

Verbal ‘Intraference’ in Educated Nigerian English (ENE)

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Abstract

‘Intraference’ is used here for Selinker’s ‘the overgeneralization of target language rules’ (1984, p. 37), Richards and Sampson’s ‘internal language transfer’ (1984, pp.6-13) and Labovian internal principle/factors of linguistic change/variability (1994). The purpose is to achieve economy and precision of terms, which is preferred in linguistics. Library research, questionnaires, observation and recording of live linguistic events were used to gather examples from 2004 to 2012 to substantiate the incidence of verbal intraference and establish its enabling psycho-sociolinguistic causes. Verbal intraference is the (re)deployment of affixation and conversion processes to create verbs that may not be found in SBE and standard dictionaries. It was found that educated Nigerian deploy inflectional, derivational morphemes and conversion to fabricate verbal intraference variations, which distinguish Nigerian English morphology from SBE and other international varieties of English.

Keywords: Intraference, Verbal intraference, Educated Nigerian English, ESL, Psycho-sociolinguistic, Affixation.

1. Introduction

English verbs are created through affixation, conversion and coinage. Affixation is the most productive of these three, which is subdivided into inflection and derivation. Inflectional affixes are used to generate paradigms of verb forms and derivational affixes are applied to derive verbs from other classes of words. Many other verbs can be derived from other classes of words through derivational affixes. The adjective *popular* and the noun *code*, for example, can be turned verbs by adding the affixes *-ize* and *en-* respectively as follows: *popular+ize* becomes *popularize* and *en+code* becomes *encode*. Conversion is the process of using supra-segmental and structural features to change another class of word, say a noun or adjective, to a verb. Stress shift is often used to convert a noun to a verb. Accordingly, most disyllabic nouns are stressed on the first syllable. But when converted to verbs, the stress usually shifts to the second syllables, although there are some exemptions; for example COM-pound (n) vs com-POUND (v). Unlike the processes of inflection and derivation, conversion arbitrarily changes a word that is not a verb to a verb without adding any segmental feature, but adopting a supra-segmental (stress) feature/change. Sometimes, there is no stress change at all. The word is simply converted as it is to a verb. Through this process, many words that are not verbs can be used (and are used) as verbs. Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvic (2003:1558) say that conversion is “a process now available for extending the lexical resources of the language”.

Educated Nigerians use these three processes of inflection, derivation and conversion to fabricate verbs that may not be found in standard dictionaries and Standard native English varieties, e.g Standard British English (SBE) and Standard American English (SAE). This habit of forming and using what Quirk *et al* term “nonce and hybrid formations” (2003:1531), which carry with them the memory of similar established words in the language is here tagged “verbal intraference.” *Verbal* in this sense is limited to its adjectival use to denote linguistic items related to verbs as a class of words, not *verbal* in the sense of spoken language, spoken performance as against written language. This paper documents the verbal cases, explains the psycho-sociolinguistic causes of verbal intraference and how verbal intraference features differentiate ENE morphology from SBE morphology.

Linguistic *intraference* was first used by Ekundayo (2006) in a research entitled “The Concept of ‘Intraference’ in ESL: Nigerian English Examples”. Ekundayo coined *intraference* to denote the creative fabrications, deviations and variations based on the rules of English (as a second language: ESL). Since the deviations and variations in ESL emanating from a native and/or first language are called *interference*, a term that has become established, Ekundayo argues that deviations and variations caused by the application of the dynamics of the second language itself, without reference to the second language user’s MT or L1 influence, should be called *intraference* because they are situated within the second language, so that when we examine *interference*, we can also examine *intraference* to balance the scale. Unlike other errors of verb forms and concord in a second language situation, deviations and variations of verbal intraference are not just vulgar grammatical errors that impede mutual intelligibility or make those who are highly proficient in the language blush with shame. Instances of verbal intraference are interesting and engaging for several reasons. First, they are the results of the creative use of word-formation processes, particularly the application of verb-forming affixes. Second, the resultant words carry with them, as Quirk *et al* say, the memory of similar other established words in the

language. Hence a second language user who produces an instance of verbal intraference can cite many similar examples in the language to justify his/her fabrication. Above all, the habit also exists in English as a native and/or first language, although it is not so widely applied or overgeneralized as it will be found in a second language situation. For these reasons, verbal intraference is examined in this paper against the backdrop of some psycho-sociolinguistic constraints.

