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Ghanaian English: Spelling Pronunciation in Focus

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Abstract

This paper examines the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian English and shows that it has become one of the features of pronunciation that have diverged from 'RP' (Received Pronunciation), the standard norm of English language proficiency that is taught to Ghanaians.

The empirical investigation of spelling pronunciation was a selection of 50 words of English based on observation of their use by different groups of educated Ghanaians over the past four years. The selected words were further put to test as readings of the words in sentences by 60 graduate students of the University of Cape Coast were recorded, observed and phonetically transcribed.

The investigation principally shows that the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation has become an unmarked feature in the way educated Ghanaians pronounce words of English. The study further suggests that two important factors account for the vastness of spelling pronunciation in Ghanaian English: the gap between spelling and pronunciation in standard British English, and the influence of L1 languages in Ghana.

The paper concludes that spelling pronunciation has become an innovative feature in Ghanaian English not only because of its widespread nature but also because it satisfies two criteria any New English variety ought to meet – maintains international intelligibility and retains local identities. The study has implications for the description of non-native varieties of English, and the norms to be used in the teaching of English as a second language in Ghana and elsewhere.

Introduction

The growth and spread of English across the world has given recognition to many new varieties of English outside its native environments. Several New Englishes including Ghanaian, Indian, Lankan, Nigerian, Malaysian, just to mention a few are constantly undergoing linguistic change; change that reflects the sociolinguistic and cultural divergences of their respective geographical domains. Kachru (1997: 220/21) establishes that in the contexts of the New Englishes, “the localized norm has a well-established linguistic, literary, and cultural identity.”

Thus the new English varieties have evolved into varieties which serve a wide range of purposes, and at the same time, developed their own character (Jenkins, 2003). Hence they differ from the native varieties (typically the two leading standard varieties: British and American).

The main levels on which the differences are encountered are pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary/idiom, and discourse styles. But it seems that the difference is most conspicuous in the area of pronunciation, which according to Jenkins (2000) maintains distinctive features even in educated sub varieties.

The Focus of This Paper

The issue in this paper is to examine the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation in the English of educated Ghanaians, and to describe it as one of the innovative divergent features of pronunciation that are giving Ghanaian English (henceforth, GhE) its own character.

Although spelling pronunciation manifests itself widely among educated Ghanaian users of English, it has received very little attention within the academic community in Ghana and beyond. In fact, studies on the pronunciation of GhE generally are scanty.

The notable research material include Sey’s (1973) popular book, *Ghanaian English: An Exploratory Survey*, which treats Ghanaian English pronunciation in the appendix. While Sey identifies features of GhE pronunciation such as RP /ə/ becoming /a/ in GhE; RP /ə:/ being pronounced /e/ in GhE; and RP /i/ being pronounced /i:/ in GhE, he makes mention of the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation very briefly. Sey indicates, for instance, that spelling pronunciation has accounted for pronunciations like

/about/ and /kɒnstabl/ for the words ‘about’ and ‘constable’. Although Sey’s (1973) work is recognised as a classic and often cited anytime Ghanaian English is mentioned (Kachru, 1992; Simo Bobda, 2000), his treatment of GhE pronunciation in particular and GhE generally has doubtful validity. He constantly refers to the features of GhE pronunciation, for instance, as errors and deviant usage; meanwhile he begins talking about GhE pronunciation by saying that “the pronunciation of E.G.E. is markedly different from R.P...” (Sey, 1973: 143). It is clear that his work has an error analysis orientation which shows that Sey does not recognise difference and innovativeness in GhE as far his (1973) work is concerned.

Other specific studies on GhE pronunciation like, Gyasi (1991), Owusu-Ansah (1992) Simo Bobda (2000) remain silent on the widespread phenomenon of spelling pronunciation. Adjaye’s (2005) book, which is based on her Ph.D. dissertation, however, briefly points out the influence of spelling on GhE pronunciation in an impressive work that describes the pronunciation of English by speakers of Akan (Fante and Twi), Ewe and Ga. While Adjaye’s work is admirable for its depth (dealing with not only segmental phonetics and phonology, but also the suprasegmentals of stress and intonation), it only scratches the surface of spelling pronunciation, a very common feature of GhE pronunciation.

We can say therefore that descriptions on GhE pronunciation in general are rare, but even scarcer are studies that describe the very common feature of spelling pronunciation in GhE. Using evidence obtained from educated Ghanaian speakers of English, the present paper argues that spelling pronunciation has become an unmarked and a pervasive feature in GhE. It is argued in this paper that two interlinked factors have promoted spelling pronunciation in GhE: the gap between spelling and pronunciation in standard British English (Henceforth BrE) in which we are confronted with a lack of one to one correspondence between letter and sound, and the existence of L1 languages in Ghana, which invariably exert an influence on the way Ghanaians pronounce English words. We come to the conclusion that spelling pronunciation as an innovative feature in GhE satisfies two important criteria non-native varieties ought to meet: maintaining international intelligibility, and retaining local identities (Bamgbose, 1998).

Spelling Pronunciation

Spelling-pronunciation refers to the pronunciation of a word which is derived from or is influenced by its spelling (Wells, 1982; Matthews, 1997). The converse of spelling-pronunciation is pronunciation spelling, “the creation of a new spelling form on the basis of the pronunciation (Wells, 1982: 109). It is not our purpose to discuss pronunciation spelling in the present paper; hence no more will be said about it here.

An example of spelling pronunciation involves the word ‘forehead’; its traditional pronunciation (RP) – [fɒrɪd], has been widely supplanted by the spelling pronunciation [fɔːhed]. Other interesting examples of this phenomenon are noted by Wells (1982). In a word such as ‘tortoise’, traditionally articulated with a second syllable /tɔːs/, a new

pronunciation with [...tɔɪs] (or [...tɔɪz]) has arisen through the influence of spelling. Similarly, the word ‘towards’ is experiencing a spelling-based form with /-w-/, which is gradually displacing the older [tɔ:dz, tɔrdz].

It is instructive to note that these instances of spelling pronunciation are divergences from Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA) by native speakers, an indication that spelling pronunciation is (like in non-native Englishes) characteristic of speakers of standard native varieties of English. Indeed, Wells (1982) observes that there are many words that have undergone this process of spelling pronunciation, and establishes that while in some cases a spelling pronunciation form has replaced a traditional form, in other cases the newer spelling pronunciation is currently in competition with the traditional form.

The fact that spelling pronunciation occurs in the English of both native and non-native speakers raises the issue of the suitability of the native models (RP, GA) as reference points for institutionalised varieties of non-native English. Kachru (1986, 1992) has already argued strongly about the need for non-native speakers of English to avoid aiming at a close approximation of these native varieties, especially RP. He draws our attention to the fact that these documented native models of English “have no authority of codification from a government or a body of scholars as is the case, for example, with Spanish or French” (Kachru, 1992: 49).

Thus since English does not have “an organized agency which undertakes the job of providing direction toward a *standardized* model, and toward controlling *language change*” (Ibid: 49), linguistic etiquette in English should be discussed in culturally specific contexts; thus English in institutionalised contexts, and the changes that occur in such contexts, for example, need to be looked at in terms of their own socio-cultural and linguistic environment.

It is not very much a useful exercise for native models to be the determining factor for “proper” usage by non-native speakers. It is noteworthy that David Abercrombie, a native speaker and an accomplished British phonetician, has shown the confusion RP has caused in England alone. He makes three points that are cited in Kachru (1992: 51); first, that the concept of a standard pronunciation such as RP is “a bad rather than a good thing. It is an anachronism in present day democratic society”. Second, it provides an “accent-bar” which does not reflect the social reality of England. And third, RP does not necessarily represent “educated English”, for while “those who talk RP can justly consider themselves educated, they are out-numbered these days by the undoubtedly educated people who do not talk RP.”

RP and Outer Circle Varieties of English

If we extend Abercrombie’s concerns to Outer Circle varieties of English, it would be difficult to justify why RP must continually serve as the norms of correction for these New Englishes. In many cases, it seems that we only pretend to speak RP when, in fact, our natural speech doesn’t look anything like it. Owusu-Ansah (1991, 1997), for

instance, has suggested that non-native teachers of English often masquerade as native speakers of English when they are consciously teaching pronunciation to their students, but make a quick switch to their ‘normal’ localised accent in their day to day use of English outside the classroom.

