

# PEDAGOGIES AND POLICIES FOR PUBLISHING RESEARCH IN ENGLISH

Local Initiatives Supporting  
International Scholars

*Edited by  
James N. Corcoran, Karen Englander and  
Laura-Mihaela Muresan*

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2019  
by Routledge  
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2019 Taylor & Francis

The right of James N. Corcoran, Karen Englander and Laura-Mihaela Muresan to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*  
A catalog record for this title has been requested

ISBN: 978-1-138-55808-3 (hbk)  
ISBN: 978-1-138-55809-0 (pbk)  
ISBN: 978-1-315-15122-9 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo  
by Swales & Willis Ltd, Exeter, Devon, UK

# CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>viii</i>
1 Diverse Global Perspectives on Scholarly Writing for Publication <i>James N. Corcoran, Karen Englander, and Laura-Mihaela Muresan</i>	1
<b>REGION 1</b>	
<b>Latin America</b>	<b>17</b>
2 A Utilization-Focused Program Evaluation of an ERPP Tutoring Service at One Colombian University <i>Gerriet Janssen and Silvia Restrepo</i>	19
3 Trajectories Towards Authorship Eight Mexican English Language Teaching Professionals <i>Fátima Encinas Prudencio, Verónica Sánchez Hernández, María Thomas-Ruzic, Gicela Cuatlapantzi-Pichón, and Georgina Aguilar-González</i>	36
4 Writing for Publication in English: Institutional Initiatives at the Universidad Nacional de Entre Ríos <i>Diana Waigandt, Alicia Noceti, and Raquel Lothringer</i>	56

<b>REGION 2</b>	
<b>Northern Europe</b>	<b>75</b>
5 Supporting Nordic Scholars Who Write in English for Research Publication Purposes <i>Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir</i>	77
6 The Unreal and the Real: English for Research Purposes in Norway <i>Tom Muir, and Kristin Solli</i>	91
<b>REGION 3</b>	
<b>Eastern and Southern Europe</b>	<b>107</b>
7 Research Writing in English in a Romanian Academic Ecosystem: A Case Study of an Experienced Multiliterate Researcher <i>Laura Mihaela Muresan and Carmen Pérez-Llantada</i>	109
8 English or Spanish for Research Publication Purposes? Reflections on a Critical Pragmatic Pedagogy <i>Sally Burgess, Pedro Martín, Diana Balasanyan, and Yerevan Haybusak</i>	128
<b>REGION 4</b>	
<b>East Asia</b>	<b>141</b>
9 Observing and Reflecting in an ERPP “Master Class”: Learning and Thinking About Application <i>Yongyan Li and Margaret Cargill</i>	143
10 Publishing Research in English for Chinese Multilingual Scholars in Language-related Disciplines: Towards a Biliteracy Approach <i>Yongyan Zheng and Yuan Cao</i>	161
<b>REGION 5</b>	
<b>South Asia</b>	<b>177</b>
11 The Impact of English Language Teaching Reforms on Pakistani Scholars’ Language and Research Skills <i>Sarwat Nauman</i>	179

<b>REGION 6</b>	
<b>Africa</b>	<b>193</b>
12 Teaching the Craft: From Thesis Writing to Writing Research for Publication <i>Hayat Messekher and Mohamed Miliani</i>	195
13 Scholarly Publishing in Nigeria: The Enduring Effects of Colonization <i>Ayokunle Olumuyiwa Omobowale, Olayinka Akanle, and Charles Akinsete</i>	215
<b>REGION 7</b>	
<b>Persian Gulf</b>	<b>233</b>
14 Examining the Status Quo of Publication in Iranian Higher Education: Perceptions and Strategies <i>Hesamoddin Shahriari and Behzad Ghonsooly</i>	235
15 Writing Louder? Coping with the Push to Publish in English at an Iranian University <i>Seyyed-Abdolhamid Mirhosseini and Zahra Shafiee</i>	252
16 “Holistic Argumentation Creation”: Integrated Principles for Helping Graduate Students Create a Journal Paper <i>Roger Nunn and Tanju Deveci</i>	266
17 Envoi <i>John Swales</i>	284
<i>Contributor Biographies</i>	291
<i>Index</i>	294

# 13

## SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING IN NIGERIA

### The Enduring Effects of Colonization

*Ayokunle Olumuyiwa Omobowale*

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA,

*Olayinka Akanle*

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA

*Charles Akinsete*

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA

#### Introduction

English has gained a dominant competitive edge globally. It is arguably the global lingua franca and, more than ever before, has assumed the status of the global language of scholarship. Failing to publish in English can result in a scholar's academic invisibility often referred to as "perishing" (Kilonzo & Magak, 2013; Bajerski, 2011; Beigel, 2009; Thompson, 2009; Harris, 2001). Scholarly publication media, which solely or partly publish in English, have greater visibility, circulation and impact than others with comparable standards (Englander, 2011; Vanderstraeten, 2011, 2010; Curry & Lillis, 2004). In the academia, the intellectual reality of "preference" for English makes it the "queen" of all languages, in which most scholars wish to publish as a statement of academic excellence and global competitiveness (Englander, 2011; Curry & Lillis, 2004; Ryan, et al., 2002).