1.1 Methodology

Questionnaire, library research, observation and recording of live linguistic events and performances were used to gather data between 2003 and 2006. The data were updated between 2010 and 2012 with the same methods. The questionnaire used consists of ten popular verb used in ENE. The definitions and usage examples of each of the verbs were given in multiple choice question forms (A-D). Letter A sense with example is SBE while B is ENE meaning and use of the verb. The questionnaire was then administered to fifteen thousand (15,000) educated Nigerians in ten federal government owned universities in the five major geo-linguistic zones of Nigeria: the Yoruba South-west, the multi-lingual South-south, the Hausa-Fulani North, the Igbo South-east and the multi-lingual Middle-belt.

The universities are Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Bayero University, Kano (North); University of Lagos, Federal University of Technology, Akure (West); University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (East); University of Ilorin, Ilorin, University of Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (Middle-belt); University of Benin, Benin City and University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt (South-South). The selection of these universities was informed by their strategic locations across Nigeria and the fact that they use a Nigerian Federal Government policy called 'Quota System' or 'Federal Character,' to admit students from 'catchment areas' and all the regions of Nigeria.

Subjects aged between 19 and 70 years tested from professors, lecturers and final year students of English and Literature, Linguistics, and Communication Departments who are, or should be, models of English use and usage in Nigeria. Ten thousand (10,000) of the questionnaire sheets were collated and analysed. The result is presented in two tables in simple percentile count. Some other parameters used are observed currency, ubiquity and acceptability of the examples documented here among educated Nigerians. Examples in this category are serially presented and annotated in juxtaposition with SBE meanings of the words. These were extracted from the published works and the recording of *spontaneous speeches* by educated speakers and then confirmed by questionnaires.

1.2 Theoretical background

This paper is based on Labovian propositions in variationist sociolinguistics and on a research work entitled "The Concept of 'Intraference' in English: The Morphemic Examples in Nigerian ESL." The research work on the concept of intraference uses Selinker's *Interlanguage* and Richards and Sampson's *intralingual interference* as its theoretical framework. In the research work on 'Intraference', Ekundayo (2006, 2013) isolated the fifth facet of interlanguage, which Selinker calls the "over generalization of linguistic materials and semantic features" and lexicalized it as *intraference*. Richards and Sampson (1984:13-18) tag them variously as "systemic intralingual errors," "internal language transfer" and "intralingual interference". As no lexicalised term existed to denote the linguistic habit, as in *interference*, Ekundayo used *intraference* to denote the creative fabrications, deviations and variations based on the overstretching and redeployment of English rules and items. Ekundayo identifies five types of intraference in English (as a second language): phonological, lexico-semantic, morphological/morphemic, structural or syntactic and graphological/orthographic intraference. Of the five types, the morphemic type is the largest and is further sub-divided into the *nominal*, *verbal*, *adjectival*, *adverbial* and *prepositional* sub-sets. Among the morphemic subsets, the nominal types are the most common.

Hazen (2007:74) says that the work "Empirical foundation for a theory of language change" by Uriel Weinreich, William Labov, and Marvin Herzog in 1968 "is the manifesto for variationist studies". In this work, Labov and the others argue strongly for the empirical study of language. Bayley (2007:135) captures the nature and focus of *variationist sociolinguistic* research as follows:

Research in variationist approach, in contrast to research that seeks a single overarching explanation, assumes that interlanguage variation, like variation in any language, is likely to be subject to the influence of not one but multiple contextual influences. That is, variationist research, whether on native or non-native languages, adopts what Young and Bayley (1996) have referred to as the principle of multiple causes

Labov (1963; 1972; 1994; 2001 and 2010) has argued that the forces of language change and variations are embedded in the linguistic system/properties and socio-cultural dynamics. These properties "are in the grammar and they constrain the grammar, and they cannot be described" without reference to the grammar. Further, Labov (1994:84) asserts that morphological and syntactic variables are informed by "semantic distinctions and/or structural configurations whose development can be traced in the history of the language".

Besides the grammar of the language, *variationist sociolinguistics*, according to Lesley Milroy (2012:4-5), makes reference to social (extralinguistic) as well as linguistic information in specifying the constraints of

variability". Accordingly, both linguistic and extralinguistic factors work together to engender variations and varieties of a language. The ENE and its verbal features of this study are clear examples of the result of the interplay of linguistic and extralinguistic forces of language change processes.