The innovative features that characterise the pronunciation of non-native Englishes are vast (including, replacement of dental fricatives with stops; substitution of /a/ for /æ/, /ɑ:/, /ʌ/; absence of the schwa /ə/; monophthongization of diphthongs and triphthongs; consonant cluster simplification, to mention only a few) and must be seen as the markers of our sociolinguistic and cultural identities. We must not be quick to condemn them simply because they diverge from a foreign standard, RP. While many prescriptive-minded critics would prefer to see spelling pronunciation in GhE as errors to be eradicated, its presence must be seen within a broader context (Mesthrie, 2004).

The Gap between Letter and Sound in English

Generally speaking, the principle of alphabetic writing is that each letter represents a particular spoken sound (phoneme) of the language. Because of this, many early systems of spelling were based on a one-to-one correspondence between the graphic representation and the spoken language (Crane et al, 1981).

In other words, one and the same sound was always represented by one and the same graphic symbol (letter) and this symbol was invariably pronounced in one way. Crane and others however note that as the pronunciation of many languages underwent important changes over the centuries, the spelling did not always keep the pace with these transformations.

The example of English is most relevant for us here. The gap between the ‘standard’ pronunciation of words and orthography in modern English is sometimes incredible. Giegerich (1992: 37) observes that “a phoneme may in English spelling be represented by different letters in different words; or a single phoneme may be represented by a sequence of two letters, each of which may elsewhere denote a different phoneme.” It may be helpful to give some examples here. The letter *g* is pronounced differently in words like *get* [get], *gem* [dʒem], and *genre* [ʒɑ:n]; in the words *give* [gɪv], *gipsy* [dʒɪpsi] and *gite* [ʒi:t]. Again, the same group of letters – *ch* – is read in three different ways in words like *child* [tʃaɪld], *charade* [ʃərə:d] and *character* [kærɪktə]. It is also quite difficult to account for the fact that words like *shy*, *mission*, *friction* and *ocean* use different letters: *sh*, *ss*, *ti*, *ce* to represent one and the same phoneme /ʃ/. Similarly, words like *four*, *cuff*, *laugh*, **pharmacy** and **lieutenant** use different letters to represent the same phoneme /f/.

Many more examples from English can be found, each one showing that the spelling of English is not suitable for the expression of phonemic distinctions in a clear one-to-one way. This inconsistent relationship between the sounds of words and their spelling has had a great influence on the pronunciation of English words in varieties of

non-native English, especially in institutionalised varieties such as GhE where L1 languages, which learners are first exposed to before coming into contact with English, have quite a different phonological structure.

The L1 Influence

We have seen the vast inconsistency between English orthography and sound. In contrast to this is that most Ghanaian L1 languages, if not all, display a good deal of correspondence between the graphic representation and the spoken language. I provide here some examples from Fante and Hausa for illustration. Most words in these languages are pronounced on the basis of their spelling. The examples from Fante are:

nsu – water
papa – father
ntem – haste
mpa – mat

A similar correspondence is evident, quite clearly, in longer connected speech like the sentence:

onda – he doesn't sleep.
yenkɔ – let's go.
miridzidzi – I am eating.

In Hausa, a similar correspondence between letter and sound exists. Consider these examples:

tafi – go
gobe – tomorrow
yaro – child
kusa – near

In these languages and in others like Ewe, Ga, Konkomba, etc., we see that, in general, their words are pronounced the way they are spelt. In Ghana (and in many Outer Circle countries) this situation has influenced the pronunciation of English words. The point must be made that these L1 languages are the languages acquired by the majority of Ghanaians in early childhood from parents, and spoken in the home environment before they come into contact with English. By the time they start learning some English, they would have already acquired the rules and structures of their L1, including those of the phonology, so that it becomes very easy to transfer the acquired rules and structures into English. According to Bamgbose (1971: 47), the influence of the local languages on English as a second language is great because certain “patterns of the local languages – phonological, grammatical and lexical – tend to be transferred into English.”

Generally in Ghana, this seems to be the case even though L1 influence may not hold true for all Ghanaian users of English. The point of significance here is that L1 influence plays a significant role in the spelling pronunciation encountered in GhE.

