



*Journal of  
Communication  
&  
Language Arts*

*Volume 6 (1) 2015*

*ISSN: 1597-0077*

## CONTENTS

1. Students' Preference and Purchasing Decision through Mobile Network Advertisements  
- Olugbenga Elegbe 7
2. Media Use and Knowledge of Cervical Cancer among Women in Delta State Nigeria.  
- Onyechi Ngozi Joy & Ogude Veronica 29
3. Roll Back Malaria Campaign and the Use of Long Lasting Insecticide-Treated Nets in Mushin LGA, Lagos State  
- Kuti Eytape Olufemi 53
4. User-Generated Contents on Online News Media: An Internet-Driven Freedom that Undermines National Development  
- Obasanjo Joseph Oyedele 83
5. Pirate Radio, Propaganda and Consequences: A Discourse on Radio Biafra in Ekwensi's Survive the Peace  
- Oyewumi Agunbiade and Francis Amenaghawon 113
6. Corruption and Oppression in Nikolai Gogol's The Government Inspector and Wole Soyinka's The Trials Of Brother Jero  
- Adeoti Yakubu Adegboyega 143
7. Influence of Online Games on the Reading Comprehension Skill of Students in South-Western Nigeria  
- Atofojomo, Omolade Atinuke; Sanni, Omolade Obhukwo and Biobaku, Olanrewaju Muftau 161

## CONTENTS

8. Social Networking Sites as Tool for Creating Access to Health Information among Nigerian Undergraduates  
- Olasinde, Emmanuel Akanni 179
9. Efficacy of E-Books on Secondary School Students' Cognitive Performance in English Language in Kogi State, Nigeria  
- Odawn Thomas Ibrahim 199
10. Film as a Cultural Agent: A Proposal for a Directorial Model for Nigerian Identity-Based Film  
- Babafemi Babatope 223
11. Auto-Segmental Analysis of Consonant Deletion in the Spoken French of Ijebu Undergraduate French Learners in Selected Universities in the Southwest Of Nigeria  
- Iyiola Amos Damilare 247
12. If Western Media Got Africa Wrong, How Right is African Media Reporting Africa?  
- Ebenezer Adebisi OLAWUYI 263
13. SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION: NPA at 50: Whither Publishing In Nigeria?  
- Professor Festus A. Adesanoye, FNAL 291

## Auto-segmental Analysis of Consonant Deletion in the Spoken French of Ijebu Undergraduate French Learners in Selected Universities in South West of Nigeria

IYIOLA Amos Damilare<sup>1</sup>, Ph.D

### Abstract

In communication, each spoken word is created out of the phonetic combination of a limited set of vowel and consonant speech sound units. Deletion, which involves loss of segment involving vowel and consonants, is a common phonological process in language. Existing studies have examined deletion in several languages and dialects with less attention paid to the spoken French of Ijebu Undergraduates. This article, therefore, examined consonant deletion in the spoken French of forty-four Ijebu Undergraduate French Learners (IUFLs) in Selected Universities in South West of Nigeria, with a view to establishing the dominance of consonant deletion in the spoken French of IUFLs. The data collection was through tape-recording of participants' production of 30 sentences containing both French vowel and consonant sounds, while Goldsmith's Auto-segmental theory of phonology (1990) was used to analyse instances of consonant deletion by the IUFLs. The results revealed inappropriate consonant deletion in the initial, medial and final positions in the French speech communication of IUFLs.

**Keywords:** IUFLs, Consonant deletion, Autosegmental phonology

<sup>1</sup>Department of European Studies, University of Ibadan,  
amosiyiola2013@yahoo.com

## Introduction

There are three types of communication namely verbal communication (the focus of this study) involving listening to a person to understand the meaning of a message, written communication in which a message is read, and nonverbal communication involving observing a person and inferring meaning. Speech is researched in terms of the speech production and speech perception of the sounds used in vocal language. By listening to the spoken French of a Nigerian, it is possible to predict the part of the country such a person comes from and this is because the accents of most speakers of French differ depending on the region they come from or their dialect (Iyiola, 2014:2). Studies have examined deletion in speech production of several languages and dialects with less attention paid to the spoken French of Ijebu Undergraduates. This study, therefore, examined consonant deletion as a major phonological feature in French verbal communication of Ijebu Undergraduate French Learners (IUFLs) in selected universities in the South West of Nigeria with a view to establishing the linguistic variables deleted and positions of deletion and causes of consonant deletion in their French speech production.