The properties in the grammar, which constrain the grammar and can be explained with reference to the grammar in addition to the lexico-semantic links of the language are the features that Ekundayo (2006 and 2012) tag "intraference." Thus Ekundayo's work on intraference and Labov's propositions strike a chord.

The extralinguistic factors that constrain the educated Nigerians of this study to produce intraference variations are (i) the dynamics of a heterogeneous second language situation/community, (ii) contextual and socio-cultural constraints and (iii) the creative urge. Located far away from a native English setting, educated Nigerians are naturally faced with contexts and events that constrain them to manipulate the morphological system of English to create and use verbs in ENE whose meanings are already well-expressed in some other established verbs in SBE.

1.2.1 The Concept of Nigerian English

The term 'Nigerian English,' has been in currency since pre-Independence Nigeria. Nigeria gained her *Independence* from the British colonialists on 1st October 1960. According to Jowitt (1991:30), Nigerians and many of the many expatriates in the schools and universities in the 1960s freely and proudly used the term *Nigerian English*.

Nigerian English is used in this paper for the varieties of English used by Nigerians who are literate from primary school to university level. Region, formal education and (socio)linguistic parameters are often used to classify NE varieties (Ekundayo, 2011:7-8). In terms of regions, there exist many regions and so different varieties of English in Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo, Efik, Urhobo, etc. Each regional variety has its linguistic variations and peculiarities, on the one hand, and similarities to the others, on the other hand. Phonological differences distinguish regional varieties.

Several classifications have been made with formal education and linguistic features. Prominent among them are Brosnahan's (1958), Banjo's (1970 and 1996) and Odumuh's (1980) varieties I, II, III and IV (Sunday, 2010: 235). Banjo's model, which is the most popular, uses grammatical features and educational levels. Accordingly, *Variety I* is the lowest, which reflects vulgar errors of grammar and broken structures often used by primary school pupils and those with half-baked formal education. *Variety II*, which is an improvement on variety I, is used by secondary school students and school certificate holders. *Variety III* is higher standard which is spoken by highly educated people, graduates, teachers, lecturers, professors, writers, broadcasters, etc. Banjo proposes this model for Nigerian English. His *Variety III* is often referred to as *Standard Nigerian English* (SNE) or *Educated Nigerian English* (ENE). Lastly, *Variety IV* of Banjo is identical to native English which few Nigerians speak: Nigerians who were born in native English-speaking countries or have a parent of English origin and consequently acquire English as their first language (Banjo, 1996:76-80).

With sociolinguistics parameters, linguists have identified three *levels* or *-lects*: *basilect*, *mesolect* and *acrolect* (Igene, 1992: 55-123; Ogbulogo, 2005:23-24). *Mesolect* is the lowest variety similar to Banjo's *Variety I*. *Basilect* is the most popular and widely used in Nigeria by junior *civil servants*, secondary school students and not-so-well-educated youths. *Acrolect* is used by few very highly educated Nigerians. It has the greatest prestige and international intelligibility. Banjo's *Variety III*, which is also *acrolect* on the sociolinguistic pyramid, is often recommended or preferred as Nigerian standard tagged ENE or SNE. The habit of verbal intraference cuts across all the varieties of NE. However, this paper examines cases widespread in ENE.

2. Review of Related Scholarship

2.1 Verbal Dynamism and Errors

The verb is connected to the subject of a sentence by concord and then relates to other predicative elements by complementation (Crystal, 2009:510; Quirk and Greenbaum 1989:11-24; 336- 63). It is also the only word class that has many forms that vary according to contexts, tenses, moods and aspects. It takes several inflectional endings and has many affixes which can be added to other word classes to create verbs. Since English in a second language is often studied against the standards of SBE, Salami (1968) argues that all forms of Nigerian English variations that cannot be found in SBE are "errors of a sort" (Jowitt, 1991:29). Some linguists often list some cases of verbal intraference as verb errors. Jowitt and Nnamonu (1985: 80-100) call them "false verbs". Ogbulogo (2005:33; 2010:53-84) regards them as "problem areas in verbs". Eyisi (2003) also treats them as "common errors". Kujore (1985, 2009), however, treats them as "notable variations" (21-83). In ENE, according to Dadzie (2009),

There is the distinction shown between verbs and nouns in their syntactic relationships and, in modern English, this is even more the case as the same words get used as a noun or a verb, the category being known only through function. Thus we have

8 (a) Will you *chair* this section?