The place of English in international publishing and global inequality in scholarly dissemination is well documented (Collyer, 2018; Englander, 2011; Vanderstraeten 2011, 2010; Salager-Meyer, 2008; Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Meriläinen, Tienari, Thomas & Davies, 2008; Paasi, 2005; Curry & Lillis, 2004; Harris, 2001; van Dalen & Henkens, 1999). In fact, available evidence reveals that Nigerian scholars and graduate students who specialise in local languages such as Hausa, Igbo, Ijaw, Efik and Yoruba and European languages such as French, German and Russian disseminate their research in English (see for example Ayeleru, 2011; Ayeleru & Ajah, 2011; Oğúndèjì, 1998, 1997). Of course, when colleagues raise queries about why such research is not disseminated in the language of specialisation, the usual response is: "If we wrote it in a language

other than English, you would not be able to read it.” Simply put, scholars of non-English language disciplines are also caught in the web to publish in English to ensure wider dissemination of research and remain relevant. To address these issues more thoroughly, this chapter discusses the colonizing effect of the English language in scholarly publishing in Nigeria.

The essentiality of the English language reverberates in the post-colonial discourse. English is a transferred language in colonies and many writers and speakers are unable to grasp standard principles in oral and written forms of the language. Arguments to move away from “standard English” discourse are presented by Rose and Galloway (2017), and Shi (2013) who demonstrate that the move is needed to appreciate and recognise the glocalization and context of global Englishes that have evolved due to diffusion of the language. Similarly, in a discussion of the domestication of ideas and language, Onwuzuruigbo (2018), dwelling on the thoughts of Alatas (2000, 1974, 1972), advocates the freedom of the “captive mind” through scholarly indigenisation. It is our view that irrespective of the calls for recognition of global Englishes and scholarly indigenization, it is important to note that English is still the language of communication of these indigenization and relativity calls; English remains the dominant language of research and scholarship, outside of which research communication becomes limited. Indigenized Englishes would remain largely understandable only to the local audience; if the research is intended for the global audience it is our view that it should abide by standard structures of the English language.

This chapter discusses the colonizing effect of English in Africa, language challenges and extra-pedagogical strategies used to circumvent difficulties in writing in English for international publishing. In the first section we examine the effects of colonialism in Nigeria on the English language and more specifically on academic publishing. In the second section we look more closely at some specific instances of divergence from the norms of prestigious standard varieties such as British and US English. Finally, we provide some reflections on the sociology of English as a language of research publication in the Nigerian context, the strategies that scholars adopt to meet the challenges of satisfying the linguistic and rhetorical requirements of international journals.

### **Colonialism, English Language and Academic Publishing**

Colonialism is a historical fact in Nigeria’s existence, and its effects on the country continue to impact contemporary post-colonial social reality. Nigeria was under British colonial rule from 1893 (Lagos was earlier declared a British Colony in 1861) and until it gained independence in 1960. In Nigeria and across Anglophone Africa, English became an instrument of colonial perpetration, perpetuation and acceleration. Beginning with the so-called “Age of Discovery” by the European explorers as from the fifteenth century (and afterwards), eventual colonisation of Africa was very resolute and systematic. Africa’s colonialism was

accentuated in the 19th and 20th Centuries with scramble and partitioning of the continent (Akanle, 2012). At the point of partitioning, little or no attention was paid to existing culture and language peculiarities, thereby creating language and cultural complications in Africa (Muchiri, et al., 1995). Colonisation of Africa and domination of African languages were not without resistance, but the resistances were largely unsuccessful.

Elevation of English as the preferred colonial language thus meant that everyone aspiring to modernity must of necessity learn and speak English. Implicitly, the capacity to speak English became elitist. Natives incapable of speaking English became the low class and restricted in colonial operations. English speaking colonial court clerks, colonial domestic servants and errand personnel somewhat became the elites. Traditional class structures and systems became reconfigured because of the English language to the extent that traditional rulers and chiefs had to rely on interpreters to communicate with the colonialists. English became Nigeria's official language, as well as the main language of pedagogic instruction. Ayo Banjo (2012, p. 3) notes that "the spread of primary education in the country from the 1950s onwards greatly boosted the ranks of mesolectal and basilectal speakers of the (English) language." Today, there is a good percentage of speakers of the language at every level; it is also noteworthy that thousands of graduates of the English language are churned out by Nigerian tertiary institutions annually.

The elitism of the English language degraded local languages to vernacular status, unacceptable in official circles and formal education (Bgoya & Jay, 2013; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007; Rymes & Pash, 2001; Muchiri, et al., 1995). Vernacular, local languages attracted (and still attract) punitive sanctions, especially in private schools and other formal climes where such languages must not be spoken even in informal relations. In fact, in many homes, English is the language of communication, such that children learn English earlier than they do local languages, if they ever gain proficiency in them at all. Throughout the Nigerian social structure, the English language has the elitist status of privileged communication, which most people strive to attain, even though imperfectly most times. English preference is meant to aid wide-reaching communication, but not without more fundamental political economy and cultural outcomes. This is because, according to Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 108):

Languages as communication and as culture are often products of each other. Communication creates culture: culture is a means of communication, language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their places, politics and at the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world.



Language is central to personal and social constructions of existence and reality. Language is not just a means of communication but a strategy of self and group identities (Lovesey, 2000). Language is important and germane for identity, communication, relevance, culture and survival. It is about identity because language demonstrates the identity of a people. This is why there are the Yoruba language (for Yoruba people), Ashanti language (for the Ashanti people), French language (for French people), English language (for English people), Zulu Language (for Zulu people) and Hausa Language (for Hausa people), among others. It is the embodiment of culture and vehicle of socialisation (Rymes & Pash, 2001). Language is about people and their existence.