## Deletion

In language, we often come across situations where a morpheme shows up in two alternating phonological shapes, one of which contains a vowel or consonant segment that is missing from the other. For example, in Samoan, the root meaning 'twist' has two alternants: *milos* and *milo* (van Oostendorp, Marc: 2004). The form ending in *s* is found before a vowel-initial suffix (as in *milos-ia* 'be twisted'), while the form lacking the *s* is found when the root falls at the end of a word. According to Oostendorp Marc, in such situations, the two alternants usually stem from a single historical source, and we can attribute the alternation between segment and zero to the action of some sound change. The question then is whether or not the historical form contained the segment that alternates in the present-day forms. Either the segment was absent from the original form and has since been inserted in certain phonological contexts or it was present and has

since been deleted in certain contexts. Which of these scenarios is correct depends on whether the segment's occurrence is phonologically predictable or not.

Deletion is a common process in language. It involves the loss of a segment under some language-specifically imposed conditions (Oyebade 1998:63). It could involve consonants and vowels. Deletion that involves vowel is called elision. Vowels are usually deleted when two or more vowels occur across morpheme boundary. When such an occurrence is introduced by morphological processes, the language may choose to drop the first or the second of the contiguous vowels. Consider examples like "J'ai, l'eau, l'hôpital, sot/so/" among others. General terms used to describe whole-segment deletion include elision, loss, drop and truncation.

Although these terms, that is, elision, loss, drop and truncation continue to prove useful for descriptive purposes, they retain a strong flavour of the philological tradition within which they were conceived. Firstly, there is a procedural flavour to the terminology: deletion might suggest that a phonological form is derivationally altered by the irretrievable elimination of a sound. Secondly, there is an implication that what gets deleted is a phoneme-sized unit – an impression undoubtedly reinforced by the practice of using alphabetic transcription to present the relevant data. Neither of these connotations accurately reflects how deletion is treated in modern phonological theory. Vowel sequences lacking an intervening consonant are cross-linguistically unacceptable. Whenever morpheme concatenation threatens to create a hiatus configuration of this sort, languages can take various measures to resolve it. One of the most favoured of these is to delete one of the vowels in French (Bright 1957).

INPUT	OUTPUT
<i>leami-</i>	<i>l'ami</i> 'the friend (m.)'
<i>la amie-</i>	<i>l'ami</i> 'the friend (f.)'

Je ai-            J'ai  
Sot-              so

Deletion can also target vowels at the absolute edges of words, usually when the affected syllable is unstressed or in some other way non-prominent. Some languages do not tolerate consonant clusters. When such occur as a result of morphological or syntactic collocation, the offending cluster is rectified. Sometimes, the conditions for consonant deletion may be that the language prefers that final syllables should be open (Oyebade 1998:65). If a closed syllable occurs in final position, the process of consonant deletion is introduced to obliterate the arresting consonant and hence open the syllable e.g. /pətitami/ /gRozami/, /trɛzetRwa/, /tropetRwa/ /pətigarsō/, /gRogaRsō/ /tRoplaRɜ/ /tRɛlaRɜ/ (Oyebade 1998). Oyebade further discusses the process of degermination (a type of consonant deletion) whereby a cluster of identical consonant is reduced to one. Consider the examples below:

Latin	French
Terra	/tɛR/
Bella	/bɛl/
Pressa	/pRɛs/

Certain syllabic positions are particularly favourable to deletion, and deletion changes the syllabification of the phonological forms it targets. These assumptions are themselves founded on a widely accepted model of syllabification that can be summarised as follows:

### Standard Syllabic Model

- (a) Sonority: syllable nuclei always correspond to sonority peaks (typically vowels).
- (b) Word edges: (i) a word-initial consonant forms a syllable onset; (ii) a word-final consonant forms a syllable coda. These assumptions represent what can be considered the 'standard' view of syllabification (Blevins 2004). However, it has increasingly been called into

question, and this inevitably impacts on the validity of syllable-based analyses of deletion.

