appendix III: Information sheet



INFORMATION SHEET

ACCENT AND SOCIAL EVALUATION: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDES, STEREOTYPES AND LISTENER BIAS IN UNIVERSITY SETTINGS IN NIGERIA

You are invited to participate in the above project conducted by Mr Sopuruchi Aboh, a post-graduate student of the Department of English and Communication, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

It is hoped that this research will help understand how different people communicate and how others receive their communication.

You are invited to complete a questionnaire, which will take you about half an hour. You will then be asked to take part in a focus group discussion. You may also be asked to read a short paragraph. There are no right and wrong answers. I am interested in your immediate first-hand impression. Your participation will take about an hour.

All of the information gathered will be kept confidential and utilised solely by me for research purposes. Furthermore, absolute anonymity would be maintained. In other words, no one will be able to identify you based on the data I collect for my research. Your name will not be used in any publications, and the information will be saved on a computer to which only I will have access.

You have every right to withdraw from the study before or during the data collection without penalty of any kind.

If you have any questions, you may ask me or the assistants, even after the study has started.

You may contact Mr Sopuruchi Aboh (email: sopuruchi.aboh@polyu.edu.hk) under the following situations:

- a. if you have any other questions in relation to the study,
- b. if you want to get access to/or change your personal data before (the expiry date).

In the event you have any complaints about the conduct of this research study, you may contact the Secretary of the PolyU Institutional Review Board in writing (institutional.review.board@polyu.edu.hk) stating clearly the responsible person and department of this study.

Thank you for being interested in participating in this study.

Mr Sopuruchi Aboh
Researcher

Hung Hom Kowloon Hong Kong 香港九龍紅磡
Tel 電話 (852) 2766 5111 Fax 傳真 (852) 2784 3374
Email 電郵 polyu@polyu.edu.hk
Website 網址 www.polyu.edu.hk

Appendix IV: Consent form



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

ACCENT AND SOCIAL EVALUATION: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDES, STEREOTYPES AND LISTENER BIAS IN UNIVERSITY SETTINGS IN NIGERIA

I _____ hereby consent to participate in the research conducted by Mr Sopuruchi Aboh.

I understand that information obtained from this research will be used in future research and published. However, my right to privacy will be retained, and my personal details will not be revealed.

The procedure in the attached information sheet has been fully explained. I understand the benefit and risks involved. My participation in the project is voluntary.

I acknowledge that I have the right to question any part of the procedure and can withdraw at any time without penalty of any kind.

Name of participant _____

Signature of participant _____

Date _____

Hung Hom Kowloon Hong Kong 香港九龍紅磡
Tel 電話 (852) 2766 5111 Fax 傳真 (852) 2784 3374
Email 電郵 polyu@polyu.edu.hk
Website 網址 www.polyu.edu.hk

Appendix V: Request for permission to conduct research



Hans J. Ladegaard
B.A., M.A., Ph.D
Professor and Head

27 April 2022

To whom it may concern:

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN YOUR DEPARTMENT

Dear Sir/Madam,

Sopuruchi Aboh is a PhD student in the Department of English and Communication at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. As part of his PhD requirements, he needs to embark on a research project, and he has selected your students as some of the respondents for his research.

As his Principal Supervisor, I would greatly appreciate if you would allow him to conduct part of his research with your students.

Thank you in advance for your support. Your help is much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Hans J Ladegaard

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hung Hom Kowloon Hong Kong
香港九龍紅磡香港理工大學
E hans.ladegaard@ T (852) 2766 5603
F (852) 2334 8984 (Direct) (852) 2333 6569 (Department)
www.engl.polyu.edu.hk

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Appendix VI: Sample of approval note by one of the universities' administration



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
英文系

Hans J. Ladegaard
B.A., M.A., Ph.D.
Professor and Head

27 April 2022

Attn:
Dean,
Student Affairs, KSU

To whom it may concern:

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN YOUR DEPARTMENT

Dear Sir/Madam,

Sopuruchi Aboh is a PhD student in the Department of English and Communication at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. As part of his PhD requirements, he needs to embark on a research project, and he has selected your students as some of the respondents for his research.

As his Principal Supervisor, I would greatly appreciate if you would allow him to conduct part of his research with your students.

Thank you in advance for your support. Your help is much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Hans J Ladegaard

Hostel Overseas
Kindly allow the below
Sopuruchi Aboh to have
access to the hostel to have
greater interaction and request for
online questionnaire and request for
his PhD research work.
2/17/2022
DOR

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hung Hom Kowloon Hong Kong
香港九龍紅磡香港理工大學
E hans.ladegaard@ T (852) 2766 5603
F (852) 2334 8984 (Direct) (852) 2333 6569 (Department)
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Appendix VII: Sample of verbal-guise experiment questionnaire

Instructions:

There are TWO sections. Section 1 contains 16 questions on personality traits. Section 2 contains 16 questions about you.

