

Challenges Facing Teachers' Mastery and Lesson Delivery of English Supra-segmental Features in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the challenges facing English language teachers' mastery and lesson delivery of English supra-segmental features at public senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria. Participants were 10 teachers of English from 10 senior secondary schools in Ibadan. Instruments used was In-Depth Interviews Guide ($r=0.81$). Two research questions were answered. Qualitative data were content-analysed. Findings showed that mother tongue interference, lack of seriousness on the part of the students, dearth of teaching resources and inadequate time allotted to oral English constituted impediments to teachers' mastery and lesson delivery of English supra-segmental features. It is recommended that teachers should be exposed to no-enculturation sources of English supra-segmental features for better mastery, while necessary teaching resources should be made available to teachers for effective lesson delivery of English supra-segmental features at public senior secondary schools.

Keywords: English phonology, supra-segmental features, Challenges resource utilisation, quality of instruction.

Introduction

English Phonology studies human speech sounds with due regard to their patterning and function in English. It studies how sounds in English are structured and how they function as against other languages. It also examines how individual sound segments in English are combined in connected speech for functional communication (Akindele, 2015).

The sounds system of English could be segmental or supra-segmental (Ladefoged, 2016). The segmental aspect deals with distinct phonemes which are subdivided into vowels and consonants including their functional characteristics in isolation or in company of other sounds (Richards, 2010; Ladefoged, 2006; Aina, 2018). Supra-segmental features are paralinguistic devices such as stress, pitch, rhythm, and intonation each of which carries a distinct meaning about the mood and attitude of the speaker. It extends beyond one sound segment. Therefore, meaningful speech relies extensively on the supra-segmental features (Ladefoged, 2006; Crystal, 2009).

Understanding supra-segmental elements is, therefore, one of the significant tasks that have to be achieved by teachers and students studying the English language. Supra-segmental elements determine the meaning and the intention of the speaker (Babalola, 2016). They are stress and intonation. Osisanwo (2018) states that stress is a supra-segmental feature of utterance that operates beyond the segments. Akinjobi (2004) states that the conception of a syllable phonetically represents an angle to the description of a syllable, using phonetic characteristics. The approach represented is the

sonority or prominence approach. This approach holds that certain sounds are perceived as being more "prominent" or 'sonorous' than others. Then, the number of peak of prominence in a word determines the number of syllables (Sunday, 2004). It is essential to note that every syllable is articulated with a chest pulse.

Crystal (2008) claimed that the syllable structure can be defined in terms of strings of consonants and vowels. Different views on the internal structure of the English syllable exist. There seems to be no unifying point among these views. Syllable structure is discussed in terms of the segments that are in its constituents. As an example, 'trump' would be seen as being made up of /t/, /r/, /ʌ/, /m/ and /p/. Emphasis is not laid on any segment being the peak. To achieve the peculiar rhythmic pattern of the English language, not all the syllables are produced with the same level of prominence. Some are given much prominence in quantity and quality than the others. Then, stress refers to the prominence given a syllable above its neighbour. In the words of Adeniyi (2017), stress is "a supra-segmental feature, which, together with pitch, duration, and sonority, makes up the prominence of sounds, syllables, words and sentences" (p. 97). In terms of articulation, a stressed syllable is marked by increased muscular activity. But in terms of acoustic characteristics, increase in intensity (loudness) characterises it.

Contributions to the literature on stress such as Crystal (2009), Akinjobi (2011) and Adeniyi (2017) have deliberated on the importance of stress in achieving mutual intelligibility among world speakers of the English language. Ladefoged (2016) conflated both the articulatory and acoustic features of stress in his explanation. "This force is obtained mainly as

pressure from the chest muscles affecting the airstream involved in speech production. The degree of force is perceived by hearers as degree of loudness which carries from syllable to syllable. Hence, stress is usually defined as relative loudness of volume from the listener point of view and relative energy from the speaker's (p. 36).

Akinjobi (2012) identified four cross-linguistic features of stress. The first of them is its being culminative. This means that every prosodic word has just one stressed syllable. Typical examples of prosodic words would be content words and grammatical words that occur in isolation. Every content word has, at least, a stressed syllable, and every function word in isolation, even if monosyllabic, is stressed. This feature suggests rightly that there can be no word without a stressed syllable neither can we have one in which all words are stressed.