Where *chair* is a verb although it is more easily considered as a noun. This however is sometimes carried a little too far as in

(b) *Will you chairman this session?

Which is normally unacceptable, but may also be seen as evidence of NE. Or is it a sign that NE uses this device {conversion} much more than SBE? The latter seems likely, as analogy tends to be an easy way out particularly in second language situations. Hence we hear such sentences as

9. *Where did you school? (93)

Similarly, Okoro (2009:174) cites few examples of coinages based on false analogy in NE, such as “opportuned,” “microphoned,” etc. Ibe (2007:200) observes that “the usage of verbs is one area where the performance of students (up to the tertiary institution) in this country is rather woeful and continues to get more so....”

The question is what makes students and other ESL users produce variations and deviations of verb forms? Fatusin (2004) fingers the agents of learning, environment and society as major causes. We add here that the deployment of affixation and conversion are equally some fertile grounds in which educated Nigerians fabricate verbs. Affixation is a productive process of attaching affixes to base forms. According to Platt, Weber and Ho (1984:95):

The English language is extremely vital and dynamic, shedding dated words and expressions that no longer fulfil a communicative task and coining new ones if they are needed. The new Englishes have had, and are having, their share of this creative process. One way of creating a new word is to add something in the form of a prefix or suffix to already existing words or forms.

Accordingly, this paper shows that instances of verbal intraference are not just vulgar errors, but the manifestations of creativity, the deployment of competence and grammatical rules and items to create more verbs and meanings during performance, as William Labov, a leading exponent of *variationist sociolinguistics*, will argue in this kind of circumstance. Labov (1972, 1974) in his studies of African American English (AAME) argues that the peculiar features of AAME should not be treated as errors but variations based on a system of grammar. Similarly, educated Nigerians use the basic processes of verb formation in English to create extra verbs that may not be found in SBE.

2.2 Inflectional and Derivational Verb Affixes

Affixes that are used to form verbs from other classes of words, like nouns and adjectives, and/or added to another verb to change its form and meaning, are called verb affixes. There are three types: plural-singular, tense-aspect affixes and derivational verb affixes.

A singular verb is used after a singular name, person, word or a group/stretch of words that denotes an idea, somebody or something. These affixes are *-s*, *-es* and *-ies*, etc:

S/he *talks* all the time.

Professor Longe *teaches* very well.

The baby *cries* at night.

A word is a verb if it can take any of the plural verb suffixes above (*-s*, *-es*, *-ies*) and if it can be marked for past and present time, that is *tense*. This is why we have time-tense-aspect suffixes. There are five time-tense-aspect suffixes for verbs, which are given below:

- d as in the past forms of *rule* (ruled), *time* (timed).

- ed as in the past tense of *dream* (dreamed), *kick* (kicked)

- ied as in the past forms of *cry* (cried), *apply* (applied).

- en as in the participial forms of *eat* (eaten) and *break* (broken).

- ing as in the continuous form of *eat* (*eating* and *break* (*breaking*), etc.

In addition to these plural-tense-aspect suffixes, which are inflectional, there are many other derivational affixes for verbs e.g. *en-* as in encourage, *dis-* as in dissatisfy, *-(c)ate* as in communicate, *-ise/ize* as in characterize, *de-* as in deodourize. Conversion is another linguistic tool used to generate verbs in English.

2.3 Conversion

Conversion is a process of using supra-segmental and structural features to change a noun or adjective to a verb. Through this process, many words that are nouns or adjectives can be used as verbs. As Quirk *et al* admit, conversion is "a process now available for extending the lexical resources of the language" (1985:1558). Stress placement or shift is often used to convert a noun to a verb. So, most disyllabic nouns are stressed on their first syllables. When they are converted to verbs, the stress usually shifts to the second syllable. There are, however, exceptions, as shown in these tables:

Table 1: Conversion without stress shift, pronunciation unchanged

Nouns	Verbs
Mis- take	Mis- take
De- mand	De- mand
Su- pply	Su- pply
Bar- gain	Bar- gain
Ha- ggle	Ha- ggle
An- swer	An- swer
In- con- ve- nience	In- con- ve- nience