Please read each question carefully and quickly choose an answer from 1 to 5. Then, circle your choice using a pen.

Not at all = 1 Only a little = 2 To some extent = 3 Rather much = 4 Very much = 5

Please answer the questions quickly according to your first reaction. There is no right or wrong answer.

If you have any questions about how to answer the questionnaire, please ask now.

Thank you very much for your participation!

SPEAKER A:

What first-hand impression do you have of this speaker? Make a list of three words or sentences that you believe best describe the speaker:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Do you think this person is

1. Well-educated?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

2. Friendly?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

3. Self-confident?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

4. Sincere?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

5. A good leader?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

6. Has a good sense of humour?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

7. Wealthy?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

8. Intelligent?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

9. Handsome?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

10. Would you like to be like this person?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

11. Do you think this person speaks correct English?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

12. Did you understand what this person said?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

13. Do you like this person's language?

1 2 3 4..... 5
Not at all *Very much*

14. Why/ why not? _____

15. Which ethnic group do you think the person comes from? _____

16. What makes you say this person comes from the place you mentioned? _____

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Instruction: Please ✓ where appropriate

1. Sex: Male Female

2. Age: _____

3a. Name of your school: _____

3b. Your department: _____

4. Year of study: _____

5. Your father's occupation _____

6. Your mother's occupation _____

7. Do you consider yourself

Hausa

Igbo

Yoruba

Other _____

8. State of origin _____

9. Religion:

Christianity

Islam

African Traditional Religion

Other _____

10a. Which primary school did you attend?

Public

Private

10b. Where is your primary school located?

Rural

Sub-urban

Urban

11a. Which secondary school did you attend?

Public

Private

11b. Where is your secondary school located?

Rural

Sub-urban

Urban

12. How did you learn English?

In school

Without formal instruction

13. How old were you when you began learning English? _____

14. Which variety of English do you speak? _____

15. Which variety of English do you aspire to speak?

British English

American English

Nigerian Pidgin English

Other _____

14. What is your first language?

English

Hausa

Igbo

Yoruba

Other _____

15. What is the name of the town you grew up in? _____

16. How many months have you stayed in the town where your school is situated? _____

Appendix VIII: Questionnaire about Nigerian culture and identity

1. Do you prefer any particular variety of Nigerian English?
 Yes No Don't know

If yes, which variety? _____

2. Why do you prefer this variety? _____

- 3a. Have you visited any Hausa-speaking state? Yes No

3b. If yes, which state(s)? _____ For how long? _____

4. Do you have personal friends, or close family members, from a Hausa-speaking state?

Yes No If yes, which state? _____

- 5a. Have you visited any Igbo-speaking state? Yes No

5b. If yes, which state(s)? _____ For how long? _____

6. Do you have personal friends, or close family members, from an Igbo-speaking state?

Yes No If yes, which state(s)? _____

- 7a. Have you visited any Yoruba-speaking state? Yes No

7b. If yes, which state(s)? _____ For how long? _____

8. Do you have personal friends, or close family members, from a Yoruba-speaking state?

Yes No If yes, which state? _____

For questions 9 – 12, indicate your order of preference using 1 (as first choice), 2 (as second choice), and 3 (as third choice)

- 9a. Which movies do you prefer?

Hausa Igbo Yoruba

9b. Explain why _____

- 10a. Which food do you prefer?

Hausa Igbo Yoruba

10b. Explain why _____

- 11a. Which mode of fashion do you prefer?

Hausa Igbo Yoruba

11b. Explain why _____

- 12a. Which music do you prefer?

Hausa Igbo Yoruba

12b. Explain why _____

13. Culture can be defined as the norms and behaviours mainly associated with particular groups of people. With this definition in mind, are you most attracted to

- Hausa culture. If yes, why? _____
 Igbo culture. If yes, why? _____

Yoruba culture. If yes, why? _____

Other _____

14. A HAUSA PERSON:

Write 3 expressions that you think would most adequately describe a Hausa person:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

15. AN IGBO PERSON:

Write 3 expressions that you think would most adequately describe an Igbo person:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

16. A YORUBA PERSON

Write 3 expressions that you think would most adequately describe a Yoruba person:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Appendix IX: Focus group discussion prompts

1. What would you say about the way your lecturer speaks?
2. Does the gender of your lecturer affect your understanding of class content or the number of times you attend class?
3. Does the ethnicity of your lecturer impact how much you pay attention in class?
4. Have you noticed any difference between how you speak and how other students talk?
5. Can you tell if someone is from your area by how he or she talks? How can you tell?
6. If you just heard someone talk, without seeing this person, could you tell what kind of background he/she had (their level of education or if they are wealthy)?
7. What would you say about men's and women's language use?
8. What are your thoughts about the language use of Christians and Muslims?
9. Have you ever tried to change anything about the way you talk? Why?
10. What can you say about the cultures and languages of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria?