



Effects of Hausa Tone on the Spoken English of Undergraduate Students and Postgraduate Students in Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of Hausa tone on the spoken English of undergraduate students and postgraduate students in northern Nigeria. In multilingual Nigeria, Hausa is one of the three major languages. Like in other languages of the world, tone in English and Hausa concerns non-segmental sounds. The theoretical anchorage of this study is Classical Phonemics. The findings of this study are instructive: Hausa tone has negative effects on the spoken English of undergraduate students and postgraduate students in northern Nigeria; the effects range from the segmental phonemes to the suprasegmental phonemes; some vowels are interchanged or wrongly pronounced; short vowels are produced as long and some unstressed syllables are unduly stressed; there are instances of substitution of some consonants with others; English words are unduly stressed; there is a sharp contrast between the ideal tune and what students produce; there are instances of weak and strong forms other than schwa; and there is no productive relationship between tone and stress in the students' spoken English.

Keywords: Spoken English, Hausa tone, English tone, undergraduate, postgraduate, Classical Phonemics.

1. Introduction

The phonology of indigenous African languages is on the front-burner in contemporary linguistic studies. In this regard, discrete aspects of the phonological corpora of the languages are investigated: vowel phonemes, consonants and suprasegmental features such as stress and intonation. This paper is a significant response to the yearnings for extensive research on the phonology of Hausa, particularly on how tone-marking in the language impinges on the performance of undergraduate students and post-graduate students in northern Nigeria, as far as spoken English is concerned. Richards and Richard (2000:601) submit that "tone is the height of pitch and change of pitch which is associated with the pronunciation of syllables or words and which affects the meaning of the word. A tone language is a language in which the meaning of a word depends on the tone used when pronouncing it." Similarly, Bussmann (1998:1204) opines that "tones are phenomena of pitch that refer to morphologically defined segments (morphs, words) to the extent that different pitches in a language are distinctive." Such languages are known as tonal languages. In phonology, the term "toneme" (in analogy to "phoneme") is used to denote phonetically distinctive tones. The segmental features (vowels) and suprasegmental features (stress, intonation) of a mother tongue (L1) are acquired by a growing child, and used as facilitators (positive transfer) of the learning of the target language (L2). Since the phonological systems of any two languages are never the same, the second language learner may take to substituting some elements of the phonological systems of the second language (L2) with those of his first language (L1). This phenomenon may impede meaning because in the face of such phonological conflicts, the native speaker may find certain utterances made by the second language learner unintelligible. Language transfer theorists believe that the lexis, grammar and phonology of the learner's first language impose themselves on the second language habit, thereby resulting in interference problems. This study is poised to investigate tone in the two languages with a view to establishing the effects of Hausa tone on the spoken English of undergraduate students and postgraduate students in northern Nigeria.

2. Phonology

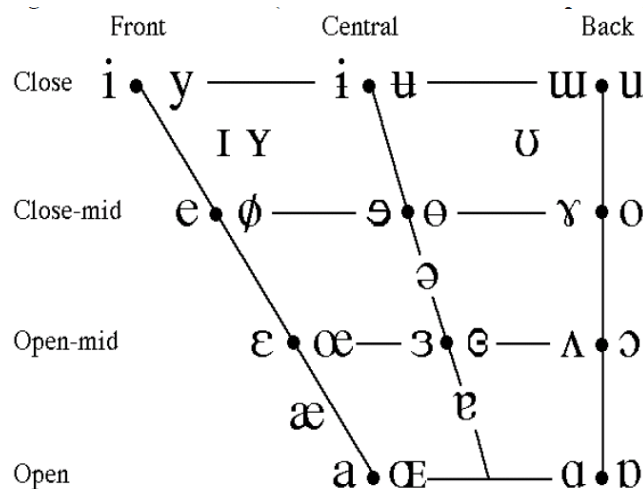
The word “phonology” evolves comes from Ancient Greek words: “phone”, “voice”, “sound”, and the suffix “-logy” (which is from the Greek *logos*, “word, speech, subject of discussion”). Phonology as a field of study has thus been viewed variously in many ways and by many linguists and scholars. Hyman (1975) defines phonology from the aspect of the object or goal of the study of phonology. In his view, phonology aims at studying the properties of the sound systems, which speakers must learn or internalize so as to be able to use the language for the purpose of meaningful communication. Katamba (1989) defines phonology as “the branch of linguistics which investigates the ways in which sounds are used systematically in different languages to form words and utterances. It is the study of the systems and patterns that units of sounds form in a language.” Bussmann (1996:898) submits that phonology is a “linguistic sub-discipline concerned with semantically relevant speech sounds (phoneme) and their pertinent characteristics, relations, and systems viewed synchronically and diachronically.” His definition captures the historical study (diachronic) and contemporary (synchronic) study of distinctive sounds. The object of the study of phonology is the phoneme, that is, a linguistically significant sound segment. A phoneme is a discrete, distinctive and abstract element in the speaker's mind that distinguishes meaning.