Language is also a powerful cultural tool. Expertise in a dominant standard language puts the speakers in an advantageous position. The culture of the dominant language is propagated, while its speakers are esteemed, irrespective of their nationality or ethnicity. Confirming this position, Currey (2013, p. 9) notes that European editors acknowledge the expertise and unique “sophistication” of early post-independence African writers in English. In Nigeria, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and Christopher Okigbo, among other early authors, were the cream of Nigeria’s literary and scholarly writers, with an expertise and sophistication in English that awed the international audience (Currey, 2013).

Language is also a vehicle of communication driving social relations; it shows the relevance of a people in local and external engagements. Use and misuse of language symbolise groups’ dominance. When different groups interact, there are bound to be power relations and cultural and linguistic exchanges (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). These exchanges could be mutually rewarding and peaceful and can be forceful and exploitative, depending on the power structures and motivations emergent in the relationships. In the case of African countries, the latter options were the case. Language is also about the survival of a people. For instance, expertise or (in)competence in a language can determine if an individual will gain employment, earn income and survive, especially if competence in the language is required in the job. In other words, once a language is dominant, the careers and existential survival of an individual or a group then depend on expertise in the dominant language.

Once a language is adopted as a major medium of communication, it simply shows the degree of dominance of the group that owns that language. In the case of English, this started with colonialism and is accentuated in post-colonial scholarship. Interestingly, English was systematically entrenched during colonialism, in post-colonial times, and English remains the dominant language of the academy and scholarship. It remains a national language and the country’s *lingua franca*.

The compulsion to learn and use English language is not only political but also economic. Academic and scholarly careers are dependent on competence in English, thus forcing scholars who use languages other than English to either learn English or employ author-editors or translators; especially native speakers of English. Unfortunately, the second option is far more expensive and means

that most scholars see gaining a mastery of English or using author–editors as their only options if they are to experience career advancement.

Despite the argument that Nigeria should have surpassed its colonial challenges, the colonial heritage remains nationally ingrained (White, 2000). This is particularly so when accounts of colonial occurrences and events continue to be relevant in understanding current realities in Nigeria. A case in point that would benefit from a post–colonial critique is the interface of English language and academic publishing (Omobowale, Akanle, Adeniran, & Adegboyega, 2014; Olukoju, 2004; Osundare, 2000). Even in Francophone Africa, it is important to note that English is increasingly gaining popular use, based on the recognition that it is the dominant language in scholarship capable of giving research wide reading coverage (Kamwangamalu, 2016; Omobowale, Sawadogo, Sawadodo/Compaoré, & Ugbem, 2013). For example, many frontline scholars in the Benin Republic, Senegal and Cameroon are competent in the use of English even though the official language of instruction and lingua franca is French.

While this situation ingrains a neocolonial language mentality, African scholars appear unable to escape the ascendancy and dominance of English because of pressures to publish. It, therefore, becomes an issue of choosing between career survival and ideological/epistemic debates. Thus, for many African academics, irrespective of colonial heritage, “publishing in English is the beginning of wisdom”, in fact, it is the pragmatic approach to having a successful academic career. This is because competence in English language would enhance the possibility of publishing in the dominant English journals, which promotion committees increasingly identify as the ones competitively indexed, with impact factor and so the standard journals. Publishing in such journals enhances promotion opportunities, expands the spread of the reading audience and the possibility of wide citation as well as the likelihood of international scholarly collaborations, consultancies and other opportunities.

As English continues to ascend as the language of scholarship and the academia in the post–colonial era, it is difficult to resist the systemic language dominance beyond mere stereotypical and ideological conjectures, intellectual rhetoric and political exemplifications. This is because English represents and reflects multi-layered interests in the global academia, scholarship and beyond. Hence, political, ideological and career motivations of academics, scholars and language learners and users are multifaceted and traverse schools, offices, communities and relationships. According to Canagarajah (1999), against the background, scholars face publication realities that advance scholarly dissemination through the English language as the panacea. Canagarajah further notes that the dominance of English in post–colonial scholarship reveals profound consequences of colonial territorial power relations in knowledge production, development and scholarship commodification. Simply put, the domination of the English Language in postcolonial scholarship somewhat gives something of a scholarly advantage to those who publish in English, especially in terms of wider dissemination of findings and consequent ranking advantage to such scholars and their institutions. Also, the publishing economy thus favours

English dissemination outlets, as they attract high patronage, readership and of course, profit viz-a-viz the non-English journals and publishers.

English is thus the language of the “center” propagating the “center’s interest” while Africa (and Nigeria) is part of the “periphery”, which must learn the language of the centre to be relevant in the global schemes of knowledge production and certification. Hence, publishing in English is largely an effective strategy that accentuates the dominance of English in global scholarship. Publishing as a legitimation strategy of English language is very dynamic and assertive. The tide has shifted from just publishing in reputable journals to largely English indexed journals with impact factor. For example, in Nigeria, as from about the year 2000, university management have supposedly tried to redress poor-quality scholarship and predatory publishing, and enhance global ranking of universities by adopting the “internationalization policy”. The internationalization project primarily prioritises “international publishing” in foreign English journals. More often than not, the responsibility to “internationalize” research findings is that of the individual researcher (with little or no funding support) at the pain of career stagnation, psychological trauma at loss of prestige, honour, seniority and of course, subtle or total obscurity (Omobowale, et al., 2014; Omobowale, et al., 2013).

Publishing in English is also about ideologies extension, structures’ legitimization and practices that legitimize and reproduce unequal power systems between Anglo-Saxon West and the South on the basis of English as the language for scholarship (Cook, 1992; Bourdieu, 1991; Canagarajah, 1999). Irrespective of ideological stances on the colonizing effect of English language, it is a fact that Nigerian scholars must write (and speak) standard English to have their manuscripts reviewed and possibly published. The next section discusses the Nigerian English in context, focusing on some of its characteristics, discrepancies from standard English and editorial remedies.

### **Nigerian English in Context: Characteristics, Discrepancies and Editorial Remedies**

As argued above, in Nigeria, English remains a requisite as a result of a range of complex factors such as the significant social relevance that use of the language proffers, as well as its publishing advantage. Kachru (1995) foregrounds the world canonization of the English and Awonusi (2016) equally states that “English assumes a hegemonic status as the most widely studied foreign language”. Consequently, the language is an essential constituent for learning across all tiers of education in Nigeria. The potential advantage that Nigeria’s long-standing contact with the language represents is, on the one hand, threatened by declining expertise in the standard varieties (Amakaeze & Abana, 2017; Akande, 2016). Further, linguistic influences from local languages and declining expertise in the language result in common errors and use of non-standard English. In this section we describe characteristics of Nigerian English and how it differs from the standard form.

Fakoya (2012 p. 46) observes that although the English language is thriving in Nigeria, there is an assemblage of lexical and phraseological differences that separate the Nigerian variety of English from the international standard. This scenario is often described as a reflection of the fallen standard of education in Nigeria (Amakaeze & Abana, 2017; Akande, 2016; Schneider, 2010; Osundare, 2000; Akere, 1978). However, it also reflects examples of glocalised English, locally popular and understood, but with little or no international communication and publishing advantage.

Writing for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani affirms that it is not uncommon to encounter official documents and research writing exhibiting verbose and flowery English (see BBC, 2017). The BBC (2017) report cited an example of a press release by the military High Command that reads as follows:

The Nigerian Army in synergy with other security agencies under its constitutional mandates. . . acted responsively in order to de-escalate the deteriorating security scenario in-situ.

Instructively, the military and other security agencies exercised maximum restraints against the odds of provocative and inexplicable violence that were employed against them. . .

It is rather inconceivable for any individual or group to have decided to inundate the general public with an anecdote of unverified narratives in order to discredit the Nigerian Army in the course of carrying out its constitutional duties despite the inexplicable premeditated and unprovoked attacks. . .

The quote above is an example of the verbose style often found in Nigeria's official and academic circles. Though a communication from the military, the extract is a good representation of everyday use of the English language in both spoken and written forms. The communiqué simply states that

the military, in cooperation with other security agencies is doing its best to improve security in Nigeria. . . Despite attacks against its forces, the military utilised minimal force to maintain order. . . False claims of acts of brutality against the Nigerian Army by individuals and groups (civil society) are unfortunate. . . .

Quite a number of Nigerian writers employ an army of ostentatious expressions to needlessly embroider a particular idea. This tendency is particularly common in the nation's geopolitical space. One prominent example is that of a member of the Nigerian National Assembly in recent times, whose verbose style of speaking has attracted wide interest among Nigerians. Honourable Patrick Obiahiagbon's contribution to national development was largely viewed from a

comic perspective, rather than a meaningful critique of the depraved state of the nation. Here is a compilation of some of his vocabulary:

- |   |                 |   |   |
|---|-----------------|---|---|
| 1 | Crinkumcrankum  | — | elaborate or detailed                                     |
| 2 | Mephistophelean | — | wicked  |
| 3 | Kakistocracy    | — | government under the control of a nation's worst citizens |
| 4 | Braggadocio     | — | arrogant attitude   |
| 5 | Jiggery-pokery  | — | misrepresentation, tricky                                 |

When asked why he chose to confuse his audience, the politician simply apologized, stating that his “intention is not to deliberately befuddle or obfuscate them (the audience). I do not set out to deposit my audience in a portmanteau of indecipherability (Obiahiagbon, 2008, *Vanguard Newspaper*)”. The point is that whenever Honourable Obiahiagbon speaks, his Nigerian audience must make a quick dash for the dictionary. When he was asked to speak on the death of former president of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 2016, he had this to say:

The grand initiation of Professor Festus Iyayi is a lancinating loss of another stentorian voice, against retrograde and prebendel forces of primitive mercantilism. That he passed through transition on matters pro bono public, bears eloquent testimony to our state of dystopia. Such is the evanescence of life. It's all vanitasvanitatum.

(Ugobude, 2016)

The summary of the above quote is that Mr Patrick mourns the loss of the deceased and therefore sees life as transient. And when he thought that the Nigerian footballer, Mikel Obi, deserved the Player of the Year Award in 2014, Obiahiagbon did ironically express his feelings in clear-cut terms:

I am maniacally bewildered, overgassted and flabberwhelmed (sic) at the paraplegic crinkum-crankum that characterized the GLO-CAF awards culminating in an odoriferous saga cum gargantuan gaga. The jiggery-pokery of CAF in crowning YayaToure instead of our own prodigy John Mikel Obi is a veritable bugaboo that must be pooh-poohed by all compos mentis homo sapiens. The perfidy and mendacity of all the apparatchik of sports suzerainty are not only repugnant but also insalubrious.

(Ugobude, 2016)

We should note the introduction of new expressions in the first sentence. The words “overgassted” and “flabberwhelmed” did go through the process of lexical mutilations. It is apparent that a mental state of chaos is created in the mindset of the listener, which runs parallel to the distressed situation of the speaker. Hence, there

is a deliberate switch to further bewilder the audience, who are most assuredly used to the correct expressions “overwhelmed” and “flabbergast”. Nevertheless, what remains pertinent is that communication is hindered by this outlandish linguistic noise; the result is an unavoidable distraction from the essence of the message.

