Contextualizing English Intonational Patterns of Selected Broadcaster`s Speech within the Borders of Received Pronunciation

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Abstract:- This study investigates the intonational patterns dominant in the speech of Nigerian Television Broadcasters. Given that there exists a Standard Nigerian English Variety (SNEV), this study seeks to investigate the features of the intonational patterns dominant in this variety within the enclaves of Received Pronunciation (RP) for possible features of localization of the English language in Nigeria. The SNEV is found amongst the elite class but this study shall focus on News Broadcasters in Nigeria. The objectives of this study are toexamine the intonational patterns dominant in the speech of Nigerian Television Broadcaster`s, investigate the features of intonational patterns in SNEV and compare the intonational patterns of SNEV and that of RP using acoustic cues. The entire broadcasting system was surveyed and a total of six (6) television stations were randomly selected. Twelve (12) broadcasters - six (6) males and six (6) females were randomly selected to form the experimental class for this study. The newscast and interview sessions of these broadcasters were recorded with the aid of a Panasonic tape recorder and transferred to Praat Object andSound Recorder at the frequency of 44100Hz being the normal human hearing frequency. The fundamental frequency was set at F0. The intonational patterns were extracted using Praat Picture and the data were analysed acoustically. This work adopts the sonority theory by Saussure. The findings of this study include: the alternate rise and fall of pitch on syllablesof words reflected in high pitch hertz as different from the RP; a medium of inconsistence in the pattern of the utterance of NIP where the speakers exhibited a sharp degree of voice fall and voice rising in alternating syllable of words; some unsteady pitch patterns between the NIP in comparison with the RPIP was also found and this is because Nigerian languages are tonal in structures as against the English language which is syllabic-timed; the speakers were unable to maintain the stress rules of English as this may not have been assimilated despite speech trainings.

Keywords:- Intonation, Broadcasters, Received Pronunciation, Standard Nigerian English,Frequency

I. INTRODUCTION

Many things have been said about language by different scholars all of which points to the major facts that language is a system of communication or a medium of self-expression. This is to say every human being has a spoken or sign language in which they conduct their day to day activities in and this, makes language a significant aspect of human existence. Language can be seen as a phenomenon employed by human being in order to express their feelings, desires and to interact with one another.

English language under study here is a language that came into Nigeria as a result of colonisation of the country by the British Empire. Today, English language has become an international language as it is spoken in several countries of the world. This is because it is used as a means of commerce in the international market, used as a language for governance and education in some multilingual nation. Given the multilingual nature of the country Nigeria, the English language breaches the problem of interethnic communication as it serves as a lingua franca. This is in line with the first attribute of language as identified by Daramola (2003) as a tool in creating unity in a community. English language however has various varieties as they are received and internalized by the countries that speak it. In countries where English language is spoken as a native language, there are also various varieties identified perhaps as regional or as a result of social status. This paper shall focus onthe Standard Variety, with emphasis on the RP.

The term Standard English describes that variety of English used for formal purposes like: education, governance and media publications. This variety of English in places where itis spoken is usually considered prestigious and associated with the educated upper class ofthe society. It is characterised by its established writing and spoken form in both formal and informal situations. Abubakar (2012) says that this variety is recognized and used by the educated Nigerians because it is directly associated with education.

This wide spread of English as pointed out by Gut (2012) has led to the formation of alarge number of different national and regional varieties of the language. Once there is a contact between two or more languages, as in the case of English and Nigerian indigenous languages, a sub-variety seems to emerge. Given the Nigerian situation, or the contact between the English Language and the Nigerian indigenous languages, a variety which is described as Nigerian English

or `West African Vernacular English` as used by (Jibril 1982, Ajani 2007) has emerged and scholars over the years have been interested in this variety of English. The variety of English however has been described as `bad English` by Vincent (1974) as well as a form of English heavy with errors and interference. Scholars like Salami (1968) disputes that there is nothing like Nigerian English. This, may not be far from Jibril`s (1982) position that the English spoken by `Yoruba`, `Hausa and `Igbo` persons could easily be identified according to these regions except where the speakers have gone through some form of speech training or the other.

Nigerian English (NE) on the other hand refers to that variety of English spoken within the shores of Nigeria. It is simply `English the way Nigerians speak and write it` (Okoro 2004). By this, one can deduce that English language which is a foreign language has been nativized, localized and bent to suit the linguistic and cultural needs of Nigerians. Alabi (2012) looks at Nigerian English as a variety of English which is socially acceptable across the cultures of the various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. This variety he adds carry the idiosyncratic Nigerian features at all the levels of language.

In an attempt to identify the varieties of English spoken in Nigeria, many scholars have grouped the varieties of English spoken in Nigeria into different headings.

Brosnaham (1958) identified four levels of Nigerian English, using the educational parameterto be:
Level i: this is the pidgin form, spoken by people without any formal education;
Level ii: spoken by people with primary education;
Level iii: the speakers here have received secondary education and
Level iv: this level is said to be close to the Standard English and it is spoken byUniversity graduates.