2.1 Segmental Phonology

Segmental phonology deals with segments. It analyses speech into distinctive units, or phonemes (segmental phonemes), which have a fairly direct correspondence with phonetic segments. Alternative approaches involve analysis in terms of distinctive features and prosodies. In phonology the smallest sound unit is the phoneme. One of the main ways the phonology of a language may be studied is through the examination of the segmental phonemes that are structured or put together as meaningful sound units through which the grammar of the language is projected. Crystal (2003) submits that “segmental phonology deals with any discrete unit that can be identified, either physically or auditory, in the stream of speech.” Bussmann (2006) explains that, the term is mostly used in phonetics and phonology to refer to phones and phonemes, but can be applied for any minimum unit of a linear sequence meaningful to the given field of analysis, such as a mora or a syllable, and a morpheme in morphology. Segments are called “discrete” because they are separate and individual, such as consonants and vowels, and occur in a distinct temporal order. Other contrastive elements of speech, such as prosody (tone, stress), and sometimes secondary articulations such as nasalization, may co-exist with multiple segments and cannot be discretely ordered with them. These elements are termed suprasegmental.

As established, segmental phonology deals with segments which in every human language, are divided into two groups: vowels and consonants. Jones (2006:549) defines a vowel as “the class of sound which makes the least obstruction to the flow of air. They are usually found at the centre of a syllable, and it is rare to find any sound other than a vowel which is able to stand alone as a whole. There is no build-up of air pressure at any point above the glottis. In most languages, phonetic vowels normally form the peak (nucleus) of many to all syllables, whereas consonants form the onset and (in languages that have them) coda. Most languages, especially in Africa have only voiced vowels where the vocal cords are vibrating during the articulation of the vowels. Vowels are speech sounds having little or no obstruction in the oral cavity in the course of their production. They are differentiated basically in terms of tongue height, backness in the mouth and roundedness of the lips.

Chart 1: IPA Vowels



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

(IPA 2005)

He stresses that the vowels are placed in subsets determined on the basis of Advanced Tongue Root (ATR), a phonetic feature characterizing an expanded ‘front-to-back’ diameter of the pharynx. Advanced tongue root (ATR) is a feature common across much of Africa, the Pacific Northwest, and other languages such as Modern Mongolian. The contrast between advanced and retracted tongue root resembles the tense/lax contrast acoustically, but they are articulated differently.

A consonant on the other hand, is a speech sound where the airstream from the lungs is completely blocked (stop), partially blocked (lateral) or where the opening is so narrow that the air escapes with audible friction (fricative). With some consonants (nasals) the airstream is blocked in the mouth but allowed to escape through the nose. Similarly, Maddieson (1984) asserts that a consonant “is a speech sound that is articulated with complete or partial closure of the vocal tract.” Examples are [p], articulated at the lips; [t], articulated at the front of the tongue; [k], articulated at the back of the tongue; [h], articulated around the glottis; [f] and [s], articulated by forcing air through a narrow channel (fricatives); and [m] and [n], articulated as the velum is being lowered allowing the air to flow out through the nasal cavity.