However, this study will not be complete without considering the Ijebu dialect as it is the mother tongue of participants in this study; and that the dialect has a way of interfering on the spoken aspect of a second foreign language learner. In Ijebu dialect, phonological process occurs when words are juxtaposed at a morpheme boundary, thus resulting in a change of the segment of these neighbouring words. In other words, the changes that take place in segment in environment such as initial, final, intervocalic and when morphemes combine to form a word are called phonological processes (cf Schane 1973:49). Phonological processes that occur in Ijebu dialect can be said to be either assimilatory or non-assimilatory. However, the focus of this study is to examine instances of consonant deletion in the spoken French of the IUFLs which has not gained enough attention by previous studies.

### **Methodology**

The participants in this study were purposively selected from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Ogun State (19 participants), Osun State University, Ikire Campus, Osun State (15 participants) and Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State (10 participants). The participants were selected from 400 level in each school because it is believed that they would have attained a considerable level of proficiency in French language. The data collection was through tape-recording of participants' speech production of 30 sentences containing both French vowel and consonant sounds.

### **Analysis**

Through the participants' Speech production of 30 sentences, the study discovered dominant instances of consonant deletion in the spoken French of the IUFLs as revealed in the table below.



Table 1

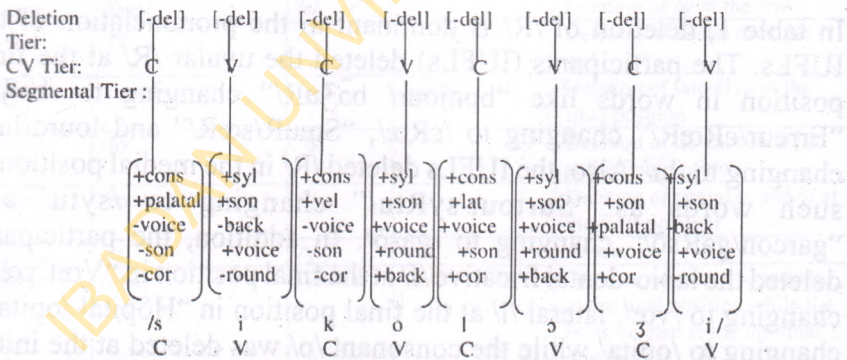
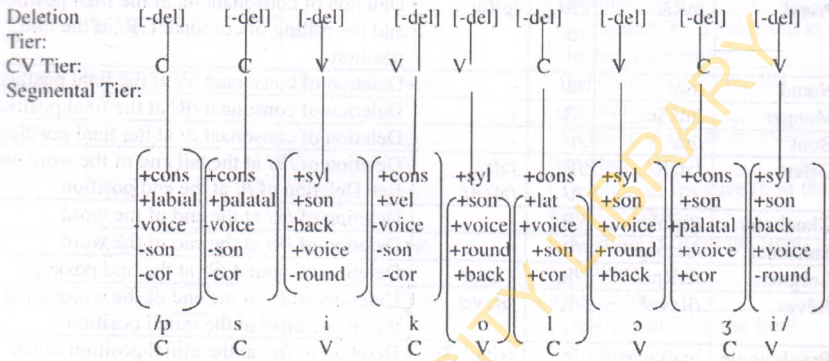
Word	Correct phonetic representation	Variable	Variants by respondents	Possible Phonological Processes
Bonjour	/bɔ̃ʒuR/	/R/	/bɔ̃ʒu/	Deletion of /R/ at the final position
Père	/pɛR/	/R/	/pɛ/	Deletion of /R/ at the final position
Trop	/tRo/	/p/	/tRo/	The sound /R/ is velarised at the medial position
Garçon	/gaRso/	/R/	/gaso/	Deletion of /R/ at medial position
Surtout	/suRtu/	/R/	/sytu/	Deletion of /R/ at the medial position
Vœf	/vœf/	/f/	/vœ/	Deletion of fricative /f/ at the final position
Sœur	/sœR/	/R/	/sœ/	Deletion of /R/ at the final position
Voir	/vwaR/	/R/	/vwa/	As above
Les	/le/	/s/	-	Deletion of /s/ at the final position
Erreur	/εRœR/	/R/	/εRœ/	Deletion of /R/ at the final position
Lait	/lɛ/	/t/	-	Deletion of dental /t/ at the end
Faisons	/fæzo/	/s/	-	Deletion of /s/ at the end
Sot	/so/	/t/	-	Deletion of dental /t/ at the end
Hôpital	/opital/	/l/	/opita/	Deletion of lateral /l/ at the final position
Chaud	/ʃo/	/d/	-	Deletion of dental sound /d/ at the final position
Impôt	/εpo/	/t/	-	Deletion of dental sound /t/ at the final position
Saint	/sɛ/	/t/	-	As above
Lourd	/luR/	/R/, /d/	/lu/	Deletion of dental sound /d/ at the final position while the /ʁ/ is deleted at the tail final position
Bœufs	/bœf/	/f/, /s/	/bœ/	Deletion of /s/ at the final position and deletion of /f/ at the final position
Mangeons	/mãʒo/	/s/	-	Deletion of /s/ at the final position
Papier	/pajɛ/	/R/	-	Deletion of /R/ at the final position
Rural	/ʁuRal/	/l/	/RuRa/	Deletion of lateral /l/ at the final position