Another form of classification is that, done by Banjo (1971) as he groups Nigerian English into four varieties:
Variety 1: having a wholesale transfer of phonological, syntactic and lexical feature of Nigerian indigenous languages. This variety of English only possesses local intelligibility but lacking international intelligibility.
Variety 2: the structure of English here is closely related to RP. This variety is socially accepted but with very low international intelligibility.
Variety 3: is said to be close to British English in syntax, semantics, with little interference in the phonology and lexical features. This variety of English ishowever socially acceptable and to a large extent internationally intelligible.
Variety 4: is identical with Standard British English in its syntax, semantics, phonology, etc. This variety is internationally acceptable but socially unacceptable as it is spoken by only a few Nigerian that were brought up in England.

Another classification of varieties of NE is that of Awonusi (1987) where he identified the following groups: Acrolect, Mesolect and Basilect varieties on a lectal pyramid. Awonusi holds that the Nigerian English continuum is socially and geographically motivated.The pyramid has the `Acrolectal` variety at the apex and can be described as Standard Nigerian English, with its speakers in the minority in terms of population. The `Mesolectal` variety in the middle position and this, he describes as general Nigerian English with high social acceptability and low international intelligibility while the `Basilectal` variety is at the base, with the largest number of membership and can be seen as the low or uneducated variety.

II. THE ACROLECTAL/STANDARD NIGERIAN ENGLISH VARIETY

Given the evidences of the existence of a Nigerian English and the diverse varieties discussed above, this study seeks to investigate the intonational pattern of Nigerian Television Broadcasters and they can be said to be the frontiers or models of the Acrolectal orSNEV hence, this paper shall focus on the variety described as `Standard Nigerian English` (SNE) also known as the `Sophisticated` variety. SNE is that variety of English that covers a wide range of communicative purposes by those that speak it. It is used in the educational sector, as a language of the media, politics and other formal writing purposes.

Awonusi (1987) observes that this variety or lect is marked by low social acceptability. Phonetically, it cannot be said to be close to RP but syntactically, varies from Standard British English in written and other forms of formal usages.

➤ *Nigerianization of English language*
English language which is a native language of Britain, America and Australia has been nativized, Nigerianized and domesticated to suit Nigerian environment. By this, the language has been made to function and serve within Nigeria`s linguistic needs bearing in mind its cultural contexts. This, Abubakar (2012) posits that Nigerian English has become a variety with a localized linguistic identity evident in phonology, grammar, semantics as well as in stylistics and discourse domains. Adekunle (1979) observes that English has come to a new ethno linguistic environment and its contact with local languages and speech habits. It is used to project local customs and traditions. It has naturally resulted in its being assimilated into the local culture and being given a local flavour.

This phenomenon however has been described in different terms by different scholars.

Adegbija (2004) calls it `domestication` where he described the context of English in Nigeria to connote `home-grown`, `made native`, `adapted and tamed to suit the Nigerian environment`. Ekpe (2006) uses the term `glocalization` which is a blend of `global` and`local` to mean the use of global English in a local environment to project local customs and traditions.

From the discussions above, it is therefore evident that there exists a Nigerian English just like other varieties of Englishes spoken in other parts of the world as a second, target or an official language. This variant of the English

language will be marked with some level of differences in its phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics reflecting the environment where it is spoken. This study however focuses on the intonational aspect of the phonology ofthe NigE with the assumption that there exists some level of nativization of English language by Nigerian speakers. This is one factor that is inherent in the speech of most Nigerian speakers of English (NSE).

> *Statement of the problem*

English language being a second/official language in Nigerian has come in contact with several indigenous Nigerian languages giving rise to diverse varieties of English spoken in Nigeria. This study seeks to investigate the characteristics of the intonational patterns deployed or dominant in the speeches and utterances of the group that is expected to use the sophisticated form of this language - the broadcasters.

To the best of our knowledge, there is no existing research on this topic, thus our interest indelving into the subject matter.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work is centred on the Sonority theory by Saussure. The sonority of a sound is describedby Ladefoged (2011) as its loudness relative to that of other sounds with the same length, stress and pitch. Loudness, he adds depends mainly on its acoustic intensity (the amount of acoustic energy present). This theory which takes into consideration the syllable as a clusterof sonority hereby identifying the sonority peak is relevant to this study as the peak in syllables of words that make up a sentence produces pitch (the rise and fall in intonation).

This is in line with Giegerich`s (1992) position that `the pulses of pulmonic air stream inspeech, corresponds to peaks in sonority.

In a bid to identify peaks in syllables, the sonority theory presents a sonority hierarchy which has human language sounds in a sequence or degree which the most sonorous sounds form the centre of the syllable and the least sonorous are found in the marginal segments as thus:

Vowels	Sound	Sonority Index
-low vowels	a	10
-mid vowels	e, o	9
-high vowels	i, u	8
glides	r	7
liquids	l	6
nasals	m, n	5
fricative (+vd)	v, z, ð	4
fricatives (-vd)	f, s, θ	3
affricates	ʧ, ʤ	2
Voiced Stops	b, d, g	1
Voiceless Stops	p, t, k	0.5