Consonants are grouped based on the manner of articulation, place of articulation, state of the glottis, generated by an airstream mechanism. Manner of articulation is the type of obstruction made by the articulators. Manner of articulation is the way in which the airstream is modified during the articulation of a consonant; (oral) or (nasal) stop, fricative, affricate, approximant, flap, or trill. Consonants have partial or complete obstruction in their articulation. Place of articulation (also point of articulation) is the upper and back parts of the oral cavity (upper lips, teeth, palate, uvula, etc.), which can be completely or partially contacted by one of the (relatively mobile, active) articulatory organs (articulator). It is the point in the vocal tract where the obstruction to the airflow is made. In contrast to the articulatory organs, the places of articulation are relatively stationary. The table below shows the universal pulmonic consonant sounds as contained in IPA (2015 version).

Chart 2: IPA consonants

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)											
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			ʀ					ʀ		
Tap or Flap				ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a voiced consonant. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

(Adapted from Odugbo 2017:39)

The table below shows the active and the passive articulators of consonants in IPA consonant chart. In the horizontal dimension of the IPA consonant chart, each of the most common places of articulation (i.e., the most common combinations of active and passive articulators) has its own column:

Table 1: IPA Articulators

IPA column label	Active Articulator	Passive Articulator
<u>bilabial</u>	labial (lower lip)	labial (upper lip)

<u>labiodental</u>	labial (lower lip)	dental (upper teeth)
<u>dental</u>	apical/laminal	Dental
<u>alveolar</u>	apical/laminal	Alveolar
<u>postalveolar</u>	apical/laminal	Postalveolar
<u>retroflex</u>	Apical	postalveolar/palatal
<u>palatal</u>	Dorsal	Palatal
<u>velar</u>	Dorsal	Velar
<u>uvular</u>	Dorsal	Uvular
<u>pharyngeal</u>	Radical	Pharyngeal

(Adapted from Odugbo (2017: 40))

In the vertical dimension of the chart, each of the most common combinations of constriction degree, nasality, and laterality has a row of its own.

IPA row label	laterality	nasality	constriction degree
<u>Plosive</u>	non-lateral	oral	Stop
<u>Nasal</u>	non-lateral	nasal	Stop
<u>Trill</u>	non-lateral	oral	Trill
<u>Tap or Flap</u>	non-lateral	oral	tap or flap
<u>Fricative</u>	non-lateral	oral	Fricative
<u>Lateral Fricative</u>	Lateral	oral	Fricative
<u>Approximant</u>	non-lateral	oral	Approximant
<u>Lateral Approximant</u>	Lateral	oral	Approximant

Only the two most common types of phonation (voiced and voiceless) are represented in the main IPA chart. If two symbols appear in the same cell (like [p] and [b]), the one on the left represents a voiceless sound (like [p]) and the one on the right a voiced sound (like [b]). Symbols that appear alone and pushed toward the right (like [m]) also represent voiced sounds. In addition, there are other sounds that use one of the less common airstream mechanisms. They are clicks, voiced implosives, and ejectives which use non-pulmonic airstream for their articulations as shown below:

Chart 3: IPA Non Pulmonic Consonants

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
◌ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	' as in:
Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	p' Bilabial
! (Post)alveolar	ɟ Palatal	t' Dental/alveolar
≠ Palatoalveolar	ɠ Velar	k' Velar
Alveolar lateral	ɠ Uvular	s' Alveolar fricative

(Adapted from Odugbo (2017:41))

2.2 Suprasegmental Phonology

The phonological feature above a segment is called suprasegmental phonology. Wells as cited in Goldsmith (1976:11) notes that "the term suprasegmental phoneme as used in recent discussions denotes phonemes which are neither vowels nor consonants." Goldsmith (1976:23), citing Wells further notes that "suprasegmental pitch phonemes are considered

phonetically in relation to the segmental phonemes, the length of a pitch phoneme is variable. Lyons (1981:93) asserts that “suprasegmentals are features ‘running over a sequence of two or more (phonemic) segments.’” The principal suprasegmental features are stress, length, tone, and intonation. These features are independent of the categories required for describing segmental features (vowels and consonants), which involve airstream mechanisms, states of the glottis, primary and secondary articulations, and frequencies.