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Ghanaian English: Spelling Pronunciation in Focus

Methodology

Data

The aim of the present paper was to show that spelling pronunciation has become an unmarked feature of the English of educated Ghanaians. To strengthen and confirm this claim, I selected 50 words of English based on observation of their use by government officials, lecturers, media practitioners, clergymen and influential opinion leaders in Ghana over the past four years. My observation of this category of Ghanaians was appropriate because their English characterised samples of English for important communicative purposes rather than samples of a learner language.

The selected words were further put to test, as 60 purposively selected graduate non-English (Mphil, PhD) students of the University of Cape Coast (from different ethnic backgrounds) were asked to read simple sentences, each one containing one of the words of focus, the way they would normally read them. The renditions of the respondents were recorded using a digital voice recorder. For readings that were not audible enough, respondents were asked to re-read the sentences a second or sometimes even a third time.

All the recordings were from male students. This was because while it was intended to keep the gender variable consistent, it was observed that there were invariably many more male students than females on sight, each time the researcher visited the Graduate Residence, where the recordings were done. The recordings were spread over ten days, with 6 informants recorded on each visiting day. It took every informant approximately 10 minutes to read out all 50 sentences. Thus in all, a total data base of about 10 hours of recordings was collected.

Recording sentences which contained the relevant words to the study rather than the words alone was significant as it enhanced the naturalness of the data. The entire recording procedure was in line with Crystal's (1987) observation that a researcher investigating language needs to record each and every sound. This recording practice is essential as more insights can be gleaned from naturalistic data rather than data collected from controlled settings.

Procedure of Analysis

The data were analysed by replaying each informants recordings and transcribing phonetically the words of focus the way they were pronounced. Thus the pronunciations of informants were tested and measured by means of the traditional method of auditory perception. While we are aware of the value and worth of instrumental analysis, which is often thought to be more objective and scientific in the analysis of speech (Roach, 2001), this traditional method proved adequate in determining whether or not the words of focus were characterised by spelling pronunciation.

The transcriptions were then compared with the RP versions of the words obtained from Daniel Jones' (1997) English Pronunciation Dictionary. The table below (Table 1) displays the selected words that served as basis for the study and their standard pronunciations (RP).

Table 1: Words of focus and their standard pronunciation (RP)

Word	Standard Pronunciation	Word	Standard Pronunciation
won	[wʌn]	lower	[ləʊə]
among	[əməŋ]	quorum	[kwɔ:rəm]
country	[kʌntri]	respond	[rɪspɒnd]
onion	[ʌnjən]	salary	[sæləri]
cohesion	[kəhi:ʒn]	modest	[mɒdist]
focus	[fəkəs]	laudable	[lə:dəbl]
tough	[tʌf]	diploma	[dɪpləʊmə]
category	[kætəɡri]	pose	[pəʊz]
tomb	[tu:m]	daunting	[dɔ:ntɪŋ]
courage	[kʌrɪdʒ]	pause	[pɔ:z]
potato	[pəteɪtə]	kowtow	[kaʊtəʊ]
double	[dʌbl]	ensure	[ɪnʃɔ:]
digit	[dɪdʒɪt]	follow	[fɒləʊ]
glove	[ɡlʌv]	wonder	[wʌndə]
query	[kwɪəri]	possess	[pəzes]
trouble	[trʌbl]	gaol	[dʒeɪl]
is	[ɪz]	gadget	[ɡædʒɪt]
push	[pʊʃ]	gold	[ɡəʊld]
castle	[kɑ:sl]	target	[tɑ:ɡɪt]
lettuce	[letɪs]	thorough	[θərə]
whistle	[hwɪsl]	encourage	[ɪŋkʌrɪdʒ]
intervene	[ɪntəvi:n]	young	[jʌŋ]
consult	[kənsʌlt]	position	[pəzɪʃn]
tomato	[təmə:tə]	method	[meθəd]
low	[ləʊ]	nose	[nəʊz]

Results and Discussion

Based on the analysis done on the words of focus in this study, it came to light that the spelling of the words largely influenced their pronunciation, thereby strengthening the observation made earlier on by the researcher that spelling pronunciation is a typical feature in the English of many educated Ghanaians. 52 (86.7% of all respondents) pronounced all the words of focus in a way that reflected spelling pronunciation.