Table 1. Goldsmith (1990:11) Sonority Hierarchy

> *Arithmetic System*

By using the word 'contact' (N), /kɒntækt/ the sonority peaks are as presented in figure 1.1below:
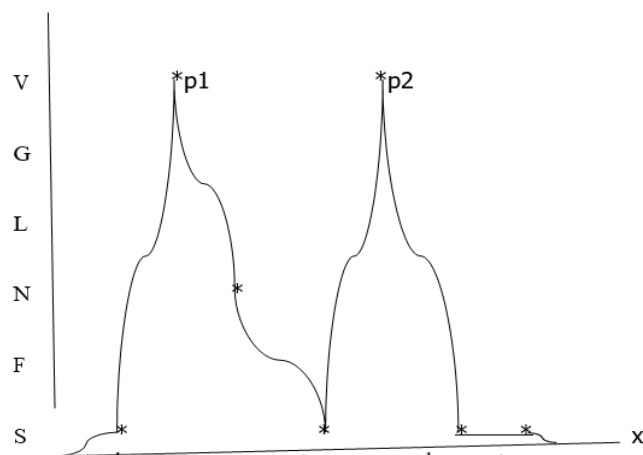
Fig 1: Sonority hierarchy of 'contact' (N), /kɒntækt/

The vertical line or 'y' axis represent the sonority index of the sounds that make up the syllable structure of the word while the horizontal line or the 'x' axis carries the phonemes in the word. Using Goldsmith's Sonority hierarchy, the analysis shows that the word /kɒntækt/ has 2 sonority peaks. Peak 1 is on /ɒ/ and peak 2 on /æ/. This attests to the fact that the nucleus of a syllable is always the vowels or the syllabic consonants. Acoustically, P1 and P2 will have 10Hz, being vowels. The stops /k/, /t/, /k/ and /t/ will be at 0.5Hz, 1Hz, 0.5Hz and 0.5Hz, respectively, while /n/ is 5Hz closer in sonority index P1 and P2.

> *Objectives of The Study*

Considering the background to the study, the objectives of the study are to:

1) Examine the intonational patterns dominant in the speech of Nigerian TelevisionBroadcasters
2) Investigate the features of intonational patterns in Standard Nigerian English Variety(SNEV)
3) Compare the intonational pattern of SNEV and that of RP using acoustic cues.

IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

> *Intonation*

According to Roach (2010:117) 'no definition' is completely satisfactory, but any attempt at a definition must recognise that the pitch of the voice plays the most important part. This, he opined while attempting to proffer a suitable definition for intonation that, intonation is variation of spoken pitch of an utterance, to determine certain non-linguistic cues like the attitudes, emotions, certainties, and other cues. This implies that where there is amovement of pitch noticeable on stressed syllable, one can say English intonation is being practiced. It can also be said to be the melody of speech. Wells (1982) describes this phenomenon to be the rise and fall of pitch in our voices and this; he adds plays a crucial role

in how we express meaning. Johnes (1960) defines intonation as the variation which takes place in the pitch of the voice in connected speech. In this case, pitch variation is not on lexical units but on sentence or a stretch of utterance. Also, it can be deducted that pitch placement in languages is considered intonational and are analysed with regards to the whole sentence and not words. This however is in line with Eka`s (1996) view that when variations relate to items higher than the word, they are normally said to signal intonation, and these patterns he adds usually occur at the end of specific utterances. Languages where pitch variations are found as described above are said to be intonational. Eka (1996) describes intonation `not as a single system, but as a combination of various prosodic features like tone, pitch, syllable prominence, rhythm, loudness and tempo as integral parts`.

According to Roach (2010), there are various kinds of tones or intonations which are
falling ↘, rising ↗, fall-rise √ and **rise-fall ∧**

All intonation are functional in that they help interlocutors to derive meaning that areextra to the lexical and sentential meaning. In the study of intonation as employed by Nigerian Television Broadcasters, some variations in their use/application in some cases differed from the native speaker`s rendition. This mightbe in line with Eka`s (1996) identification of the two main purposes of intonation to be: `to distinguish meanings and to show various forms of attitude or emotion`. The second purpose identified here, he describes as `being largely idiosyncratic, conventional to a group and generally variable from one individual to the other`.

In a study carried out by Melefa (2018) on stress and rhythmic patterns on Nigerian newscasters; where thirty (30) newscasters were sampled, the study revealed that the organisation of feet by 43:3% of the population size aligned largely with the RP. This population was able to `consistently

alternate weak and strong syllables at roughly regular intervals of time`. Here, strong vowels were weakened in unstressed syllables as it is the case with RP. In Melefa`s (2018) study, the remaining 56.7% of the newscasters under study failed to attain patterns that characterise RP.

V. METHODOLOGY

Cluster sampling which involves first selecting larger groups called clusters and then selecting the sampling units from the clusters (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996) was used for this study. A simple random sampling was used where the entire broadcasting system was surveyed and a total of six (6) television stations were randomly selected. Twelve (12) broadcasters (2 selected from each television station under study) - six (6) males and six (6) females were randomly selected to form the experimental class for this study. The newscast and interview sessions of these broadcasters were recorded with the aid of a Panasonic tape recorder and transferred to Praat object and Sound Recorder at the frequency of 44100Hz being the normal human hearing frequency for analysis. The fundamental frequency was set at zero F_0.

➢ *Method of data analysis*

The intonational patterns were extracted using Praat Object and Praat Picture and the data were analysed acoustically. To carry out the analysis, RP extract of speech to text of same sentence rendered by the Broadcasters was used as a control, making a contrast betweenthe intonational patterns as rendered by these groups.