2.2.1 Tone

The word “tone” was derived in the thirteenth century from French *ton*, Latin *tonos* meaning tension, sound. Bussmann (1996:1204) opines that in acoustic phonetics, tone is a term for “occurrence of sounds with simple, periodic waves.” In phonology, the term “toneme” (in analogy to “phoneme”) is used to denote phonetically distinctive tones. Binkert (1999:188) defines tone as “a pitch or change in pitch in a syllable of a word that is associated with a difference in the meaning.” Although tone has a very wide range of meanings and uses in ordinary language, its meaning in phonetics and phonology is quite restricted: it refers to an identifiable movement or level of pitch that is used in a linguistically constructive way. In some languages (known as tone languages) the linguistic function of tone is to change the meaning of a word; in Mandarin Chinese, for example, *má* said with high pitch means “mother” while *mà* said on low rising tone means “hemp”. Languages such as the above are called tone languages, according to Roach (2000:154). In other languages, tone forms the central part of intonation, and the difference between, for example, a rising and a falling tone on a particular word may cause a different interpretation of the sentence in which it occurs. In the case of tone languages, it is usual to identify tones as being a property of individual syllables, whereas an intonational tone may be spread over many syllables. Anyanwu (2008:133) defines tone as “the distinctive pitch level of a syllable.” Tone constitutes a suprasegmental feature supra-imposed on the segment entity, syllable, morpheme, or word, so that such entity comes out with two, three, four or more different meanings. In the study of intonation, a sequence of tones constitutes a contour or tone unit. In Hallidayan analysis, the division of an utterance into tone groups is called tonality. The most prominent tone in a tone unit may be referred to as a nuclear tone. The organisation of tonal structure within a non-linear phonological model (the nature of tonal features and the location of tonal linkage) is sometimes called tonal geometry. The historical development of a tonal language from an atonal one is known as tonogenesis. In many languages, the tone carried by a word is an essential feature of the meaning of that word (lexical tone). The unit which carries the tone (e.g. syllable, mora) is called the tone-bearing unit.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is examined below:

3.1 Classical Phonemics

Classical phonemics is a phonological theory that existed between the 1920s and 1960s. It got its insights and orientation from the American School of Phonology and the Prague School of Phonology in Europe. In Classical phonology, the object of study is the sound system of a language. This separates it from the other areas of language study, e.g. syntax and semantics. Classical phonemics is pre-occupied with how to ‘phonemicize’, how to represent unusual allophonic or morphophonemic situations, and so on. Classical phonemics sees the phoneme as an irreducible contrastive unit of sound and does not regard the phoneme as a bundle of features. Classical phonology refuses to admit grammatical information into phonological analysis. It is an offshoot of structural grammar, which emphasizes the study of the structures of language; hence, the emphasis on the dichotomy between “substance” and “form”; phonemic and morphemic status; and analytical or discovery procedure. Therefore, the major goal of classical phonology, as Sommerstein (1977:1) puts it, “is the investigation of the phonic features serving in the particular language being investigated or capable of serving in natural language, to distinguish utterances.” Classical phonology is interested in identifying the phonemes of languages. Thus, the establishment of the phoneme, and the explanation of phonemic and morphophonemic alternations constitute the focus of classical phonology. In this approach, the phoneme is seen as an irreducible contrastive sound unit. For example, there are three such units in ‘pat’ /pæt/. But in reality, there are problems connected with the discreteness of sound because the discreteness is not borne out in actual speech. Human sound is understood to be “continuous”.