Another characteristic of stress is that it is demarcate. In some languages, stress signals word boundaries since there is the tendency for it to be at the edges of words; it could be assigned to syllables that occur word-initially or word-initially. Another prominent position for them is the penultimate syllable. Even in some languages (Such as French), stress is predictable such that a speaker knows the position of the syllable to bear the stress (Akinjobi, 2012). The English language does not accommodate such a stationary or stable stress placement pattern. However, one must admit that there is a tendency for the initial syllable to be stressed in bisyllabic or polysyllabic words.

The rhythmic feature of stress means the tendency towards rhythmic patterning of strong and weak syllables, occurring at regular intervals. The occurrence of accented and unaccented syllables at regular intervals creates the inherent rhythm of the English language. There is also the quantity-sensitivity feature. Most stress falls on only syllables with some inherent prominence. This prominence may result from the quality of the vowel nucleus in the syllable. A closed syllable has the tendency to bear the stress. So also is one that ends with either a long vowel or a diphthong. This feature necessitates the suspension of the demarcative feature of stress (Akinjobi and Aina, 2014).

Adeyemi (2014) goes further to describe stress as hierarchical. If a word is polysyllabic, one out of all the syllables is made more prominent than the others. Apart from that which is assigned the primary stress, another stressed syllable comes next in hierarchy to it. This one bears the secondary stress

and all other syllables are unstressed. Additionally, stressed contrasts are enhanced segmentally. Such phonological processes as vowel lengthening, vowel reduction or vowel germination may strengthen or weaken a syllable. In the same vein, it is necessary to note that even in connected speeches, the strong forms of grammatical words may be used when one is expressing emphasis or contrast. As examples, the capitalised grammatical words below are stressed to express emphasis:

- i. I live IN Lagos (not outside)
- ii. I gave HER the books (not him)
- iii. Dr. Olawole built a ROOM (not a house).

In English, stress clash is avoided by reassigning stress when words are in a group. Stress does not assimilate to adjacent syllables because such assimilation has the tendency to lead to clashes. Instead, there occurs a stress shift from one syllable to another to avoid any possible clash (Crystal, 2009). We often differentiate between free stress languages and fixed stress languages. In the words of Adeniyi (2017), "languages which restrict the placement of stress to one particular syllable within each word are said to have fixed or non-phonemic stress" (pg 244). Stress placement and pattern in such languages is relatively predictable. Languages like Russian, French, Hungarian, Turkish, and Polish are in this category, free stress languages, on the other hand, have prominence associated with stress on different syllables of different words. English is a language with the free stress pattern, though it must be admitted that stress patterns are predictable to an extent in the language. But this predictability is not significant enough for extensive generalisation.

Stress happens when a syllable is pronounced with the loudest voice in such a way that it sounded louder than others. The principles guiding stress placement stipulate, among others, that one-syllable words are stressed in isolation and in a list of items; the -lity ending words and -tion ending words carry primary stress in ante-penultimate and penultimate syllables, respectively, compound words carry primary stress on information words, while stress is mobile on poly-syllabic words. In connected speech, primary stress falls on lexical words, grammatical words do not take primary stress (Adeniyi, 2017).

Osisanwo (2012) indicates that English speech has a rhythm which is the product of regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables occurring at more or less equal intervals of time called feet. This means that stressed syllables tend to occur at regular and irregularly equal intervals irrespective of the number of unstressed syllables between them. Rhythm is the prosodic feature of the foot. It is

brought about by the regular occurrence of stressed and unstressed syllables in connected speech (Akinjobi, 2012; Akindele, 2015). Foot exists as a supra-segmental unit above the syllable. A foot is often structurally defined as starting with a stressed syllable (or a silent beat) and continuing up to, but not including the next stressed syllable (Babalola, 2016). In the sentence: *This boy needs a big bag*, there are four feet. The first has a silent beat because it is without stress. 'Boy' /bɔɪ/, 'needs a' /nɪdz, 'big/big/and/bɒ g/, constitute the second, third and fourth foot respectively.