Tort		/R/, /t/	/tɔR/	Deletion of /t/ and the rolling of /R/
Bruit	/bRɥi/	/R/, /t/	/bRɥi/	Deletion dental sound /t/ at the final position while the /R/ at the initial position is rolled
Chat	/ʃa/	/t/	-	Deletion of dental sound /t/ at the final position
Secrétaire	/səkRetɛR/	/R/	/səkRetɛ/	Deletion of /R/ at the final position
Prend	/pRã/	/R/, /d/	/pRã/	Deletion of consonant /d/ at the final position and the rolling of consonant /R/ at the mid position
Nœud	/nø/	/d/	-	Deletion of consonant /d/ at the final position
Manger	/mãʒɛ/	/R/	-	Deletion of consonant /R/ at the final position
Bout	/bu/	/t/	-	Deletion of consonant /t/ at the final position
Offert	/ɔfɛR/	/R/, /t/	/ɔfɛ/, /ɔfɛR/	Deletion of /R/ at the tail end of the word and free Deletion of /t/ at the end position
Chuchoter	/ʃyʔote/	/R/	-	Deletion of /R/ at the end of the word
Saisonnier	/sezɔnjɛ/	/R/	-	Deletion of /R/ at the end of the word
Lorgner	/lɔRɲɛ/	/R/	/lɔɲɛ/	Deletion of sound /R/ at the mid position
Rêver	/Reve/	/R/	/Reve/	Deletion of /R/ at the end of the word while the /R/ is rolled at the initial position
Psychologie	/psikolɔʒi/	/p/	/sikolɔʒi/	Deletion of /p/ at the initial position of the word
Sept	/set/	/p/	-	Deletion of /p/ at the end of the word
Sirop	/siRo/	/p/	-	Deletion of /p/ at the end of the word

In table 1, deletion of /R/ is dominant in the pronunciation of the IUFLs. The participants (IUFLs) deleted the uvular /R/ at the final position in words like “bonjour/ bɔ̃ʒuR/” changing to /bɔ̃ʒu/, “Erreur/ɛRœR/” changing to /ɛRœ/, “Sœur/sœR/” and lourd/luR/ changing to /lu/. Also, the IUFLs deleted /R/ in the medial position in such words as “Surtout/syRtu/” changing to /sytu/ and “garçon/gaRsɔ̃/” changing to /gasɔ̃/. In addition, the participants deleted the labio-dental fricative /f/ at the final position in “Vœuf/vœf/” changing to /vœ/, lateral /l/ at the final position in “Hôpital /opital/” changing to /opita/ while the consonant /p/ was deleted at the initial position in “Psychologie/psikolɔʒi/” changing to /sikolɔʒi/.

### Autosegmental Analysis of deletion by the IUFLs

(i). Psychologie/psikoloji/



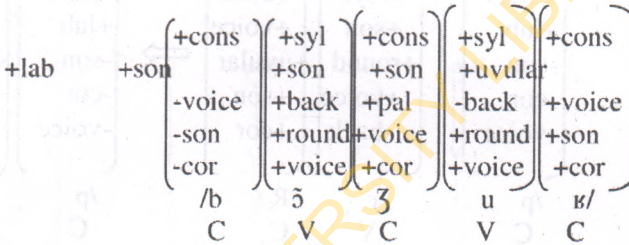
The figure (i) above represents instance of auto-segmental analysis of consonant (/p/) deletion at the initial position.

