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David Jowitt, *Nigerian English* (Dialects of English 18). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2019. Pp. x + 242. ISBN 9781501512728.

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David Jowitt's *Nigerian English*, volume 18 in the Dialects of English series (De Gruyter Mouton, formerly published by Edinburgh University Press) provides a long overdue comprehensive and up-to-date treatment of a variety that has so far failed to attract as much attention as it deserves in World Englishes research, given the widespread use, prominent status and important functions of the language in what is Africa's most populous country.

The above-mentioned and many other basic facts about Nigerian English are comprehensively covered in the Introduction (chapter 1), with several maps and a table on domains of language use providing illuminating additions to the text (pp. 2, 4, 6, 9, 16–17). The chapter gives due attention to Nigeria's multilingualism; the important aspect of sub-varieties of Nigerian English is appropriately treated in some detail (pp. 28–33; see further below), and the discussion is well rounded off by perspectives that go beyond Nigeria's borders, namely the influence of American English (p. 33) as well as the Anglophone West African context (p. 34). Furthermore, while the chapter started out with observations on the comparative dearth of research on Nigerian English in the preliminary remarks (p. 1), it rightly points, in closing, to the new horizons opened up by the relatively recent advent of corpora, specifically the Nigerian component of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE-Nigeria) and the *Corpus of Global Web-Based English* (GloWbE) (p. 35).

Chapter 1 is primarily concerned with current aspects and recent developments, and is appropriately complemented in chapter 5 ('History and changes in progress') by a focus on the earlier history, in particular the colonial era (pp. 154–77). In accordance with the

general structure of the volumes in this series, these two chapters frame three chapters devoted to different language-structural aspects, namely 'Phonetics and phonology' (chapter 2), 'Morphosyntax' (chapter 3) and 'Lexis and discourse' (chapter 4), while a 'Survey of previous work and annotated bibliography' (chapter 6) as well as 'Samples of texts' (chapter 7) supplement the main chapters.

As in any variety of English as a second language, variation along educational lines is a major issue in the description of Nigerian English. The section of the Introduction dealing with variation within Nigerian English offers extensive discussion and due acknowledgement of the problem of distinguishing varieties along what is in fact a lectal continuum (p. 32), and Jowitt opts for a distinction between 'acrolectal' and 'non-acrolectal' levels (p. 33). This is applied throughout chapters 3 to 5 and indicated by the symbols '+' and '-' respectively, though not infrequently a usage is labelled '+/-' , reflecting the difficulty in assigning usages to discrete varieties. The issue of what constitutes the Standard is a vexing one in this context. Not only does extensive variation in usage cause difficulty in applying the educational parameter as a criterion, but considerations of formal versus informal usage and of usage versus acceptance further complicate the issue, as Jowitt discusses (pp. 31–2), concluding that

... with regard to any given linguistic item about which there is a division of usage or a division of opinions among Nigerians, two standardizing forces are at work: one pulling in the direction of the existing 'Standard' (which turns out to be still the same as the 'exonormative' British or American Standard), the other pulling in the direction of a developing, distinctively Nigerian 'standard'. (p. 32)

While there have been moves towards defining a Standard Nigerian English pronunciation (p. 42) and distinctively Nigerian lexical usage tends not to arouse that much controversy (p. 181), it is in the area of morphosyntax that the exonormative Standard still holds the most sway, with concomitant rejection of Nigerian usages as errors (p. 74); the latter is amply testified to by a vibrant 'complaint tradition' (pp. 22–4).

Jowitt's description of the situation surrounding Nigerian English is in line with Schneider's (2007) assessment of the variety as being in stage 3 – i.e. nativization – of his Dynamic Model, with the subsequent phase of endonormative stabilization not having been reached yet but possibly being 'just around the corner' (Schneider 2007: 210); Schneider (2007: 211–12) also discusses the vexing Standard question in this connection, while pointing to Nigeria's flourishing literary tradition (also delineated by Jowitt, pp. 20–2) as a feature of phase 4 that is already realized, in contrast to codification, an aspect of phase 4 that is still at an early stage, as also remarked by Jowitt (p. 26).

Apart from the educational parameter, a further parameter of variation is the ethnic one, covered more briefly in the Introduction (pp. 28–9), as it is primarily relevant to the area of phonetics and phonology. Accordingly, the discussion is taken up again in chapter 2 (pp. 40–1), with particular attention to Jibril's (1986) model of Nigerian English accents, which incorporates the educational dimension and a distinction between Southern and Hausa accents. In the detailed account of the segmental sounds of

Nigerian English which follows (pp. 43–58), Jowitt distinguishes primarily between the accents of the three main ethnic groups – Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo – while sometimes also pointing out features characteristic of other ethnic groups. As a summary of Nigerian English vowel realizations that draws together the preceding discussion in list form according to lexical sets, he presents separate diagrams for the monophthongs of the Igbo and Yoruba accent, on the one hand, and the Hausa accent on the other hand (p. 51). The chapter further treats the suprasegmental aspects of stress and intonation (pp. 58–73); it should be interesting for future researchers in the area to take up Jowitt’s suggestion at the end of the chapter to further investigate attitudes associated with intonation patterns (p. 73).