In the words of Roach (2010), "stress-timed rhythm implies that stressed syllables will tend to occur at relative regular intervals whether they are separated by unstressed syllable, or not." (p. 134) In syllable-timed languages, "all syllables, whether stressed or unstressed, tend to occur at regular time-intervals and the time between stressed syllables will be shorter or longer in proportion to the number of unstressed syllables" (Roach 2010).

The English language is considered a language with stressed-timed rhythm. In it, stressed syllables occur at regular intervals (Akindele, 2015). The occurrence of stressed syllables at regular intervals gives the English language its isochronous rhythm that is based on stress. Even Akinjobi (2012), argues that the principle of isochrony engenders a misinterpretation of rhythm because the intervals between accented syllables are "more equivalent than equal" Learners of English can practice to divide utterances into feet while listening.

Intonation is the rising and falling of voice in connected speeches. (Akindele, 2015). Intonation is very important to the production of meaningful speech, and the changing tune affects the range of meaning. English intonation can change grammatical function in phrases or sentences. In addition, the intonation pattern: a rise-fall and a fall-rise is used with different intention and feeling. Learners must notice intonation pattern when listening. On the other hand, one can refer to it as the number of tonal oscillations per second (Adeniyi, 2016). Intonation and tone are the different realisations of pitch in languages of the world. They both mean variation in the pitch of a speaker's voice. When differing levels of pitch are used to mark distinctions among lexical items, it is referred to as tone. When the variation is on a tone group, it is intonation. Intonation is not known to be lexically significant (Babalola, 2016).

According to Gordon (2016), English

language is intonation compliant (O'Connor 2004) and as a prosodic feature, it operates on the suprasegmental unit called tone unit or tone group. According to Akinjobi and Aina (2014). It may not be entirely appropriate to link a tone group with known grammatical categories since it can be a word, a phrase, a clause or a sentence. There are four components in the structure of a tone group. They include the pre-head, the head, the tonic syllable and the tail. A pre-head is made up of all the weak syllables that occur before the first stressed syllable in a tone group. This is illustrated in:

- (i) Some of the boys are healthy.

//səm əv ðə bæz : 'helθi//

If one takes this sentence as a tone group, the pre-head starts from 'some' /səm and end before the first stressed syllable which is 'boys' /bɔɪz/. Next to the pre-head is the head. In the example given above, the first stressed syllable is 'boys' /bɔɪz/. The head starts from *it* and ends at 'are' /a:/, just before the next stressed syllable. The last stressed syllable in a tone group is called the tonic syllable or the nucleus. While all the other elements are optional, the nucleus is a compulsory one. It is the syllable that takes what is referred to as the nuclear stress or intonation tune (Aina, 2018). This, in turn, indicates the pitch direction, whether a rise or a fall. Any unstressed syllables that come after the nucleus are jointly referred to as the tail of the tone group. Having discussed all the components of a tone group, the example at the outset of the discussion of this study is buttressed further in:

The double slant lines show the tone group boundary while the slant lines indicate the foot junctures, (v) stands for the anacrusis or silent beat. It is there because the first syllable is not salient. It is also essential to differentiate between a simple tone group and a compound tonegroup. A simple tone group fits the description of a tone group that has been given so far. But a compound tone group has the head and the nucleus appearing contiguously. Additionally, it is essential to illustrate the compulsory and optional statuses of the elements (Adeniyi, 2017). The examples below adequately do this:

- a) Tone Group without a pre-head: Sola kissed Feyi /Sola kɪstFeyi/.
 b) Tone Group without a Head: He is bright/hi: æbraɪt/.
 c) Tone Group without a Tail: Tolani spoke English/Tolanɪspəʊk'ə glɪʃ/

As given at the onset, intonation is the

variation in the pitch of voice by speakers. The falling tune is mostly used to show that there is no other information expected in an utterance.

It is found in simple statements, simple commands, questions and exclamations, for example:

- (i) He is a nice man (simple statement)
- (ii) Get out (simple command)
- (iii) What is my name? (wh-questions)
- (iv) Fantastic! (Exclamation).