Table 2: Conversion with stress shift

Nouns	Verbs
'Re- fuse	Re- 'fuse
'Tor- ment	Tor- 'ment
'Re- cord	Re- 'cord
'Re- bel	Re- 'bel
'in- terest	in- 'terest

Constrained by some psycho-sociolinguistic factors, educated Nigerians freely (re)deploy the processes of inflection, derivation and conversion to fabricate verbs that may not be in SBE and standard dictionaries, but adequately convey the same meanings of other more established and standard verbs in the language. Some of such fabrications are already entrenched in ENE while some are emerging morphological trends that distinguish the morphology of ENE.

3. Data Presentation and Analysis

3.1 Affixation Examples

Ten verbs were used in multiple choice questions for 10,000 educated Nigerians. Option A is SBE while option B is popular or observed ENE. Respondents were asked to pick the option that they use(d) regularly.

- 1.) She married the man that ____ her at 19.
 (A) deflowered (B) disvirgined (C) unvirgined (D) defoliated.
- 2.) He ____ the story 'The Prison Behind'.
 (A) entitled (B) titled (C) named (D) called.
- 3.) Now, I can ____ all the theories I have learnt in school
 (A) practise (B) practicalize (C) picturize (D) display.
- 4.) The Hausa man sprinkled ____ pepper in the suya meat
- 5.) (A) ground (B) grounded (C) grinded (D) grind.
- 6.) Sister Catherine has ____ (A) backslid (B) backslidden (C) backslided (D) backslide.
- 7.) Many contractors have ____ for the road construction contract
 (A) bid (B) bidden (C) bidden (D) bade.
- 8.) My father has ____ on the bench outside for two hours now
 (A) lain (B) laid (C) lied (D) lay.
- 9.) The raped girl went to the police station to ____ the case. (A) report and record (B) report and incident
 (C) say and write (D) inform and write.
- 10.) Their housemaid caught them ____ each other in the room.
 (A) fondling (B) romancing (C) holding (D) touching.
- 11.) This is a well ____ piece of furniture
 (A) smoothed (B) smoothen (C) smoothened (D) smooth.

The responses are presented in tables one (1) and two (2) below:

Table 3: A Table of the Distribution of Responses for Ten Verbs by University Lecturers

S/N	Post-graduates(M.Phil/M.A./M.Sc and undergraduates				Total	Comment
	Words: SBE (A)	Percentage	ENE (B)	Percentage		
1	Deflower	600:16.7%	Disvirgin	3,000:83.3%	3,600	Entrenched
2	Entitle	100:2.7%	Title	3,500:97.3%	3,600	Entrenched
3	Practise/apply	1000:27.8%	Practicalize	2,600:72.2	3,600	Widespread
4	Ground	2000:55.6%	Grounded	1,600:44.4%	3,600	Variant
5	Backslid	500:13.9%	Backslidden	3,100:86.1%	3,600	Entrenched
6	Bid	1600:44.4%	Bidden	2,000:55.6%	3,600	Variant
7	Lain	1600:44.4%	Laid	2,000:55.6%	3,600	Variant
8	Report	1500:41.7%	Incident	2,100:58.3%	3,600	Common
9	Neck/fondle/caress	1300:36.1%	Romance	2,300:63.9	3,600	Widespread
10	Smooth	1500:41.7%	Smoothen	2,100:58.3%	3,600	Common

Table 4: A Table of the Distribution of Responses for Ten Verbs by University Students

S/N	Post-graduates(M.Phil/M.A./M.Sc and undergraduates				Total	Comment
	Words SBE (A)	Percentage	ENE (B)	Percentage		
1	Deflower	400:6.25%	Disvirgin	6,000:93.75%	6,400	Entrenched
2	Entitle	100:1.5%	Title	6,300:98.5%	6,400	Entrenched
3	Practise/apply	1,000:15.6%	Practicalize	5,400:84.4%	6,400	Entrenched
4	Ground	2,500:39%	Grounded	3,900:61%	6,400	Widespread
5	Backslid	500:7.9%	Backslidden	5,900:93.1%	6,400	Entrenched
6	Bid	700:10.9%	Bidden	5,700:89.1%	6,400	Entrenched
7	Lain	1,200:18.75	Laid	5,200:81.25%	6,400	Entrenched
8	Report	2,400:37.5	Incident	4,000:62.5%	6,400	Widespread
9	Neck/fondle/caress	800:12.5%	Romance	5,600:87.5%	6,400	Entrenched
10	Smooth	500:7.9%	Smoothen	3,900:93.1%	6,400	Entrenched

As shown in the two tables, the ENE forms have higher percentage of usage. However, performances by lecturers and Ph.D. holders (table 3) are nearer SBE than in table 4.