As a prominent leader and national figure, Obiahiagbon’s lucid expressions are quite inspirational to many young writers. There is a strong temptation to follow in his footsteps, especially with the huge fame that he has attracted to himself. However, the effect of his idiosyncratic use of language has far reaching consequences, particularly in a formal setting. Be it a manuscript, essay, research proposal, grant proposal, thesis or any formal documentation, the presence of verbose expression is always counter-productive.

Furthermore, the use of incomplete expressions is another common problem which features regularly in publications written in English. There is a striking connection between verbosity and incomplete expression. The underlining factor is the desire to be seen as an elite proficient speaker of English. Unfortunately meaning is distorted when sentences are not well constructed. The value-chain of cohesion and coherence in any given language, in this case English, is immediately lost in the sea of incomprehension. Here are a few excerpts from essays written by undergraduate students.

Example 1. It was on a Tuesday evening 14th of March 2017 at the faculty of art the class was supposed to hold in Room 40 precisely why we were at the premises waiting for our tutor, and that faithful day was our first class.

Example 2. And I see him as a very hardworking man, because he did not just only rely on the lecturing job but has extra three jobs, all because of the welfare of his family members.

The two examples are derived from two descriptive essays with the same title, “My English Lecturer”. The first example is meant to be an introductory paragraph, while the second is culled from a transitory paragraph of the second essay. The common problem associated with both excerpts is incomplete expressions.

In everyday spoken interaction, it is not uncommon to hear phrases such as “I came to your office, but met your absence” (I called at your office, but you were not in), “you are welldone” (you have done well), “I had go-slow” (I was held up in traffic) or “I flashed your number yesterday” (that is, I called (or telephoned) you yesterday, but terminated the call before you answered).<sup>1,2</sup> Nigeria thus has usages that diverge from the standard, but which are locally regarded as “standard”, due to fallen standards and as a result of a conscious desire to celebrate the local varieties. Whereas this has negative implications for global competitiveness in English and publishing, there is little deliberate pedagogical effort put into enhancing written English among scholarly and literary writers. Needless to say, the challenge of divergent use of the English Language is generally noted in Nigeria, though it is assumed that scholarly and literary writers are in fact expert users of the English language. It is this assumption that results in an almost complete lack of formal training for professional writers.

Common errors and non-standard usage affect different units of the English Language such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and so on. In this chapter we present data focused on divergence within the Nigerian context that is commonly seen in political views, edited manuscripts, theses, dissertations and essays. The objective here is to foreground archetypal non-standard grammatical constructions and/or unclear structural presentation of the English language, possibly influenced by linguistic elements of Nigeria's local languages. These grammatical, lexical and orthographic infelicities are well represented in public speeches as well as in quite a number of publications by Nigerian authors. Among these infelicities we would include verbosity, inappropriate expressions, wrong usage of punctuation marks and morphological errors among other linguistic infractions.

It should be emphasized that it is not our intention to undermine the creative enterprise of Nigerian publications. In terms of global recognition, Nigerian writers are among the best in the world. As was noted earlier the likes of Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and Elechi Amadi are pioneers in the arts of creative writing and many have, over the years, followed in their footsteps. Contemporary Nigerian writers such as Ben Okri, Chimamanda Adichie, among others, have successfully navigated linguistic pitfalls that many other writers have fallen into, with respect to combining the English language effectively with indigenous idiosyncrasies. More often than not, quite a number of writers suffer the ill-effects of a general belief that language use must go beyond communication. In other words, authors are inclined to think that by using the English language in an exaggerated fashion, they generate respect and admiration from the reader. In actual fact, the reverse is the case.

In addition to turns of phrase, bad punctuation is the nemesis of any good publication. Although punctuation marks may appear to be of no consequence due to the way writers usually flout punctuation rules, it is arguably one of the most important guidelines that aids acceptance of manuscripts for publication. The import of the full-stop, comma, semicolon, colon, question mark, among others, cannot be overestimated. Wrong use or the lack of these punctuation marks in publications causes unintended alteration. Without appropriate use of punctuation, the readers are easily misinformed. Babajide (1996, p. 71) affirms that if there is a proper usage of punctuation, "it facilitates correct interpretation of the message encoded. If, on the other hand, it is not used properly, it either leads to utter meaninglessness or gives an unintended meaning." Here are some examples culled from written essays, in which the use of the comma is omitted.

Excerpt 1:

During my free periods I love watching football including gymnastics athletics judo and wrestling.

*(wrong use)*

Excerpt 2: Before they knew he had escaped.(wrong use)

## Excerpt 1:

During my free periods, I love watching football, including gymnastics, athletics, judo and wrestling.

(correct)

Excerpt 2: Before they knew, he had escaped. (correct)

First, it is difficult to have an orthographic reading in the first example. Also, the second example is complex and quite tricky in terms of absolute comprehension. But reading the two sentences in Excerpt 2 ultimately saves the day.