The rising tune is used for polar questions. changing statements to questions, polite statements.

as seen in the example. ') below:

"Will you come along?" (Polar question)

Please sit down (polite request)

A: You are a banker. (statement)

B: You are a banker? (question)

These two main tunes are combined in some utterances. One of the possibilities is the rise-fall tune. It is use

Whenever the cloud gathers, it rains (to separate clauses)

He addressed the children, the women and the men (listing items).d to separate clauses and list items, for example:

The fall-rise tune is mostly used in tag questions. The part of the statement takes the falling tune while the tag takes the rising tune e.g.

(i) He smokes marijuana, doesn't he'?

() and () stand for the rising tune and the falling tune respectively.

According to Crystal (2009), Akinjobi (2012) and Aina (2018) intonation performs a number of functions. The attitudinal function of intonation refers to how it is used to display emotions. As an example, the articulation of "So be it" with a falling tune shows finality or definiteness. Another function of intonation is its accentual function. It is also called the contrastive function of intonation. Intonation is employed to mark out the most important information in a tone group.

Intonation can also perform grammatical functions. In such instances, intonation is used to indicate the syntactic structure of a sentence or an utterance. As an example, intonation can show phrasal, clausal and sentential boundaries, sentence type and grammatical subordination. For example:

Whenever I come, he sneaks out (Rising tune indicates clausal boundary).

Is she sleeping? (Rising tune indicates that the question is a polar one). When intonation is used to mark new information, it performs the discourse function.

On pitch, when people speak, the pitch of their voice is changed all the time Aina (2018) explain that the pitch depends on how fast the vocal cords vibrate. The faster they vibrate, the higher the pitch. Murphy (2014) indicated that the pressure of the air coming out of the lungs and the tension of the vocal cords affect the pitch of the voice. Pitch is varied; people sometimes speak with their normal pitch, a low pitch, a high pitch, a rising pitch, or a falling pitch. The pitch is altered appropriately from the lowest note to the highest not depending on each kind of situation.

Suprasegmental features must be well taught to learners if they want to produce meaningful speech that will be intelligible to other users of the English language. The difficulties and challenges learners are facing in this aspect of oral English might not be farfetched. According to Adeyemi (2014), the importance of spoken English in most English speaking countries as a medium of education and as a means of national and international communication demands a high general level of proficiency, in performance and understanding than exists at present. This is to say, not much attention has been given to the study of oral English particularly in the aspects of syllables, stress and intonation. This has, therefore, discouraged learners of English in learning and understanding oral English.

However, as important as the supraegmental features are to effective oral communication in English, many teachers in Oyo State are not well grounded in it. An informal observation of some Oral English lessons in secondary schools in Ibadan revealed that most teachers of English lack adequate knowledge of English suprasegmental features as evident in their poor articulation of stress, emphatic/contrastive stress and intonation (Akinjobi and Aina, 2014). This deficiency on the part of the teachers, explains why the teaching of English supra-segmentals is not given adequate attention in oral English instruction. In the words of Babalola (2016), there is, generally speaking, more emphasis placed on segmental features than the prosodic features of English speech. The neglect in teaching suprasegmentals does not seem to augur well for effective teaching of speaking skill as scholars (Adeniyi, 2017; Aina, 2018) have in fact highlighted the need to concentrate more on rhythm and intonation than any other aspect of pronunciation because of their importance in communicating meaning. The lack of attention seems more to be due to the deficiency of teachers in the knowledge of the prosody of the language. As rightly observed by Ladefogde (2016), teachers who are expected to model correct

articulation of the suprasegmental features are themselves deficient in it (p. 8).

Statement of the problem

English suprasegmental features are very essential to speech intelligibility hence; they are expected to be taught in oral English by teachers who are well-trained to deliver high quality of instruction in them. However, reports have shown that many public senior secondary school teachers of English in Oyo State exhibit poor quality of instruction in English suprasegmental features, which partly accounts for their inability to model these features appropriately to students. Previous studies focused largely on effects of modes of reflective teaching on quality of instruction without looking at challenges facing teachers in the mastery and lesson delivery of English suprasegmental features. This study, therefore, investigated challenges facing teachers in the mastery and lesson delivery of English suprasegmental features at public senior secondary schools Ibadan, Nigeria.