(ii). Bonjour /bɔ̃ʒuR/

Deletion Tier: [-del] [del] [-del] [-del] [-del]

CV Tier: C V C V C

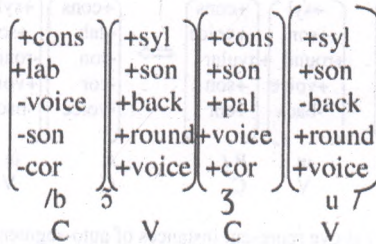
Segmental Tier :



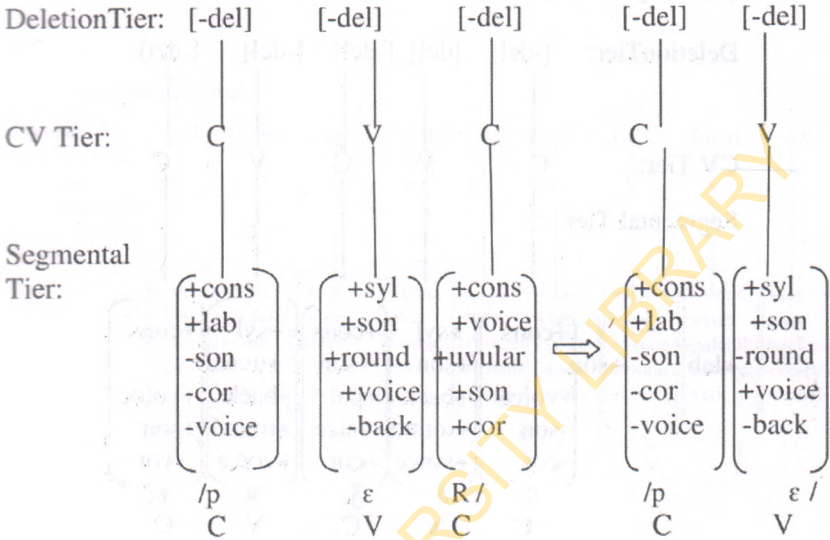
Deletion Tier: [-del] [del] [-del] [-del]

CV Tier: C V C V

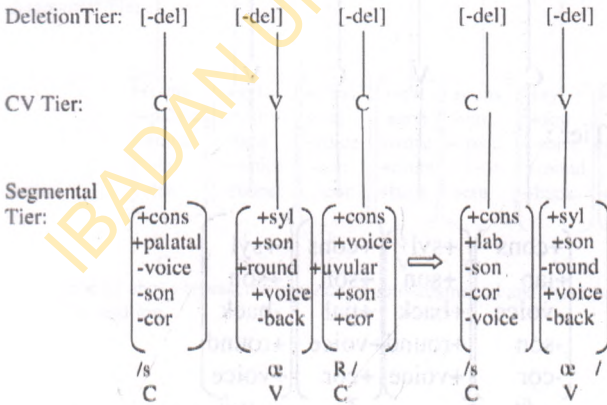
Segmental Tier :