Within the tradition of classical phonemics there are still divergent views on the concept of the phoneme. Hyman (1975:59) as cited in Odugbo (2017) identifies three such different views which modify the definitions of the phoneme. There is the view that the phoneme constitutes a phonetic reality. According to this view, the phoneme is seen as a phonetic reality and all the sounds belonging to the same phoneme must share important phonetic properties. This assumption underlies Jones’ (1967:7) definition of the phoneme as “a family of sounds in a given language, consisting of an important sound of the language together with other related sounds.” This same assumption underlies Gleason’s (1969:258) definition of the phoneme as “a class of sounds.” For the phonologists sharing this view, the primary concern is to establish those sounds that belong in the same family. This leads to the setting up of the principles of contrast and complementarities. If two sounds occurring in the same environment, when substituted bring about a meaning change, they must be considered as two separate phonemes, for example the sound /p/ and /b/ in “pat” and “bat”; /t/ and /d/ in “mat” and “mad”. The pair of words containing such sounds is said to be a minimal pair. It is possible for two sounds to

occur in mutually exclusive environments, that is where one occurs the other will not occur. Such sounds are said to be in complementary distribution – they are taken as allophones of the same phoneme.

4. Methodology

This section of the paper presents: the research design; population of the study; sampling and sampling techniques; and data collection procedure and instrumentation.

4.1 Research Design

The study would be conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods of research because one method would not suffice in providing all the required information in a study of this nature. Using these two research designs is justifiably important because, employing a variety of methods to collecting data may help to give the research finding validity through triangulation; the sourcing of the same pattern or behavior through different sources. It may also provide a diversified way of collecting, describing and interpreting the data.

4.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study will comprise Undergraduate and Postgraduate students who are also Hausa native speakers but use English as either a medium of communication in school or study English as a course of study. The selected respondents are graduates and postgraduate students from Bayero University, Kano and Federal University, Birnin-Kebbi. These respondents represent Kananci and Sakwatanci speakers of Hausa dialects who use English language. Kananci dialect of Hausa is spoken in Kano, Jigawa, Yobe, Kaduna and Bauchi states and other parts of northern Nigeria. The Sakwatanci dialect of Hausa is spoken in Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara in North Western Nigeria. The study hopes to use a total of 40 respondents drawn from the two universities with 10 graduates and 10 postgraduates from the each of the universities.

Sokoto, Kebbi, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Bauchi, Niger and Kano states. These states are chosen because they all share some basic characteristics – they are all located in the northern part of Nigeria.

4.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A total of four natives/indigenes of each of the eight states (i.e., 32 subjects) would be selected through a non-probability sampling technique called “convenience sampling”. In the sampling techniques, the subjects were selected for the study by chance because they accidentally happened to be available for the data collection. The sample however cut across sex, age, social class and level of education. Indeed, this sample size will suffice for this study.

4.4 Data Collection Procedure and Instrumentation

In this study, recording is the source of data collection. Scholars align with the view that via recording, information can be gathered from large number of people. However, published and unpublished secondary materials comprising textbooks, journals, encyclopedia, theses and dissertations are consulted. Internet sources are also utilized.

5. Presentation and Analysis of Data

This section presents the data gathered for the study and its analysis. The analysis is divided into analysis of segmental phonemes and analysis of supral segmental phonemes. The two groups into which the analysis is divided captured effects of Hausa tone on English spoken by students in Northern Nigeria, relationship between tone and stress in the students’ speeches or utterances, and effects of Hausa tone on the students’ formation of questions and statements in English.