Research questions

Two research questions were answered.

1. What the challenges facing teachers' mastery of English Supra-segmental features?

2. What the challenges facing teachers' lesson delivery of English Supra-segmental features?

Significance of the study

This study has provided first hand piece of information on the **challenges facing teachers' mastery of English Supra-segmental features**. It has also revealed the **challenges facing teachers' lesson delivery of English Supra-segmental features**. It is hoped that this research work will add to the studies on the appraisal of pedagogical practices in Oral English classrooms.

Methodology

The qualitative research design was adopted to assess the **challenges facing teachers' mastery and lesson delivery of English Supra-segmental features**. This involved conducting in-depth interview with teachers of oral English on the challenges/difficulties of mastery and lesson delivery of English supra-segmental features. The participants were 10 English Language teachers from 10 randomly selected public senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria. The instrument used was Oral Interview Guide for Teachers ($r=0.81$). The trained research assistants helped to conduct oral interviews with the teachers to elicit qualitative data on the challenges facing mastery and lesson delivery

of English supra-segmental features. Data collection lasted eight weeks. The data collected were analysed using content-analysis.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the challenges facing teachers' mastery of English Supra-segmental features?

The oral interview conducted with teachers identified the challenges they face in mastering English supra-segmental features the retroactive inhibition from the first language. A contrastive analysis of the Yoruba language, which is the first language of teachers of English shows that there is a marked difference in the supra-segmental features of the two languages. In the Yoruba language, tone mark is the only marker of supra-segmental features, while in English, stress, rhythms and intonation constitute the supra-segmental features. As such, while the Yoruba language is syllable-timed and tonal, the English language is stress-timed and intonational. In consequence of the foregoing, many teachers of English who have Yoruba as their L1 often experience difficulties in mastering and articulating the English supra-segmental features correctly.

According to the teachers, *'the problem is that, English as a second language those features we have in supra-segmental such as stress, intonation, emphatic stress, we don't have them in our mother tongue which is Yoruba which the students speak widely in the environments. Take for instance, if we are talking of this intonation, you know English language is a tonal language once you have a variety of intonation, you will have a change of meaning unlike Yoruba which is widely spoken around here. With change in tones we don't normally have a change of meaning. Take for instance, once they say 'iru' they will say locust bean, 'iru' tail, 'iru' a black sucking insect unlike English when you have a variety of intonation it would bring about the meaning itself.'*

One of the teachers who cited his area of challenge in mastery of English supra-segmental features as syllables and stress reports that: *'For instance, polysyllabic words i.e words of more than two syllables as in 'education'. the stress will fall on a particular syllable which is called stressed syllable like when we say e - du - CA- tion the pitch of voice will rise on a stressed syllable. The case is different with monosyllabic words, where it takes primary stress because it is a word of one stress. Another area of problem is the prefix and suffix. All these make the mastery very difficult'*.

On stress, another teacher reports that: *I particularly have challenges in assigning stress to*

function and form words. We don't normally stress what is called grammatical/form words. When we are talking of these function words we are talking of verbs, adverbs, adjective but the grammatical words such as preposition are not normally stressed, auxiliary verbs are not normally stressed except auxiliary verbs with negator. For instance, if we say 'I can't come' we will stress it like we don't normally stress pronoun except for the demonstrative pronouns, when we are talking of demonstrative pronoun they are "this, these, those and that"

A teacher pinpointed the emphatic/contrastive stress as the area of challenges in mastering the English supra-segmental features as follows: *That emphatic stress is quite different from word stress or syllable stress. Because it is a special stress given to a particular word in a sentence by the speaker either to single it out, to clarify that very word or to give additional meaning to that very word in a sentence. In a situation like that, we can stress any word both grammatical words and function words take for instance 'I may say I have a bag' when I say I have A bag if I want to stress that article 'a' I will say I have A bag meaning just one not more than one or if I say the same sentence once you have a change in variation of such emphatic stress then you have a change of meaning. For instance, if I said I have a bag, my stress is on that bag. It means what I have is nothing else but a bag I'm not talking about the book; I'm not talking about the chair I'm talking about the bag. All these are not present in Yoruba which makes their mastery very difficult*