3.1.1 Word Formation Processes Used to Fabricate the Verbs

Disvirgin (dis+virgin): a redeployment of the verb prefix *dis-*

Title: conversion from noun to verb.

When this verb denotes giving a title to a book or work, educated Nigerians predominantly use *title(d)*, not *entitle(d)*, which is more common in SBE: "The books are titled *Poems for Junior Secondary School...*" (Osundare, 2004:21). 'He returned to this theme in a lecture ... titled 'Niger-saki'...' (Akinyemi, 2005:42). "I hope President Obasanjo will call for a copy of that article titled 'The President, the Hunchback and National Conference.'" (Lawal, 2005:8).

In SBE, *to title* and *titled* are often used for human beings with titles; for example, *Chief Gabriel Igbinedion is titled the Esama of Benin*. *Entitled* in SBE is often used in the active sense for abstract, creative and intellectual works, for instance, *He entitled his paper 'The Way Backward is Forward.'* However, two dictionaries acknowledge the use of *title* in the sense of *entitle*, but only in the passive sense: *There first album was titled 'Ocean Drive' (Oxford Advanced Learners:1258)* and also in *Webster's:1318*).

Practicalize (practical+ize): a redeployment of the suffix *-ize*.

Grounded (ground+ed): the use of the inflectional suffix *-ed* for past tense in order to differentiate the word from the now *ground*.

Backsidden (backslide+en): the use of *-en* for the participial form of verbs, as in *forbidden, hidden, forgiven* and *gotten* in American English, etc.

Bidden (bid+en): as in *backslidden* above.

Have laid for have lain: replacement and mix-up of homographs and homophones.

Incident: conversion and meaning extension.

Romance: conversion and meaning extension.

Smoothen (smooth+en): overgeneralization of the suffix *-en*.

3.2 Examples with Inflectional suffixes

Below are other examples which were gathered from published works and speeches. These were also tested for

widespread usage with 10, 000 lecturers and students. The percentage is indicated in the front of each example.

Understand+ing (65%: w. spread)

‘Children of God, are you understanding me?’ This is not common in SBE because verbs of (inert) perception like *see, hear, understand*, etc are hardly used in the continuous sense. When they are used in the continuous sense, they connote additional meanings. ‘Do you understand me’ may be used instead in SBE.

Binded/Bounded (67%: w. spread).

‘She hasn’t binded her project.’ ‘I submitted four copies of my bounded project.’ Compare with standard native usage: “She hasn’t bound her project.” ‘I submitted four copies of my bound project.’

Treaded (63%: w. spread).

‘..... Wherever they *treaded*, the grasses refused to grow...’

SBE: ‘... wherever they *trod*...’

Shapen (56%: very common).

It is used in the native English sense of ‘to shape.’ ‘Please, help me *shapen* this plank.’

Two factors are responsible for this variation: the knowledge of the application of the verb suffix *-en* and the memory of words like *sharpen, loosen, dampen*, etc. But in SBE, the standard verb form of the noun *shape* is by conversion: ‘Please, *shape* this plank,’ but *sharpen* (not *sharp*) *this pencil*.

3.3 Examples with Derivational Affixes

Defranchise (de+franchise: 68%: w. spread)

‘Many eligible voters were defranchised’ (Olatunji, 2007)

SBE: Many eligible voters were *disenfranchised*.

Remodify (re+ mode+ -fy: 58%: very common)

This means *change, reorganize, revise, redesign* in ENE: ‘My work has now been *remodified*.’

SBE is ‘My work has been *modified*.’ *Modify* already has the meaning of *re* - in it. To modify means to *re-arrange, change, reorganize, revise, redesign*. The closest to *remodify* both in meaning and spelling in SBE are *remodel* and *remold*, which informs the use of *remodify* by some educated Nigerians.