There are other morphological concerns that also affect the quality of publication. These include a varied number of errors such as spelling mistakes, homophone errors, slang, colloquialisms, to mention a few. Focus would however be on certain morphological misrepresentations, which are quite common in publications. In fact, this problem cuts across all levels of the education sector, right from primary schools to tertiary institutions. For instance, the use of “its vs it’s”; “their vs there”; “lose vs loose”; “whose vs who’s”, “I vs me” are usually misrepresented in terms of usage. Listed below are common examples:

Its raining	(wrong)	
It’s raining	(correct)	
Their is a need to change status quo.	(wrong)	
There is a need to change status quo.	(correct)	
Chelsea will not loose the next match.	(wrong)	
Chelsea will not lose the next match.	(correct)	
Who’s car is outside?	(wrong)	
Whose car is outside?	(correct)	
Dad will take Gbemi and I	(wrong)	
Dad will take Gbemi and me	(correct)	
interpret	(wrong)	interpret
arguement	(wrong)	argument
early fourties	(wrong)	early forties
faithful	(wrong)	fateful
being	(wrong)	been



Grammatical and fundamental errors are prime linguistic setbacks that affect the quality of publications in general. There are nonetheless other challenges that should also be mentioned, especially in relation to journal articles, including other forms of academic writing. Reviewers of publications are often challenged by some other forms of errors, namely, poor abstract, bad reference style, poor titles and in-text citations (Omobowale, et al., 2014; Papaioannou, Machaira, & Theano, 2013). A poor abstract is often as a result of verbosity and lack of focus on the gap in knowledge. Using the appropriate reference style for any article or publication is not negotiable. Attention is usually not paid to appropriate reference style by some scholars. All these contribute to poorly written publications. The art and act of writing significantly determines the success of any given publication.

### Author-Editing and Other Interventions

The challenges of producing a manuscript that meets the demands of journal editors are most often remedied through peer and professional authors' editing of manuscripts. Willing colleagues are often requested to assist in reading through manuscripts to assess the intellectual worth of such works, but very importantly, to also address grammatical issues that may be identified. This option is common among close colleagues. Peer editing does not necessarily confer such a transient editor with the role of an author. It is often a job done gratis, based on collegial values. Readiness to continue to offer such free services is not commonplace. Whereas a peer editor continually consulted may not decline, again due to collegial value, the enthusiasm, speed and frequency of assistance declines over time. As colleagues provide less of these free editing services, the author is stymied and consults professional editors. Hence, professional author-editing is the preferred option. In short, the need for international publishing portends the need to redress English language deficiency in scholarly manuscripts through author-editing. Peer-editing works, but professional author-editing is a relative panacea.

The art of author-editing is increasingly gaining ascendancy in Nigeria's intellectual and literary circles. Author-editing in the twenty-first century Nigeria has indeed reached a remarkable equilibrium, despite the fact that there are quite a number of linguistic and non-linguistic challenges. Author-editors do not only cross Ts, and dot Is, they practically ensure manuscripts are linguistically presented in Standard English. Hence, the English language has transcended its communication purpose alone. It is also a source of economic value.

There is an explosion of job opportunities across the nation as far as author-editing is concerned. Author-editors charge between N200 and N400, which is between 60 US cents and 1.3 dollars, per page. This avenue is now a steady source of livelihood for both exceptionally brilliant postgraduate students and professional author-editors in Nigeria. Unfortunately, quacks have also joined the teeming population of author-editors, claiming expertise in English language author-editing, which they obviously lack. Also, customers do not usually take the time

to learn from the mistakes made. Since copy-editors are always available, quite a number of scholars have been lackadaisical with the necessity to learn how to use the English language appropriately. Nonetheless, with the use of the English language, author-editing in Nigeria has become a socio-economic and intellectual remedy in terms of both economic and intellectual values.

To meet the demand to publish, scholars are also known to take advantage of the opportunity to publish in less recognized outlets. We have seen that “there are journals, and there are journals” is a sordid reality among Nigerian scholars. Not only have journals sprung up in Nigeria that are characterized as “predatory”, but some scholars actively seek them out, since for a fee they can quickly add a publication to their vitae even though it may have little credibility in the larger academic world (Omobowale, et al., 2014). While this does not serve the goal of disseminating Nigerian scholars’ research on the international stage, it does respond to the need driven by universities and others to publish frequently and in English.

### **Author-ethnographic Reflections and the Sociology of English and Publishing**

Our experience and success have been guided by the need to as much as possible present research reports in Standard English. It is important to note that Nigerian universities do allow scholars to publish in other international languages such as French, Russian and Spanish among others, provided English interpretations are included for internal review. However, Nigeria’s intellectual establishment sees the English language as the epitome of research (and publication). Works published in other languages are rarely assessed for appointment and promotion review. Though an unwritten code, it is expected that most scholars’ works (up to 99%) is presented in the English language.

Despite Nigeria’s Anglophone heritage, it is difficult to claim a global optimal expertise in the English language among scholars and students. It is not sufficient to have wonderful research ideas, super and cutting edge methodology, funds and generate empirical findings without dissemination outlets. From personal and shared experiences from colleagues, it is not uncommon to have reviewers complain about the written English of authors, typographical errors, misplaced punctuation and wrong use of words among other issues that, ordinarily, should not be challenges to individuals whose training and practice are carried out in the English language. Manuscripts may have sound empirical data, but due to language deficiency, they may fail quality tests depending on the editorial magnanimity of journal or volume editors (Papaioannou, Machaira, & Theano, 2013). Lapses in spoken and written English are evident in research reports, making such manuscripts barely readable and understandable for native speakers of English. It is our view that writing for international publication should abide by the standard structures of the English language. Thus, as scholars ourselves, we continually

seek to replicate the rhetoric and accuracy of standard English with our students and in our papers.