On intonation, the teachers reported that the greatest challenge is intonation. According to them, intonation has both accentual and grammatical functions. The use of intonation for grammatical function is noted in polar questions versus wh-questions, command, declarative sentence, and exclamation. *For example, polar question, the question that requires 'yes' or 'no' answer. So across the polar question the pitch of our voice will automatically rise. For instance, I may say "Is this your pen?" / I can't say "Is this your pen?" \when I say is this your pen? \ that is Yoruba English but you say 'is this your pen?' / the pitch of your voice will grow up. Likewise, when we have incomplete sentences the pitch of your voice will rise up like when I say I / the pitch of your voice rises. We talk of this polar we talk of incomplete sentence, we talk of polite request, when we are talking of polite request the pitch of your voice will rise like "May I come in?" / The pitch of your voice will rise up. But other side*

when we are talking of this falling tune we have a declarative sentence - a sentence that expresses nothing but the truth. This is my bag the pitch of your voice will fall, you can't say 'this is my bag' / you say 'this is my bag' \. The same thing we have command where we ate talking of command 'sit down' \you can't say sit down /, the pitch of your voice will go down. The same thing applicable to what is called WH question. When we have a WH question that is a question that requires answer rather than Yes or No like when you say 'What is your name?' \ you can't say 'what is your name?' / the pitch of your voice will go down. The same thing with exclamatory, a sentence that ends with exclamation 'what a mess!' \you can't say what a mess/ the pitch of your voice will go down/ A teacher said that, "the major source of difficulty here is that in Yoruba command or imperative sentences are said in rising tone contrary to what obtains in English commands. Also in Yoruba, the articulation of polar and wh-questions are said in a rising tune, but in English, only polar question is said in rising tone, wh-question is said in a falling tune. The same is true with exclamation which in Yoruba is said in a rising tune but said in a falling tune in English."

Research Question 2: What are the challenges facing teachers' lesson delivery of English Supra-segmental features?

4.2.2. Challenges Facing Lesson Delivery of English Supra-segmental features

The major challenge highlighted by the teachers in teaching this aspect of phonology of English was students' unseriousness as many of them did not see any reason for trying to speak like the English people. Other challenges were' mother tongue interference, non-availability of resources for teaching the English supra-segmental features. As reported unanimously by the teachers interviewed, "students often do not take the teaching and learning of the English supra-segmental features seriously as many of them see it as an attempt to force them to speak English like native speakers. As a result, their attitude to it is poor" On the challenges of mother tongue interference, some teachers reported that: "Some of them could not articulate the features correctly. Mother tongue interference is another challenge too; this has to do with the various environment the students find themselves."

Another teacher said that: "Some of the students always make fun of it when you teach them. They laugh especially when you are pronouncing the sounds. I found out them whenever you are pronouncing they will just be laughing. They saw it as a sort of jokes"

On availability and adequacy of instructional materials, the teachers reported that in most cases, there were no teaching materials such as language laboratory, spectrograph, oscillogram, resource persons, video and tape recorders for teaching this aspect of English phonology. For example, one teacher said that: *"here we don't have language laboratory, all we rely on is our experience as teachers. Another teacher reported: "I have not been using tape/video recorder, may I say we don't have access to them. We don't have them in school." However, those we improvise are fairly adequate. These include Vowel and consonant charts, word and sentence cards.. I extract those things from them and I use cardboard to write some of the things out. I project it in the class for them. Tape recorder is not encouraged because of their population. Using tape recorder is not applicable in most public schools due to their population."* On adequacy of improvised materials, another teacher said: *"The materials improvised are not so adequate because the improvised materials cannot actually serve the purpose of the main materials but we just use them so that the children will get familiar with some of the basic things that they need to learn."*

"Another teacher complains: *"children are not exposed to anything that deals with having a language laboratory, where all these facilities for sound are available, one can test their own voice, where they can see some materials that are basically meant for speech production, so all these in schools, they are not provided and it's a big challenge."* There was also the challenge of inadequate time allotted to its teaching. According to a teacher, *"The major challenge is that the time allotted to the teaching of English supra-segmental features is grossly inadequate"*