➢ *Intonational Patterns Of Sentences By Nigerian Television Broadcasters (Ntb) And Received Pronunciation (Rp)*

A. *Data presentation on intonational patterns dominant in the speech of NTB*

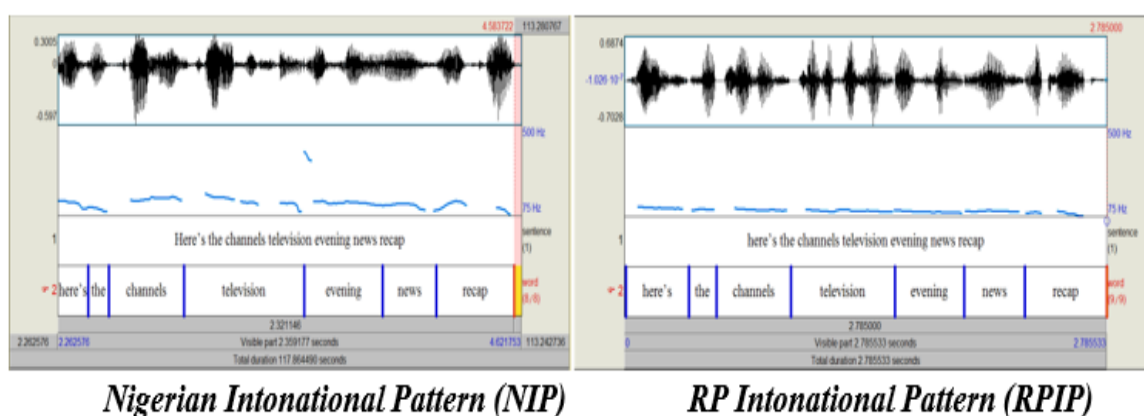- *Spectrograph A*

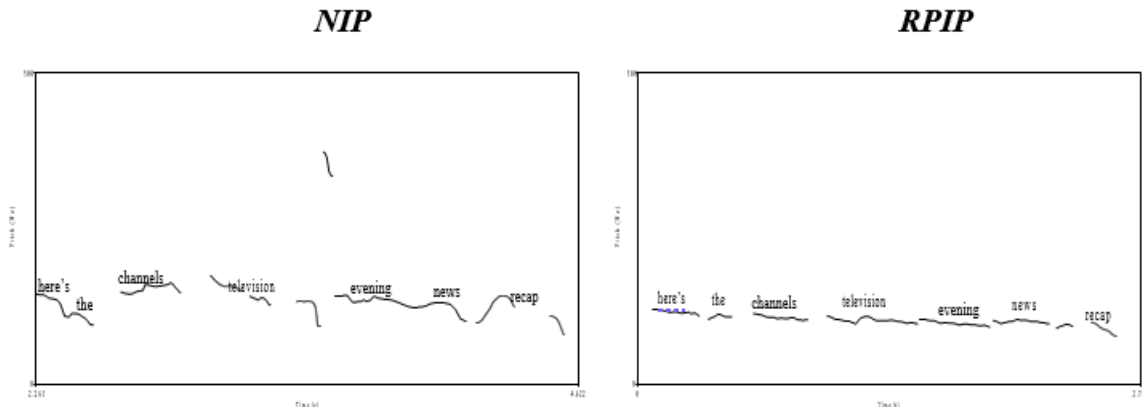Fig 2 NIP and RPIP of 'here's the channels television evening news recap'

NIP

RPIP

Fig 3:- Pitch extracts of NIP and RPIP

- *Spectrograph B*

NIP

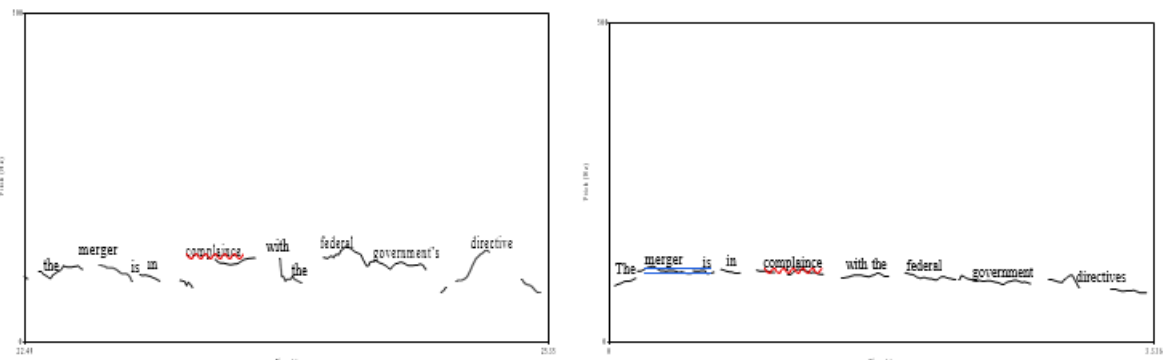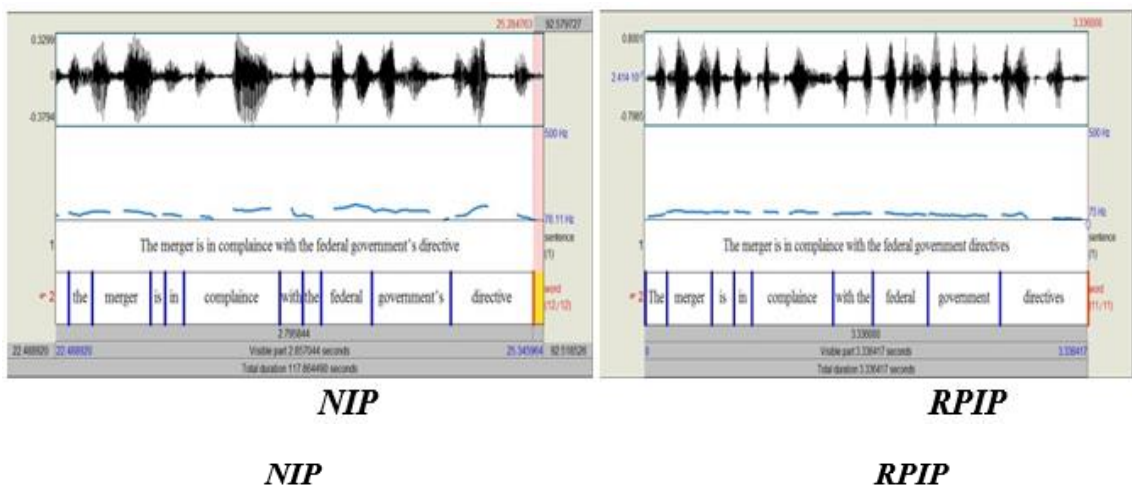**RPIP**