Revolutionalised (revolution-al+-ise+d: 65%: w. spread)

‘Akwuyili has revolutionalised the crusade against fake drugs in Nigeria’ (Idowu, 2005, p.27). The word is formed from *revolution* by the addition of *-al* and *-ise*. SBE is *revolutionise*.

3.4 Conversion Examples

(To) Probate/probated/probating (81%: entrenched).

To probate in ENE means (in native English {for a student}) to *repeat* a class or level and *retake* all his/her courses; for example, ‘Three students are *probating* in year one.’ In SBE, *(to) probate* means to validate or authenticate a will or legal document. This sense is still retained in Nigerian *legalese*. One can also be on *probation*, or *probationary period*, that is a period of test, trial and reassessment. From this sense, educated Nigerian converts *probate* or back clips *probation* to have *probate*.

Useless/uselessed/uselessing (40%: Emerging trend).

An adjective used as a verb: *useless, uselesses, uselessed* and *uselessing*. “If you insist on going ahead with the relationship, you may be *used, uselessed* and *dumped*” (Lady VCG 8). This is not common in ENE, but it is gaining currency. One now hears expressions like: “Some girls *useless* themselves before marriage” instead of SBE *Some girls mess themselves up / abuse themselves / misuse themselves / behave in a promiscuous / loose manner before marriage*. Although this example may sound funny or ridiculous, there are similar usages in SBE where adjectives have been converted to verbs; for instance, the adjectives *rough, dirty* and the preposition or adverb *near*, etc are sometimes used as verbs, as in these sentences:

- (i) I *roughed* the road through. (ii) Please do not *dirty* my white clothes. (iii) You are *dirtying* my clothes by stepping on them. (iv) *Nearing* home, we heaved a sigh of relief.

So, if a Nigerian says *a lady is uselessing herself*, does this peculiar use not obey the morphophonemic and morphosyntactic rules of the language? What is the strange thing in the coinage and use? It is strange only because the educated elite have not started using it widely.

Incident/ed (incident+ed: 87%: entrenched)

A noun converted to a verb, particularly in the military and the paramilitary, it means to put/write down or record an incident, to put a case on the records. ‘The mother and cousin managed to get to NEPA police station where the case was first *incidented* and later transferred to Police Headquarters’ (Okologu, 2005:38).

Sex (80%: entrenched)

‘...Ighagwolo who abandoned his wife and reputation to sex the corpse of a girl who refused to marry him...’ (Akpobaro, 2006:102).

SBE will be ‘Ighagwolo who abandoned his wife...*to have sex with* the corpse of a girl...’

Finger/Fingering (96% entrenched in Informal ENE).

Although *finger*, a noun, is also used as a verb in SBE, it is further used in a sexual sense in NE where it denotes

the habit of inserting (a) finger(s) into a female’s privates for sexual arousal and pleasure. ‘He fingered the girl’, in SBE, would mean *He identified or accused her*, but in ENE, depending on the context, it additionally means that he inserted his finger into the girl’s privates, although the SBE sense is also used.

Block/Blocking (96%: entrenched).

Block is a noun also used as a verb by conversion in SBE. In ENE, the verb form of *block* has assumed a different meaning: *Block/blocking* now denotes a notorious and morally condemnable practice of bribing lecturers and members of staff in an institution and other places with money, gifts and sex to get pass marks, influence examination result or achieve a purpose. ‘Last September, I spent more than fifty thousand naira to *block* my lecturers,’ also ‘sort/sorting’.

Sun/to sun clothes (92% entrenched)

Sun is converted to a verb in both native and Nigerian usages, but with different meanings. In SBE, *to sun* means to put oneself in the sun, to bask in the sun, as a feverish person would do. But in ENE, *to sun* means to put wet, damp, washed clothes/cloths in the sun to dry: ‘I sunned my clothes and left for school, but before I returned, the rain had wet them.’

The NE sense of *sun/to sun* is not common in SBE may be as a result of the fact that native English people in this generation dry clean their clothes with machines. The use of ‘sun’ in this context in ENE is achieved by conversion (linguistic) and necessitated by socio-environmental factor and way of life.

Horn/Horning (93%: entrenched).

Horn is widely used as a verb in Nigerian English: ‘Horn before overtaking’ (An inscription on the back of a lorry). ‘Horning is not allowed in the High Court Area.’