5.1 Analysis of Segmental Phonemes

This section of the analysis covers English words that were wrongly produced by the students as a result of the influence of Hausa language on their production of English sounds. The words, the right transcription of the words followed by the transcription of the actual sounds produced by the students, are presented. Consider the examples below:

	buprofen	/ʌibju:prəʊf(ə)n/	/aibuprəfein/
1.	ObthaliDOM	/əbθælidən/	/tælæmɔ:n/
2.	Headache	/hədəik/	/hədəek/
3.	There	/ ðər/	/zaja/
4.	Stay	/stei/	/ste/
5.	Know	/nəʊ/	/neu:/
6.	Under	/ʌdə(r)/	/ɔ:za/
7.	Until	/ʌntil/	/ɔ:ti:/
8.	Again	/əgein/	/ægen/
9.	Pump	/pʌmp/	/pɔ:mp/

10. Mine	/main	/mai/
11. Tank	/tæŋk/	/ta:nk/
12. Go	/gəʊ/	/gəu:/
13. Ago	/ægəʊ/	/ægəu:/
14. These	/ði:z/	/ðis/
15. People	/pi:pl/	/fi:fl/
16. Thinking	/θiŋkiŋ/	/ti:kin/
17. That	/ðæt/	/dæt/
18. Today	/təʊdeɪ/	/təde/
19. And	/ən/	/ænd/
20. Sister	/sistə(r)/	/sista/
21. Years	/jeɪz/	/jies/
22. Injection	/ɪndʒekʃn/	/ɪndʒekʃn/
23. Nurse	/nɜ:z/	/nɜ:s/
24. Come	/kʌm/	/kɒm/

5.2 Analysis of Suprasegmental Phonemes

This section of the study presents the analysis of stress and intonation patterns:

5.2.1 Stress

25. Ibuprofen	/ˌɪbɜ:ˈprəʊf(ə)n/	/ˈaɪbʊprəfeɪn/
26. Under	/ˌʌˈdə(r)/	/ˈʊ:ˈdɑ/
27. Thinking	/θiŋkiŋ/	/ti:ˈkiŋ/

From the data, most of the words were unduly stressed as a result of the influence of Hausa tones on our students' spoken English. From examples 26 to 28, because the words are wrongly pronounced, the stress placement was equally wrongly placed. In example 26, instead of the third syllable to receive the stress, it is wrongly placed on the first syllable. In example 27, the word under, instead of stressing the second syllable, the first syllable is stressed and the same situation applies to example 28 where the the second syllable is stressed instead of the first syllable.

5.2.2 Intonation

Like vowels and consonants, intonation and stress are indispensable in spoken English. While stress affects the meaning of a word, intonation affects the meaning of an utterance by variations in the pitch of voice. When we speak, the voice changes because all sounds are not pronounced on the same tone. Some sounds are made on a high pitch and the others on a low pitch. It is this change, from high to low and then to high pitch again, that gives rise to various intonation patterns. These changes in pitch are important because if there are no such changes, the speech would sound monotonous or meaningless. We have observed from our data that the Hausa speakers of English in view do not follow the right pattern of pitch as a result of the negative influence of Hausa on their spoken English. The assertion is demonstrated by the following examples:

28. A: Sumaiya, the phone repairer, is waiting for you outside.↘

B: He is↘ there? He has brought my phone↘ back?

A: I don't think↗ so. He is not holding anything.

B: What has he come to↗ do? I need the phone↘ now.

From the above conversation, it is obvious that the intonational patterns were wrong. Therefore, one cannot differentiate a statement from a question. Speaker A used the right tunes since his utterances were mainly statements and not questions. But speaker B who should have used the right tunes forced his statements on questions as a result of wrong structures and intonation. The intonational patterns in the above utterances would have been correct if structured as shown below:

29. A: Sumaiya, the phone repairer is waiting for you↘ outside.

B: Oh, is he↗ there? Has he brought my phone↗ back?

A: I don't think↗ so. He is not holding↗ anything.

A: Then what has he come to↗ do? I need the phone↘ now.

30. C: Hello, Sani. How are you?

D: Is that you? Fine, thank you.

Similarly, the second conversation fails to follow the right intonational patterns. Speaker 'C' observed the right tune but speakers 'D' did not. The above should have been presented as:

31. C: Hello, Sani. How are you?

D: Fine, thank you.

32. E: You have seen Mallam Usman?

F: No, I haven't. Where is he?

The above pair would be right if structured like this:

33. E: Have you seen Mallam Usman?

F: No, I haven't. Where is he?