NIP

RPIP

Fig 4 'the merger is in compliance with the federal government's directive'

B. Data analysis of intonational patterns dominant in the speech of NTB

When variation in pitch is found within a stretch of utterance, it is intonation. English intonational patterns follow the stress rule of English language. The rule has it that within a stretch of utterance, words in closed class categories like determiners, pronouns, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs among others are not eligible to take stress. Words in the open class category; noun, adverb, verb, and adjective are eligible to take stress. This is to say that, in sentences, prominence is given to words in the open class category.

In spectrograph `A` shown above, alternate rise and fall of pitch on syllables of words reflected in high pitch hertz as different from the RP. This sentence as rendered in the NIP and RP however maintains the falling tone as the English language rule holds for declarative sentences. The patterns found in the utterance of NIP show a medium of inconsistence, the speakers exhibited a sharp degree of voice fall and voice rising in alternating syllable of words. The following lexical items, 'here', 'television' and 'evening' had their pitch hertz at 128.1 HZ, 145.3 HZ and 154.3 HZ for NIP while 115.5 HZ, 102 HZ and 97.43 HZ were realized as measurements for the RP. This observed difference, we adjudge to be a consequence of wrong placement of stress in

different polysyllabic words by the Nigerian speaker. This, however results in a different intonational pattern from what is obtainable fromthe RPIP.

From spectrograph B above, there is a slight difference between Nigerian intonational patterns and that of the Received Pronunciation. The NIP spectrographs and pitch extracts show sharp fall at the end of the declarative sentence as against that of the RP which maintained a steady and gradual fall in the tone at the end of the sentence. The word `with` inthe sentence was also erroneously given a high pitch by the NIP. From the above, it was observed that nativization of English language by Nigerian speakers is one factor that is inherent in the speech of most Nigerian speakers of English (NSE).

The NIP in comparison with the RPIP are made up of some unsteady pitch patterns and this is because Nigerian languages are tonal in structures as against the English language which is syllabic-timed. Nigerian languages are mainly characterized with high, low, mid andgliding tones while English language is characterized with primary, secondary and tertiary stress. Nigerian speakers of English find it difficult to adapt to the syllabic nature of English language because of the tonal nature of their mother tongues (L1).