While chapter 2 contains occasional references to texts in the ICE-Nigeria corpus in which specific notable pronunciation phenomena occur, it would have benefited from more extensive illustration. Given that the ICE-Nigeria sound recordings are publicly available (sourceforge.net/projects/ice-nigeria/files/), this might, for example, have taken the form of a selection of representative extracts from the corpus with some general commentary on the accents, parallel to the selection of (exclusively written) texts in chapter 7, which receives comment from the point of view of morphosyntax in chapter 3.

The main part of chapter 3 consists of a detailed presentation in list format of Nigerian English morphosyntactic forms (pp. 79–93), which, in accordance with the general critical attitude towards Nigerian features in the area of morphosyntax (see above), are collectively designated as non-Standard. As Jowitt points out at the beginning of the chapter (p. 74), descriptions of the morphosyntax of Nigerian English have been sparse. It is thus not surprising that the features dealt with are mostly familiar from earlier descriptions such as the corresponding chapter in Jowitt’s own much earlier *Nigerian English Usage* (1991) and the chapter on the morphology and syntax of Nigerian English in the *Handbook of Varieties of English* (Alo & Mesthrie 2008; this text actually echoes Jowitt 1991 to a considerable degree). Recent corpus-based work is given only cursory attention (p. 88). However, the text features some corpus findings of Jowitt’s own and a considerable number of corpus examples. A further useful addition to the description is the additional perspective provided by Jowitt on the feature ratings for Nigerian English in the *Electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English* (Kortmann & Lunkenheimer 2013).

As already mentioned, chapter 3 includes a discussion of morphosyntax issues found in the texts in chapter 7 (pp. 94–9). The discussion proceeds according to the number of non-Standard features present in each text (unfortunately the text numbering does not match between chapters 3 and 7 from text 28 onwards, making it somewhat cumbersome to consider the features singled out for discussion in their textual context). The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the grammar of Nigerian Pidgin (pp. 101–5). An important purpose in including this is to counter the ‘widespread assumption that Nigerian English equals “Pidgin English”’ and support the scholarly view of it ‘as a distinct language, with its own grammar’ (p. 101). This brief section should be useful as a very first introduction to the language for students or for an

uninitiated reader of Nigerian literature grappling with Pidgin elements in a text, though the present volume would have to be complemented by a separate one on Nigerian Pidgin for a full description of the language.

Chapter 4 mainly presents a rather extensive treatment of Nigerian English lexis (pp. 107–39). It starts out with a helpful classificatory scheme (p. 108) that provides the subdivisions for the following description, which covers a considerable number of items, with quite detailed descriptions and numerous examples, often from previous work on Nigerian English lexis and occasionally also from ICE-Nigeria. Discourse phenomena receive relatively less attention (pp. 139–47). In the area of discourse particles, Jowitt lists some items, together with interjections, that are mainly of indigenous language origin (pp. 139–41); corpus work has recently been initiated (e.g. Unuabonah & Gut 2018) and could contribute more findings in future. Politeness is mentioned by Jowitt as an area that has been relatively neglected so far (p. 143). Jowitt's observations on the religiosity of Nigerian English discourse are well illustrated by findings from both ICE-Nigeria and GloWbE (pp. 145–6). Code-switching might have been considered but it would admittedly have been difficult to do justice to this topic within the scope of the present volume.

In the preliminary remarks of chapter 4, Jowitt mentions that in a growing number of studies on language use in literary works and other specific registers, Nigerian English is not treated as a distinctive variety (p. 107). This, according to Jowitt, '[a]rguably ... shows English in Nigeria "coming of age"' (p. 107). Although this argument can hardly be faulted and such studies are certainly a valuable addition to the body of research on Nigerian English, they could be pursued alongside further work on distinctive features and, importantly, their acceptability; these could help to advance the status of a Nigerian Standard and redress continuing concerns over what should be recognized as 'correct' usage in the context of teaching, as outlined in the Introduction (p. 26).

Chapter 6 surveys a broad range of studies from the 1960s to 2016, providing an overview as well as a critical review of the research presented. It is organized into a section of general works and further sections corresponding to the topics of the different chapters. Researchers seeking to identify previous studies relevant to their own work should find it especially useful because it takes good account of both the local and international strands of research, dialogue between which has faced certain limitations due, *inter alia*, to issues of accessibility. Originally hailing from England but having taught and researched in Nigeria for decades, David Jowitt is of course in an ideal position to achieve a fine balance between these somewhat divergent research traditions and perspectives, as indeed he does throughout the book. Jowitt has himself dedicated a great amount of work to the study of Nigerian English, and his additional observations and the occasional anecdote from his experience in Nigeria enrich the account of research without detracting from the overall well-informed and scholarly character of the text.

All in all, the volume offers an informative, detailed and well-balanced account that not only does justice to the rich and multifaceted nature of Nigerian English but perfectly lives up to the series' intention of providing up-to-date documentation of varieties of English

that is at the same time authoritative and accessible. It is highly recommended for scholars and students alike.

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