## Conclusion

The English language is not just the linguistic form in Nigeria; it is a social reality which captures Nigeria's colonial and post-colonial linguistic experience. Nigeria's English heritage notwithstanding, verbose expressions, coarse grammatical constructions, spelling errors, unclear presentation and homophone errors are some common challenges in oral and written English among Nigerians, thus necessitating a growing industry of author-editors, who many at times do poor jobs. Aside from personal reading, reflection and re-reading to detect often overlooked errors, scholars employ the services of author-editors and colleagues, and lately editing software such as Grammarly has been helpful. Poor English disadvantages the publication opportunities of Nigerian scholars in the global scholarly community.

As long as the "Nigerian English" remains internationally unrecognized, scholars whose works are rendered in such English will remain disadvantaged. The research theories and methods adopted may be sound, and of course, findings may be groundbreaking. Writing research reports in non-standard English, and thus finding it difficult to publish in internationally acclaimed dissemination outlets, also denies the international community access to scholarly-worthy research from Nigeria. This detracts from the possible contribution of Nigeria to the global repository of knowledge. The growing industry of language editors is a home-grown fix for improving manuscripts, but it does not represent a long-term strategy for supporting Nigerian scholars in publishing their research. Hence, there is a need to design pedagogic strategies for English scholarly writing to advance the writing skills and competitiveness of Nigerian scholars and graduate students.

## Notes

- 1 "Welldone" evolved in the Nigerian English about the 1990s as a form of gratification for a job done satisfactorily or mutual salutation
- 2 "Flashing" became a strategic telephony method right from the early days of mobile phones entry into Nigeria between 2000 and 2001. Calling was expensive, hence, "flashing" was a symbolic code for greeting while repeated "flashing" was (is still) a strategic means of saying that there is an important message to be relayed, call me urgently. In the West, "flashing" rather refers to illicit momentary nudity in the public space (see Curnutt, 2012; Lynch, 2007; Barcan, 2004).

## References

- Akande, A. T. (2016). Non-standard syntactic features in Nigerian university graduates' English. *Awka Journal of English Language and Literary Studies*, 4(1), 16–30.
- Akanle, O. (2012). Childhood construction, child rights and development in Nigeria: Trajectories from the Yoruba of the south-western Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues*, 15(2), 359–379.

- Akere, F. (1978). Socio-cultural constraints and the emergence of a standard Nigerian English. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 20(9), 407–421.
- Alatas, S. (1972). The captive mind in development studies. *International Social Science Journal*, 24(1), 9–25.
- Alatas, S. (1974). The captive mind and creative development. *International Social Science Journal*, 26(4), 691–700.
- Alatas, S. (2000). Intellectual imperialism: Definition, traits and problems. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 28(1), 23–45.
- Amakaeze, G., & Abana, B. (2017). English as a criterion for political exclusion in Nigeria. *Madonna Journal of English and Literary Studies*, 2(8), 119–130.
- Awonusi, S. (2016). Codification, standardisation and communication: Linguistic and literary perspectives of English and indigenous language in Anglophone West Africa. In A. Odebunmi, A. Osisanwo, H. Bodunde, & S. Ekpe (Eds.). *Grammar applied linguistics and society* (pp.15–42). Ile-Ife, Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Ayeleru, B. (2011). African cultural rebirth: A literary approach. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 23(2), 165–175.
- Ayeleru, B., & Ajah, R. O. (2011). Transgressing borders or bodies, deconstructing geographies in Tahar Ben Jelloun's "Partir". *África: Revista do Centro de Estudos Africanos*, 29(30), 187–202.
- Babajide, A. (1996). *Introductory English grammar and writing skills*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Enicrownfit Publishers.
- Bajerski, A. (2011). The role of French, German and Spanish journals in scientific communication in international geography. *Area* 43(3), 305–313.
- Banjo, A. (2012). The deteriorating use of English in Nigeria. A. Akinjobi (Ed.). *English language clinic lecture series* 1–5 (pp. 2–29). Ibadan, Nigeria: University of Ibadan.
- Barber, C. (1993). *The English language: A historical introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barcan, R. (2004). *Nudity: A cultural anatomy*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- BBC (2017, 5 February). *Letters from Africa: Nigeria's art of flowery language*. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38827888>
- Beigel, F. (2009). *Sur les tabous* intellectuals: Bourdieu and academic dependence. *Sociologica* 2(3), 1–26.
- Bgoya, W., & Jay, M. (2013). Publishing in Africa from independence to the present day. *Research in African Literatures*, 44(2), 17–34.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (1999). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collyer, F. M. (2018). Global patterns in the publishing of academic knowledge: Global north, global south. *Current Sociology*, 66(1), 56–73. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392116680020>
- Cook, V. (1992). Evidence for multicompetence. *Language Learning*, 42, 557–591.
- Curnutt, H. (2012). Flashing your phone: Sexting and the remediation of teen sexuality. *Communication Quarterly*, 60(3), 353–369.
- Currey, J. (2013). Literary publishing after Nigerian independence: Mbari as celebration. *Research in African Literatures*, 44(2), 8–16.
- Curry, M. J., & Lillis, T. (2004). Multilingual scholars and the imperative to publish in English: Negotiating interests, demands, and rewards. *TESOL Quarterly* 38(4), 663–688.
- Duszak, A., & Lewkowicz, J. (2008). Publishing academic texts in English: A Polish perspective. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7(2), 108–120.