Horn in this sense means to sound the horn of a vehicle. Compare with SBE: Honk before overtaking. Hoot your horn before you overtake, etc. Honking/hooting of vehicle horns is not allowed in the High Court Area.

Romance (91% entrenched)

In ENE, *romance* (v) has extra layers of meaning different from the SBE sense. Educated Nigerians use it to denote the following: (i) cuddle, caress, neck, smooch or have foreplay before sex or without sex, (ii) to have a sort of questionable sexual or social relationship with someone or a group; for example, ‘Darling, if you don’t *romance* me, I will *romance* you’ (*Under Fire*, a Nigerian film / ‘Home Video’). “Romancing Nollywood at the expense of other art forms...” (Ajeluorou, 2013:25, 27).

Reference (70%: w. spread)

Reference in ENE is additionally converted to a verb *to cite, citing, etc*: ‘In this community alone, eight couples (inclusive of the cases *referenced* above...’ (David-West, 2012:12).

SBE: ‘...including/inclusive of the cases *cited* or *mentioned* above...’ This kind of usage has justification in similar examples in the language, e.g. ‘reverence’ - *reverenced*, ‘inconvenience’ – *inconvenienced*.

On/off, to off/to on... (80%: entrenched).

These prepositions are widely used as verbs in Nigerian English, as in these examples: ‘Please *off* the light before you go to bird.’ ‘*On* that light please.’ ‘I didn’t remember to *off* the office light.’ (*Light* here is electric power and the switch).

Some examples can be found in native usage as well. Yule (2003:67-8) says that conversion is “particularly productive in modern English, with new uses occurring frequently. The conversion can involve verbs becoming nouns,... other forms, such as *up* and *down*, can also become verbs, as in *They up the prices* or *We down a few brews*”.

Zone/zoning (100% entrenched)

In SBE, *zone* is an area of land or farm and *to zone* is to share an area of land or mark it out clearly. But in ENE, it is extended to mean *to rotate power, particularly political power, office and leadership, to a specific village, ward, tribe, or geo-political zone*. *Zoning* is the lexicalization of this political policy “In conformity with power sharing and zoning principle, the President and Vice-presidential candidates have to be alternately picked from either north or south... the Zoning Principle of equity in representation and power sharing is now invariably adopted...”(Igbafe, 2006, p. 8).

Further/to further (80% entrenched)

“I have no means to further my education.” “She has gone to London to further her education.”

SBE: “I have no money to continue with my education.” “She has gone to London in furtherance of/to continue with/to advance her education.

Fig. 2. Summary Table for the Percentages of Verbal Cases Examined

Cases Entrenched	Widespread	Common	Variant	Emerging	Total
Thirteen (13): 44%	Nine (09): 30%	Four (04):14%	Three (03):10%	One (01): 2%	Thirty (30): 100%

4. Conclusion

This paper has so far examined the linguistic habit of 'verbal intraference.' A combination of some linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors constrain educated Nigerians to produce cases of verbal intraference. The linguistic causes are the (re)deployment of inflectional and derivational affixes and the overgeneralization of conversion.

On the sociolinguistic plane, the pressure of communication, the strategies of learning and teaching, the distance between educated Nigerians and native users of English, English being a second language in Nigeria, etc form the extenuating background in which Nigerian users produce verbal intraference variations. Ignorance of rule restriction and exceptions as well as the urge to fabricate something new are some of the mind and cognitive factors that make educated Nigerians produce verbal intraference cases.

In all, the habit of overstretching verb affixes and conversion to form verbs is an interesting trend in NE. Unlike verbal concord and some other vulgar errors, cases of verbal intraference may not 'hurt' the grammatical sensibilities of highly competent speakers and may not impede mutual intelligibility, although some of them could sound ridiculous. Educated Nigerians do condemn the ones that they do not use as errors. For instance, most educated Nigerians who use varieties III and IV of Banjo's classification will condemn the expression: *That girl is uselesing herself*, but may accept the sentence: *He disvirgined the girl*. But both *uselesing* and *disvirgined* are got from conversion and the overgeneralization of the verb prefix *dis-*. However, *uselesing* is condemned because it has not yet entered and settled in ENE.

Since education and the educated elite are often the standard bearers in this regard, it is proposed that cases that are entrenched in ENE be accepted as ESL variants, not errors; for example

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