Here are further instances of the effect of Hausa on spoken English of the Hausa speakers of English under study.

5.3 Misapplication of Falling Tune

Different aspects of the misapplication of falling tune are considered below:

5.3.1 Statement

34. The school has provided generator.

35. Let us contribute 100, 100, naira and buy fuel.

36. It doesn't have meaning, there is no excitement.

37. I have some people in my lodge that don't even off tap at all.

As a result of the effect of Hausa on the spoken English of the students in view, there is a sharp contrast between the ideal tune and what we have presented as observed from our data. The falling tune otherwise known as the glide-down refers to a fall in human voice while speaking from high to low pitch. Usually, the fall is shown through stressed syllable. Examples 35 to 38 are statements and should all have falling tunes but our data showed rising tune as a result of Hausa influence. However, the right intonation should have the examples marked with falling tunes as shown below:

35b. The school has provided generator.

36b. Let us contribute 100, 100, naira and buy fuel.

37b. It doesn't have meaning, there is no excitement.

38b. I have some people in my lodge that don't even off tap at all.

5.3.2 Command

38. Go for your lecture.

39. Shut up, you are disturbing us.

40. Send the note to your course representative.

Just like what we witnessed with the examples under statement, the examples under command are marked with the wrong tunes. Instead of falling tune, the examples are marked with rising tune as a result of Hausa influence on spoken English of the students. Therefore, the above examples should be marked as:

39b. Go for your lecture. ↘

40b. Shut up, you are disturbing us. ↘

41b. Send the note to your course representative. ↘

5.3.3 Tune in Questions Beginning with Interrogative Adverb, Adjective or Pronoun (Wh-Questions)

41. What are these people doing like this? ↗

42. Who prescribed the drugs? ↗

43. Where is your lecture timetable? ↗

44. Who told you, Mallam Shitu is holding class tomorrow? ↗

The examples here are no exception to the influence of Hausa on the spoken English of the students in view. We have observed that examples 42 to 45 follow the same pattern as the earlier examples. Examples 42 to 45 should all have falling tune as shown below:

42b. What are these people doing like this? ↘

43b. Who prescribed the drugs? ↘

44b. Where is your lecture timetable? ↘

45b. Who told you, Mallam Shitu is holding a class tomorrow? ↘

5.3.4 Rising Tune

The rising tune is particularly used in polar questions; that is, questions that require only 'Yes' or 'No' answers, especially when they are preceded by a statement of fact or certainty. In the falling tune, the last stressed syllable is very important specifically in sentences where no special contrast is intended. In polar question too, the last stressed syllable carries the rise. The rising tune is sometimes used to create special effect or to convey the speaker's attitude. For example, the rise in pitch is gradual when the speaker shows indifference or lack of involvement, boredom, making polite request, greetings and listing items.

The data here reflect the above assertion as the influence of Hausa favours rising tune in the utterances of the students in view. Consider the following examples:

45. Is it Ibuprofen? ↗

46. Do you mind if I use your phone? ↗

47. Do you like taking Obthalidom? ↗

48. We need to prepare for GST 101, ENG 103, and CMP 111test. ↗

49. Switch on the light, please. ↗

5.4 Use of Weak and Strong Forms

Consider the examples below:

5.4.1 Schwa /ə/

Vowel schwa /ə/ is the soft vowel mostly heard in weak, unstressed syllables. The vowel takes different spelling forms in written English. However, in our data, the vowel is substituted with other vowels in the different spelling forms. In the following examples, we italicized the different spelling forms, emboldened the right vowel and put the substituted vowels in red as observed in the data.