- Englander, K. (2011). The globalized world of English scientific publishing: An analytical proposal that situates a multilingual scholar. *Counterpoints*, 387, 209–228.
- Fakoya, A. (2015). Sources and courses of errors in Nigerian English. In A. Akinjobi (Ed.). *English language clinic lecture series 1–5*. Vol 2 (pp. 45–67). Ibadan, Nigeria: University of Ibadan.
- Harris C. D. (2001). English as international language in geography: Development and limitations. *Geographical Review*, 91(4), 675–689.
- Kachru, B. B. (1995). *The other tongue: English across cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kamwangamalu, N. M. (2016). *Language policy and economics: The language question in Africa* (pp. 83–104). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kilonzo, S. M., & Magak, K. (2013). Publish or perish: Challenges and prospects of social science research and publishing in institutions of higher learning in Kenya. *International Journal of Sociology*, 43(1), 27–42.
- Lovesey, O. (2000). *Ngugiwa Thiong'o*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Lynch, A. (2007). Expanding the definition of provocative dress: An examination of female flashing behavior on a college campus. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 25(2), 184–201.
- Meriläinen, S., Tienari, J., Thomas, R., & Davies, A (2008). Hegemonic academic practices: Experiences of publishing from the periphery. *Organization*, 15(4), 584–597.
- Muchiri, M. N., Mulamba, G. N., Myers, G., & Ndoloi, D. B. (1995). Importing composition: Teaching and researching academic writing beyond North America. *College Composition and Communication*, 46(2), 175–198.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986). *Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. London: J. Currey; Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ogúndèjì, P. (1997). The communicative and semiotic contexts of àròkò among the Yoruba symbol-communication systems. *African Languages and Cultures*, 10(2), 145–156.
- Ogúndèjì, P. (1998). The Image of Sàngó in Duro Ladipo's Plays. *Research in African Literatures*, 29(2), 57–75.
- Olukoju, A. (2004). The crisis of research and academic publishing in Nigerian universities. In P. T. Zeleza and A. Olukoshi (Eds.). *African universities in the twenty-first century* Vol. 2: Knowledge and Society (pp. 363–375). Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA.
- Omobowale, A. O., Akanle, O., Adeniran, I. A., & Adegboyega, K. (2014). Peripheral scholarship and the context of foreign paid scholarship in Nigeria. *Current Sociology*, 62(5), 666–684.
- Omobowale, A. O., Sawadogo, N., Sawadodo/Compaoré, E., & Ugbem, C. (2013). Globalisation and scholarly publishing in West Africa: A comparative study of Burkina Faso and Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology*, 43(1), 8–26.
- Onwuzuruigbo, I. (2018). Indigenising Eurocentric sociology: The “captive mind” and five decades of sociology in Nigeria. *Current Sociology*, 66(6), 831–848. DOI: 10.1177/0011392117704242
- Osundare, N. (2000). Yoruba thought, English words: A poet's journey through the tunnel of two tongues. In S. Brown (Ed.). *Kiss & quarrel: Yoruba/English strategies of mediation* (pp. 15–31). University of Birmingham, UK: Centre of West African Studies.
- Paasi, A. (2005). Globalisation, academic capitalism, and the uneven geographies of international journal publishing spaces. *Environment and Planning A*, 37(5), 769–789.
- Papaioannou, A. G., Machaira, E., & Theano, V. (2013). Fifteen years of publishing in English language journals of sport and exercise psychology: Authors' proficiency in

- English and editorial boards make a difference. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11(1) doi.org/10.1080/1612197X.2013.753726
- Pavlenko, A., & Norton, B. (2007). Imagined communities, identity and English language learning. *International Handbook of English Language Teaching*, 15, 669–680.
- Rose, H., & Galloway, N. (2017). Debating standard language ideology in the classroom: Using the “speak good English movement” to raise awareness of global Englishes. *RELC Journal*, 48(3), 294–301. DOI:10.1177/0033688216684281
- Ryan, J., Avelar, I., Fleissner, J., Lashmet, D. E., Miller, J. H., Pike, K. H., Sitter, J., & Tatlock, L. (2002). The future of scholarly publishing: MLA ad hoc committee on the future of scholarly publishing. *Profession*, 172–186. Retrieved from <https://www.mla.org/content/download/3014/80410/schlrlypbshng.pdf>
- Rymes, B., & Pash, D. (2001). Questioning identity: The case of one second-language learner. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 32(3), 276–300.
- Salager-Meyer, F. (2008). Scientific publishing in developing countries: Challenges for the future. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 7(2), 121–132.
- Schneider, E. W. (2010). Developmental patterns of English: Similar or different? A. Kirkpatrick (Ed.). *The Routledge handbook of world Englishes* (pp. 372–384). New York: Routledge.
- Shi, X. (2013). The glocalization of English: A Chinese case study. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 29(2), 89–122.
- Thompson, R. H. (2009). Publish and prosper: Scholarly publishing in anthropology at the University of Arizona. *Journal of the Southwest*, 51(3), 423–444.
- Ugobude, F. (2016). 4 times hon Patrick Obahiagbon confused us with grammar. Retrieved 10 from <http://omgvoice.com/news/hon-patrick-obahiagbon-grammar/>
- van Dalen, H., & Henkens, K. (1999). How influential are demography journals? *Population and Development Review*, 25(2), 229–251.
- Vanderstraeten, R. (2010). Scientific communication: Sociology journals and publication practices. *Sociology*, 44(3), 559–576.
- Vanderstraeten, R. (2011). Scholarly communication in education journals. *Social Science History*, 35(1), 109–130.
- White, L. (2000). *Speaking with vampires: Rumor and history in colonial Africa*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