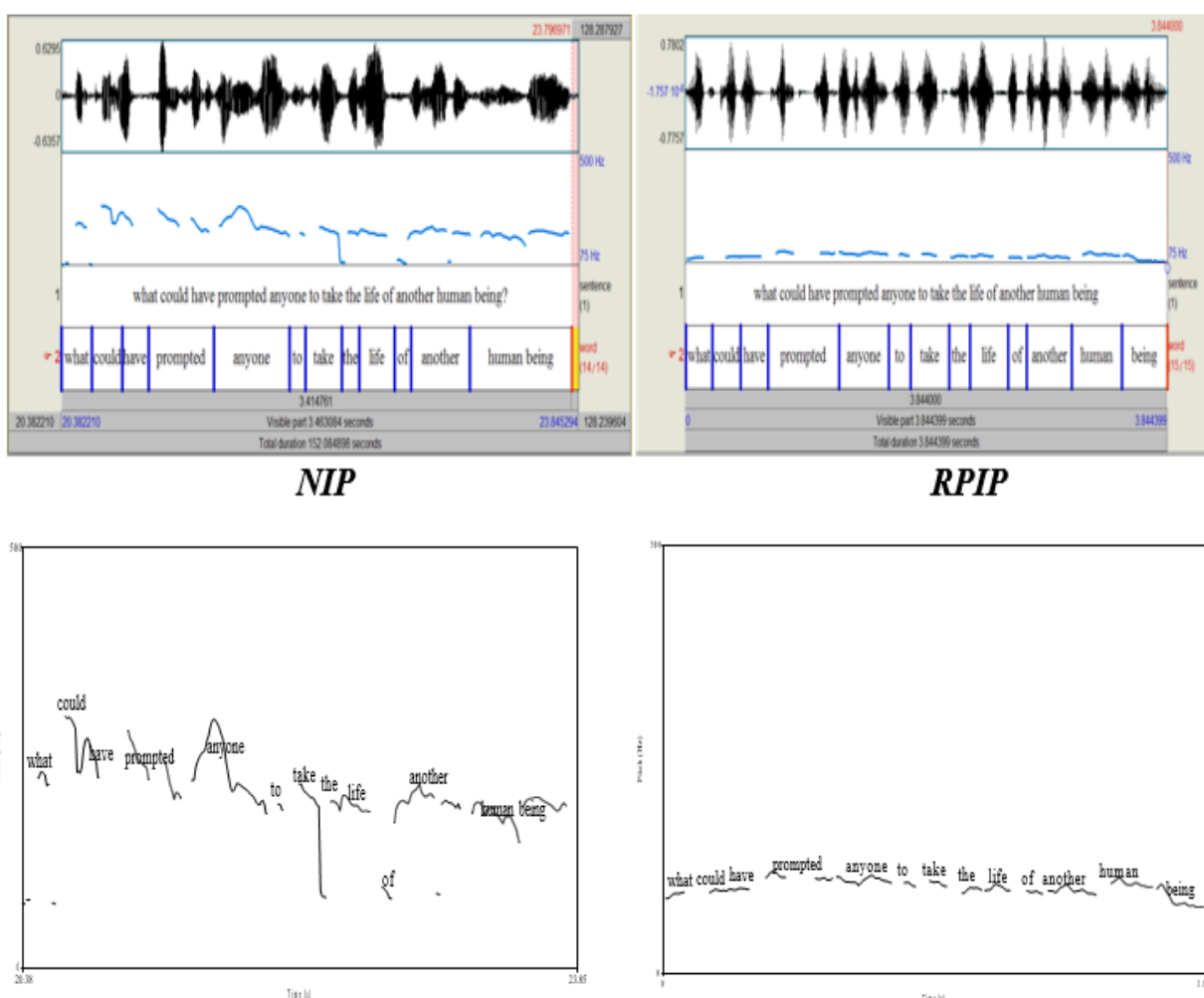C. *Data presentation on features of intonational patterns dominant in the speech ofNTB*

- *Spectrograph C*

Fig 5 'what could have prompted anyone to take the life of another human being?'
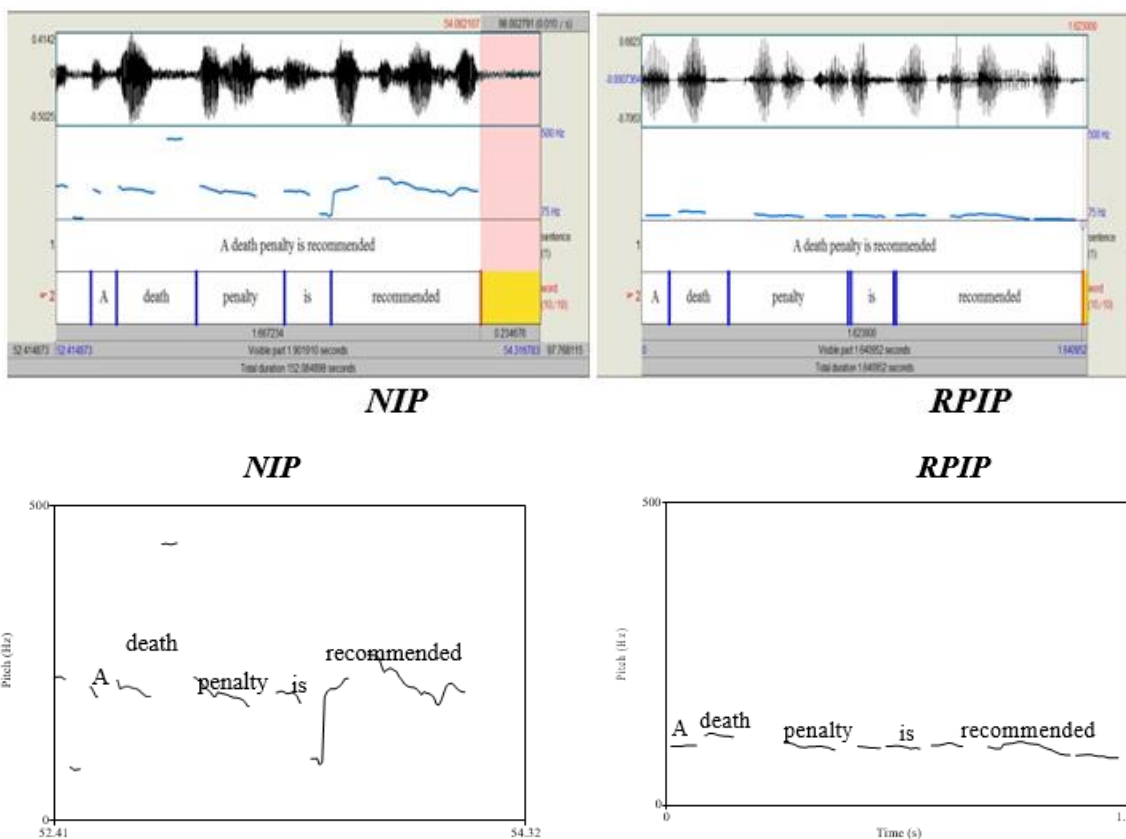
- *Spectrograph D*
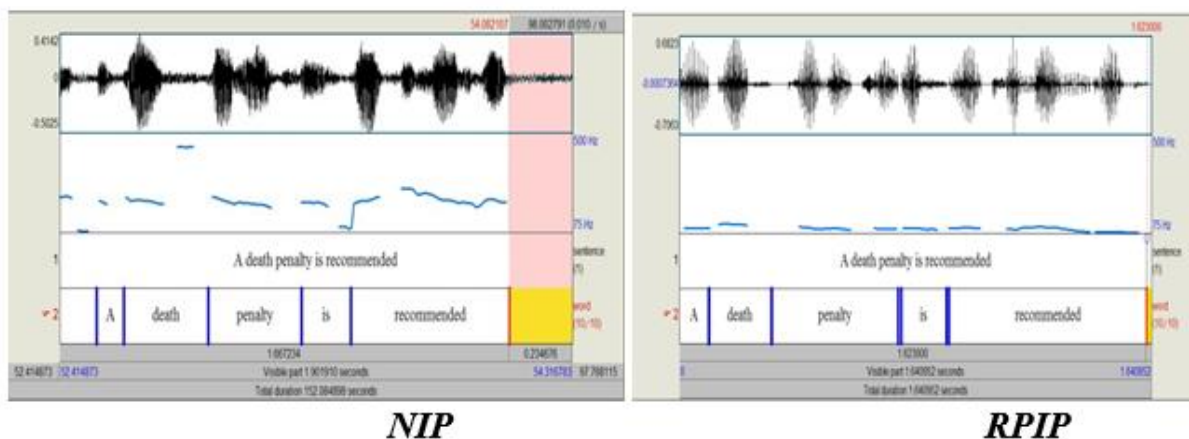