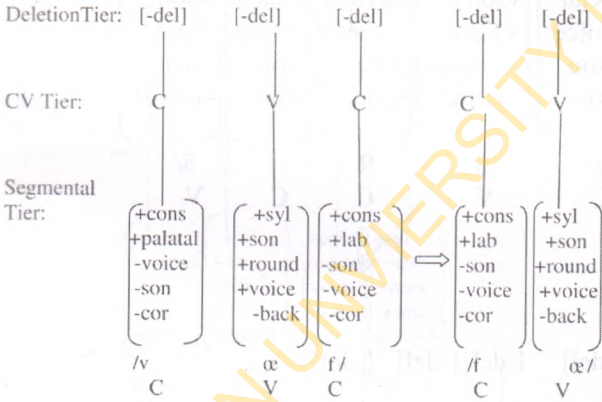
(iii). Père /pɛR/



(iv). Sœur /sœR/

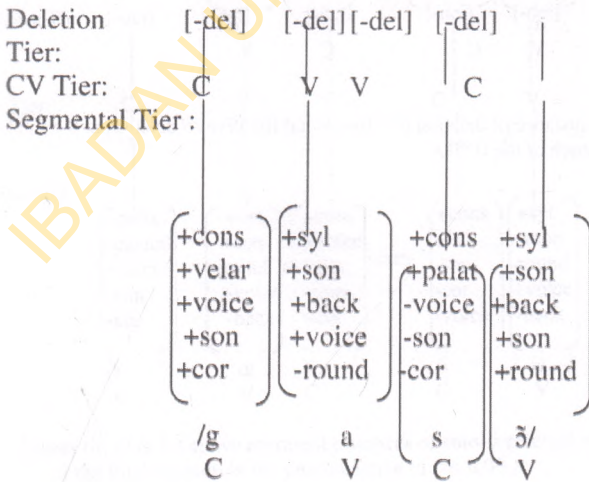
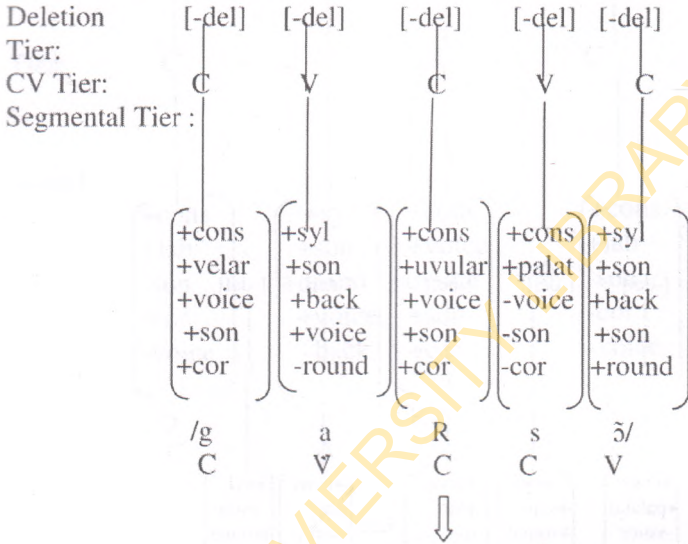


The figures (ii, iii & iv) above represent instances of auto-segmental analyses of consonant /R/ deletion at the final position in the pronunciation of the IUFLs.

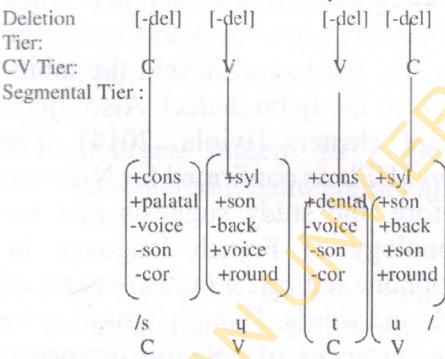
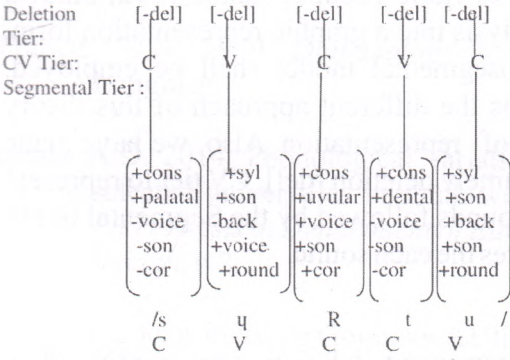
(v). *Vœf /vœf/*

The figure (v) represents instance of deletion of labio-dental fricative /f/ deletion at the final position in the spoken French of the IUFLs.

## (vi). Garçon /gaRsõ/



(vii). Surtout /sqRtu/



The figures (vi & vii) represent instances of R-deletion at the final position in the spoken French of the IUFLs.

The analyses above are based on Distinctive Feature Theory as propounded by Chomsky and Halle (1968) blended with Autosegmental Theory of Phonology as propounded by Goldsmith(1976, 1990). Distinctive Feature Theory (DFT) has been used to analyse indivisible phonemes into indivisible elements. That is, a phoneme is a bundle of distinctive features as opined by Trubetzkoy (1939) and Jakobson, Fant and Halle (1952). The distinctive features has also been used to classify the deleted consonants as well as the ones that are not deleted through major class



features, cavity features, laryngeal features, manner features and prosodic features (Chomsky & Halle 1968, Katamba 1992, Salawu 2002). In order to put the analysis into a graphic representation form, some of the views of Autosegmental model shall be employed. Goldsmith (1990: 8) explains the different approach of this theory from the generative method of representation. Also, we have made use of Autosegmental tiers namely deletion [del], CV tier to represent the consonants and vowels sounds followed by the Segmental tier to describe the distinctive features the each sound