One teacher reported her frustration in teaching the English supra-segmental features as follows: *"the mastery of suprasegmental is a problem for most of the students and you have to stress yourself unnecessarily before they can understand that aspect. And apart from that, many of the students don't take English Language seriously, they don't speak in English, as a result of that, they are not familiar with most of these features and so teaching it becomes so laborious that we have spent extra time and get a lot of things before they can follow the lesson"*

Discussion of Results

Challenges facing teachers' mastery of the English supra-segmental features

The oral interview conducted with teachers identified the challenges they face in mastering English supra-segmental features as including inhibition or interference from the first language. This is because there is a marked difference in the supra-segmental features of the two languages. In the Yoruba language, tone mark is the only marker of supra-segmental features, while in English, stress, rhythms and intonation constitute the supra-segmental features. As such, while the Yoruba language is syllable-timed and tonal, the English language is stress-timed and intonational. In consequence of the foregoing, many teachers of English who have Yoruba as their L1 often experience difficulties in mastering and articulating the English supra-segmental features correctly. According to the teachers, *"the problem is that, English as a second language those features we have in supra-segmental such as stress, intonation, emphatic stress, we don't have them in our mother tongue which is Yoruba which the students speak widely in the environments. This finding confirms the submission of Adeyemi (2014), who identified learners' mother tongue interference the major problem of mastering the sounds of English. The same is true of Akindele (2015), who said there were sounds absent in some languages in Nigeria, but present in Received Pronunciation of English. A good example is the /ɔ/ vowel sound. This sound is absent in most Nigerian languages like in the Igbo sound system.*

Challenges facing teachers' lesson delivery of the English supra-segmental features

The major challenge highlighted by the teachers in teaching this aspect of phonology of English was students' unseriousness as many of them did not see any reason for trying to speak like the English people. Other challenges were' mother tongue interference, non-availability of resources for teaching the English supra-segmental features. As reported unanimously by the teachers interviewed, *"students often do not take the teaching and learning of the English supra-segmental features seriously as many of them see it as an attempt to force them to speak English like native speakers. As a result, their attitude to it is poor. Another teacher said that: "Some of the students always make fun of it when you teach them. They laugh especially when you are pronouncing the sounds. I found out them whenever you are pronouncing they will just be laughing. They saw it as a sort of jokes"*

On availability and adequacy of instructional materials, the teachers reported that in most cases, there were no teaching materials such as language laboratory, spectrograph, oscillogram, resource persons, video and tape recorders for teaching this

aspect of English phonology. On adequacy of improvised materials, another teacher said: "The materials improvised are not so adequate because the improvised materials cannot actually serve the purpose of the main materials but we just use them so that the children will get familiar with some of the basic things that they need to learn." There was also the challenge of inadequate time allotted to its teaching. According to a teacher, "The major challenge is that the time allotted to the teaching of English supra-segmental features is grossly inadequate." These results confirm the report of Murphy (2014) who identified dearth of language laboratories and other instructional aids as well as lack of seriousness on the part of the students as some problems of teaching English.

Conclusion

The research looked at the challenges facing English language teachers in the mastery and lesson delivery of English supra-segmental features at public senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria. Findings showed that the major challenge facing teachers' mastery of English supra-segmental features was mother tongue interference, and their irregular engagement with professional development which inhibited them from serving as good models to their students, while students' lack of seriousness, non-availability of instructional materials and inadequate time allotted on the time table were major challenges of lesson delivery of the English supra-segmental features.

Recommendations

1. English language teachers should engage in constant professional development programmes such as in-service training and refresher courses to improve their knowledge and lesson delivery of English supra-segmental features.
2. The English Studies Association of Nigeria (ESAN) and Linguistics Association of Nigeria (LAN) should organise regular conferences and seminars for teachers of English Language in order to improve their mastery and lesson delivery of English supra-segmental features.
3. Teachers of English language should endeavour to invite resource persons who are experts in English supra-segmental features to handle this important aspect of Oral English if they are deficient in it.

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