Fig 6 'A death penalty is recommended'

D. Data analysis of features of intonational patterns dominant in the speech of NTB

In the data of the speech of broadcasters presented above, no segmental deviation was found but looking at the NIP pitch extracts of spectrographs C and D one will notice the presence ofunsteady pitch patterns completely different from the RP realization of the same sentences.

Again, in spectrograph D, no segmental deviation was found. However, NIP pitch extracts of spectrograph D presents another evidence of unsteady pitch patterns which according to this study is a dominant feature of SNEV and this, marks it different from the RP rendition. The NTB here does not seem to maintain the English language rule of intonation for declarative sentences. Individual words were wrongly stressed till the end of the sentence with a sharp decline in tone to mark the end of the sentence.

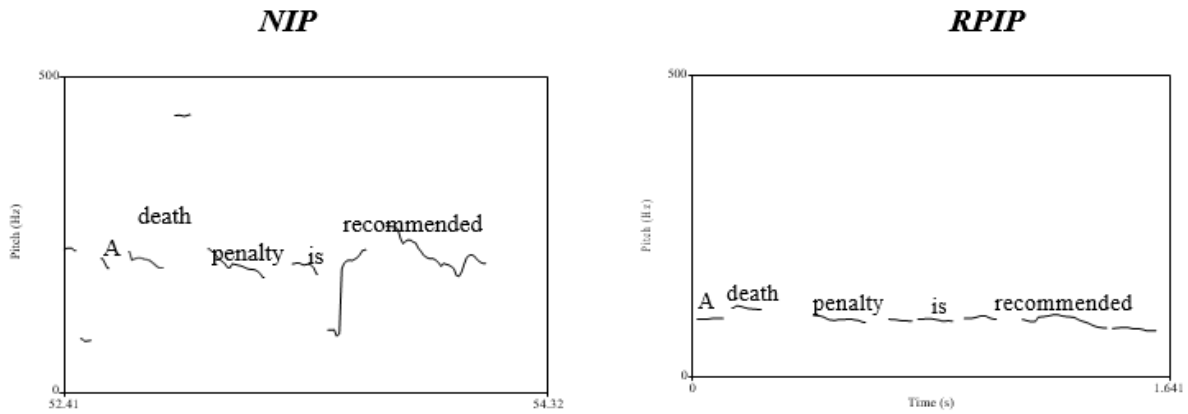### E. Data presentation on the intonational patterns of SNEV and the RIPSpectrograph D