50. She walked a *way* but came back a *gain*. [əwei] /ə/ ... [əgen] /ə/

51. The po *lice* *office* is near of school. [ə] /-/

52. The Civil Defence officers are looking for one particular boy. [ə] /a:/

53. This pen is similar to mine. [ə] /a:/

54. Please don't forget to call him. [ə] /ɔ:/
 55. He is conscious of his new position. [ə], [ə] /-/, /-/
 56. She likes potatoes for dinner. [ə], [ə] /e/ /æ/
 57. Mallam Musa has been appointed an ambassador [ə] /ɔ:/
 58. Jamila's friends now suspect her. [ə] /ɔ/
 59. Carrots and fruits are good for you. [ə] /ɔ/

From examples 51 to 60, our data revealed how much Hausa influenced spoken English of the students in view. In examples 51, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, and 60, the students as a result of the influence of Hausa on their spoken English produced either the strong form or entirely different vowels as against the weak or soft schwa sound. The unstressed syllables were stressed all through the examples. In examples 52 and 56, the students do not produce any sound related to English vowel but unduly stressed the syllables. The hyphen in place of the expected sound is as a result of non relatedness of any of the sounds produced to English vowels. The strong influence of Hausa accounts for the differences observed in our data.

Others instances of weak and strong forms are demonstrated in the following examples as shown in our data.

60. Please shut the door. [ðə] /de/
 61. Please give me the orange. [ði] /ðe/
 62. He reads a book a day. [ə] /ei/
 63. I eat an apple a day. [ən] /ænl/
 64. Come and see them tomorrow. [ən] /ænd/
 65. We don't like that. [ðæt] /ðæt/
 66. It was Musa that annoyed him. [ðæt] /ðæt/
 67. Where have you come from? [frɒm] /frɔ:m/
 68. I came back from market. [frəm] /frɔ:m/
 69. What is she talking of. [ɒv] /ɔf/
 70. What is the name of your school? [əv] /ɔf/
 71. I promise that I shall. [ʃæl] /ʃa:/
 72. I shall see him tomorrow. [ʃəl] /ʃa:/
 73. Yes, you should. [ʃud] /ʃu:d/
 74. You should get home early. [ʃəd] /ʃu:/
 75. Here, you can have some. [səm] /sɔm/
 76. Can I have some salt? [səm] /sɔm/
 77. Does your son call regularly? [dɔz] /dɔz/
 78. Sometimes he does. [dɔz] /dɔz/
 79. Often he doesn't. [dɔznt] /dɔznt/

The above examples demonstrate other instances of weak and strong forms other than schwa. Here, words belonging to the grammatical classes of pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, articles and conjunctions have two different pronunciation forms – a strong and a weak form. In these, the soft weak vowel /ə/ is heard in the weak form. In some of them just a consonant, or a consonant and another vowel of the strong form are lost in the weak form. In the above examples, the students in view did not comply with either of the cases. When ordinarily, the strong form is to be produced, the students produced an entirely different sound and in some other instances produced a strong form as against the weak forms. The above discovery is yet a result of the influence of Hausa on the students' spoken English.

6. Findings and Conclusion

This study investigates the effects of Hausa tone on the spoken English of undergraduate students and postgraduate students in northern Nigeria. To ascertain the phenomena being investigated, the study examines segmental and suprasegmental phonemes in both languages. The effects of Hausa tone on the spoken English of undergraduate students and postgraduate students in northern Nigeria were clear-cut. The study reveals the relationship between tone and stress in the students' speeches or utterances, and effects of Hausa tone on the students' formation of questions and statements in English. The effects ranged from the segmental phonemes to the suprasegmental phonemes. At the segmental level, as a result of the effects of Hausa tone on the students' spoken English, some vowels are interchanged or wrongly pronounced. Short vowels are produced as long and some unstressed syllables are unduly stressed. Although the students have some knowledge of the English sounds, the effects abound. There were cases of substitution of some consonants with others. There is no productive relationship between tone and stress in the students' utterances. The tone rather constitutes a great constraint to the right placement of stress on English words by the students. It therefore showed that Hausa tone impacted negatively on formation of questions and statements by the students. As an addition to the existing body of knowledge on the implications of mother tongue interference in the teaching and learning of a target language such as English, this study remains a spring board to further contrastive studies on African languages.

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