

Alexandra Uzoaku Esimaje & Obiageli Nnamani *Benson Idahosa University and Enugu State University of Science and Technology* "Attitude of present-day educated Nigerians to Nigerian English."

### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the social attitude of present-day educated Nigerians to Nigerian English (NE) in order to ascertain whether or not the variety suffers discrimination. The paper adopts two methods: a social survey method and a verbal guise method. A questionnaire with a Likert scale is used to measure the attitude of 1029 subjects towards NE. All the participants were drawn from Departments of English Studies of 15 universities in Nigeria and comprise 500 postgraduate students, 400 final year undergraduate students, and 129 lecturers. The results show a tendency for educated Nigerians to prefer British English (BE) to Nigerian English while they dissociate themselves from American English (AME). The evaluation of attitudes returned the highest acceptance rating of 71.05% for BE to prove that it is highly rated and preferred above NE which has a 36.07% acceptance and AE with a 15.63% acceptance. In order to verify these results, 50 of the 500 postgraduate students were subjected to a verbal guise to determine the extent to which their self reports matched their actual attitudes. The results of this indirect assessment showed positive scores for all three varieties, however, in the descending order of: BE; 178 out of 248 (71.77%), NE; 167 out of 250 (66.08%) and AME; 128 out of 247 (51.82%). Therefore, all three varieties are accepted although BE and NE are valued more than AME which does not enjoy a comparable level of acceptance. Interestingly, therefore, the results of the indirect assessment do not conform to those of the direct assessments and lead to the conclusion that Nigerian English has indeed gained acceptance amongst its educated speakers.

**Keywords:** Nigerian English, language attitude, discrimination, and language politics