NIP

RPIP

Fig 7 'A death penalty is recommended'
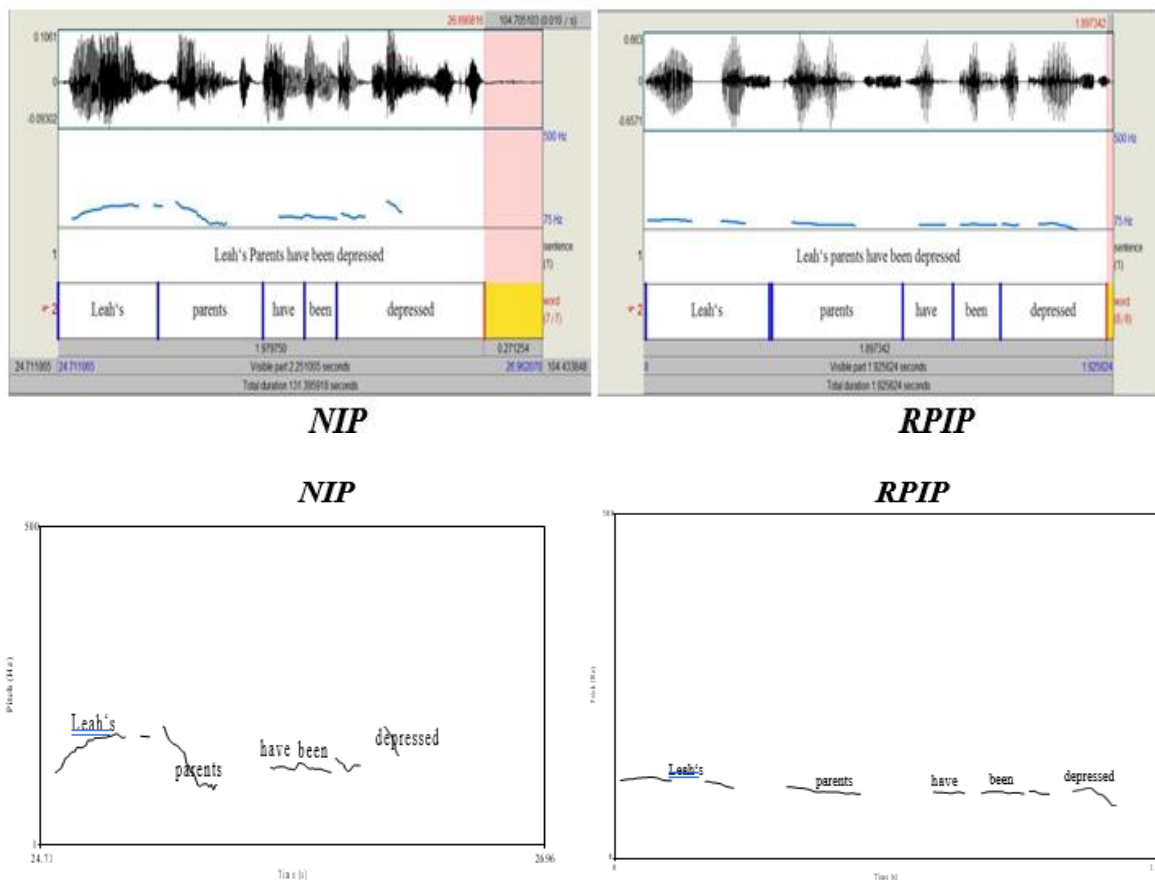
- *Spectrograph E*

NIP

RPIP

Fig 8 'Leah's parents have been depressed'

F. Data analysis of the intonational patterns of SNEV and the RIP

Also, in spectrograph D of NIP, prominence was given to the determiner 'A' with a pitch hertz of 205 HZ, and the auxiliary verb 'is' with a pitch hertz of 170 HZ. While in RPIP, the determiner 'A' has a pitch hertz of 98 HZ and the auxiliary verb 'is' has a pitch hertz of 96 HZ. In the speech of the NTB presented above, no segmental deviation again was found. The NIP pitch extracts of spectrograph E again shows unsteady pitch patterns, wrong placement of stress and the use of a wrong tone as a declarative sentence was ended with a high tone, as against the rule of the English language for sentence stress. This difference again marks this variety of the English language significantly different from the RIP. The auxiliary verbs 'have' and 'been' have the pitch hertz of 122 HZ and 121.46 HZ while in RPIP, these verbs have a pitch hertz of 95 HZ.

The above analyses further shows that the NIPs have staccato pitch patterns because the speakers did not maintain the stress rules of English as this may not have been assimilated despite speech trainings. Considering that the sentences above are declarative sentences, some broadcasters under study maintained a high pitch from the beginning of the

sentence to the end as against the English language rule where declarative sentences have a falling tune. There is rather an adaptation of the tonal structures of their various indigenous languages intothe English language. In NIP, prominence was given to words in the closed classed categoriesas against the rule. In the RP rendition, prominence was given to words in the open class as stipulated in the rule.

VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

For the purpose of this study, six (6) Television Broadcasting Stations were sampled where 12 Broadcasters made up the study class as earlier stated but a few of the total population is shown here in the work under Praat object and picture. As seen in our analysis, it is obvious that the intonational patterns deployed by Nigerian Broadcasters in comparison with RP extract of speech to text analysis are different. The results of the experiment, as we observed show that there was a continuous pitch movement and timing interval which was not very similar to the speech of the RP. We attribute these differences to the effect of tone patterns of Nigerian indigenous languages. This apparently means that there exists a Nigerian English and although the Standard form of this variety of English is medially close to RP in phonology, their differences reflected in the speeches of SNEV speakers are largely peculiar to the Nigerian environment. By this, it means the speech habits, tonal patterns as obtained in their L1 still find its way into the speeches of this class of speakers despite speech training.

This depicts Nigerianization, nativization and localization of the English intonational rule in a new environment. A socio-linguistic study of Nigerian Television Broadcasters could be investigated to find out the reasons for variations in intonational pattern in the speeches of Nigerian Television Broadcasters.

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