### Conclusion

Instances of inappropriate consonant deletion were confirmed in verbal communication of Ijebu Undergraduate French learners when they pronounced French words. These instances of deletion may be attributed to the fact that Parisian /R/, the lateral /l/ and the labiodental fricative /f/ do not end words in the Ijebu dialect. Also, Ijebu dialect does not permit consonant clusters (Iyiola, 2014). The voiceless consonant /p/ is deleted by IUFIs as confirmed for Nigerian English (Akinjobi, 2010). Therefore, the study suggests that the teaching of phonetics and phonology of French language be emphasized especially in the Anglophone setting for better mastery of speech production of French sounds and words. Though it may not be totally possible to eradicate these instances of deletion in speech production, it could be minimized and Nigerian learners and speakers of French could approximate better to Parisian French which is the standard French.

### References

- Akinjobi, A.A. 2010. "Consonant Cluster Simplification by Deletion in Nigerian English". *Ibadan Journal of English Studies*. Vol 6: 27-38
- Blaho, Patrik Bye & Martin Krämer, *Freedom of analysis?* 123-148. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.

- Blevins, J. 2004. *Evolutionary phonology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Francis, W.N. 1989. *Dialectology: an introduction*. New York: Longman
- Iyiola, A.D. 2014. Phonological variation in the spoken French in selected universities in south-west of Nigeria. *Unpublished Ph.D Thesis in Department of European studies, University of Ibadan*, p.2
- Jaeger, A., Jean-Philippe Goldman & UliFrauenfelder. 2001. Liaison and schwa deletion in french: an effect of lexical frequency and competition? *Proceedings of Eurospeech 2001* ed. by Paul Dasgaard, Børge Lindberg, Henrik Benner & Zheng-hua Tan. 639-642. Aalborg, Denmark: Aalborg University.
- Klausenburger, Jurgen. 1977. Deletion vs epenthesis: intra- vs interparadigmatic arguments in linguistics: *Lingua* 42. 153-160.
- Oyèbádé, F.O. 1988. The role of the child in the acquisition of yoruba communicative competence. *ODU: A Journal of West African Studies*, 34.
- Oyèbádé, F.O. 1988. Issues in the analysis of yoruba tone. Thesis, *Lagos Papers in English Studies* Vol. 1: 200-214 (2007) July – 2007 214 University of London.
- Oyèbádé, F.O. 1990. Tones in the yoruba personal praise names: oríkìàbísó. A paper presented at the Department of African Languages and Literatures Seminar Series. 19th March.
- Oyèbádé, F.O. 1990. Language acquisition: the phonology of a yorùbá child. *Research in African Languages and Linguistics*.

Vol. 1, 1, 17-34.

- Oyèbádé, F.O.. 1998. *A course in phonology*. Ijebu Ode: Shebiotimo Publications.
- Richards, J. C. 1974. *Error analysis: perspectives on second language acquisition*. Longman Press, pp. 34–36.
- Roca, Iggy & Wyn Johnson. 1999. *A course in phonology*. Oxford: Blackwell. Section 4.7 & chapter 14
- Rodgers, J. E. J. 1996. Vowel deletion/devoicing. In A. P. Simpson and M. P.atzold (Eds.), *Sound Patterns of Connected Speech: Description, Models, and Explanation*, AIPUK 31, pp. 211–218.
- Rodgers, K. J. Kohler & P. Helgason. 1997. Segment deletion in the *kiel corpus of spontaneous speech*. In A. P. Simpson, K. J. Kohler, and T. Rettstadt (Eds.), *The Kiel Corpus of Read/Spontaneous Speech — Acoustic data base, processing tools and analysis results*, AIPUK 32, pp. 127–176.
- Schane, Sanford A. 1968. *French phonology and morphology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Van Oostendorp, Marc. 2004. Phonological recoverability in dialects of Dutch. ROA-657-0404.
- VanOostendorp, Marc. 2007. Derived environment effects and Consistency of Exponence. In Sylvia