Four respondents pronounced two of the words (*country* and *courage*) using near RP while the remaining 48 words were rendered in a way that was clearly influenced by their spelling. Two respondents gave only (*country*) a near RP rendition while the 49 words were characterised by spelling pronunciation. Two other respondents pronounced four of the words (*double*, *digit*, *country*, *focus*) using near RP while the rest of the 46 words were characterised by spelling pronunciation. In all, only 6 words (12% of the total number of words) received near RP renditions by only eight respondents (less than 15% of all respondents).

Thus though a few of the respondents pronounced some of the words with a near RP accent, the pronunciation of the overwhelming majority of the respondents demonstrated the phenomenon of spelling pronunciation. The selected words and their spelling pronunciations are shown in the table next (Table 2):

Table displaying the fifty (50) words used for the study and their Spelling Pronunciation rendition in Ghanaian English

Word	Spelling Pronunciation	Word	Spelling Pronunciation
won	[wɒn]	low	[lɔw]
among	[amɒŋ]	lower	[lɔwə]
country	[kauntri]	quorum	[qɒrəm]
onion	[ɒniən]	respond	[rɛspɒnd]
cohesion	[kəʊheʃn]	salary	[sæləri]
focus	[fɒkɒs]	modest	[mɒdɛst]
tough	[tɒf]	laudable	[laʊdəbəl]
category	[kætɪgɒri]	diploma	[dɪplɒmə]
tomb	[tʌmb]	pose	[pəʊz]
courage	[kɒrɪdʒ]	daunting	[daʊntɪŋ]
potato	[pətəʊtəʊ]	pause	[pəʊz]
double	[dʌʊbəl]	kowtow	[kəʊtəʊ]
digit	[dɪdʒɪt]	ensure	[ɛnʃʊə]
glove	[glɒv]	follow	[fɒləʊ]

query	[kwɛri]	wonder	[wɒndə]
trouble	[trɒbul]	possess	[pɒses]
is	[is]	gaol	[gaul]*
push	[puʃ]	gadget	[gadzɛt]
castle	[kɑstɪl]	gold	[gɒld]
lettuce	[letus]	target	[tɑgɛt]
whistle	[wɪstɪl]	thorough	[tɒrɒ]
intervene	[ɪntevɛɪn]	encourage	[ɛnkɔreɪdz]
consult	[kɒnsʌlt]	young	[jʌŋ]
tomato	[tɒmɑtɒ]	position	[pɒzɪʃɪn]
method	[metɒd]	nose	[nɒs]

Clearly the data present a trend that suggests that spelling pronunciation is dominant among educated Ghanaian users of English. Spelling pronunciation has become the most comfortable way of pronouncing English words. Again, it does not seem that the few exceptions of words in the data that received RP pronunciation were rendered with a conscious attempt at pronouncing RP since the same respondents failed to pronounce most of the other words using RP.

It is worthy of note that the word “gaol” posed a special problem. Four of the respondents were hesitant in pronouncing it because they claimed they had never heard or encountered its use. They were persuaded to just pronounce the word how they would have pronounced it if they encountered it. When they did, their rendition (like those of the other respondents) reflected spelling pronunciation. The significant point is that the pronunciation of “gaol” (RP [dʒeɪl]) as [gaul] in GhE has serious implications for intelligibility, and therefore can be regarded as an error in pronunciation. But this is just one exception; the pronunciation of the other words of focus in this paper provides sufficient evidence of spelling pronunciation which can be well understood by speakers of other varieties.

Spelling pronunciation is therefore a nativised feature of Ghanaian English that satisfies international intelligibility and, as well, retains local identities. The phenomenon has already left indelible marks on the English speech of Ghanaians, and this situation will doubtless continue since the process is an unavoidable one.

Lessons from Other New English Varieties

We have tried to demonstrate here that it is the very nature of language to adapt itself to the varying socio-cultural and linguistic needs of its users. This means that for us in Ghana, it is about time we gradually shifted from the use of an exonormative model (a

model that is based on the native variety as the norm) to embrace an endonormative model (one that is based on localised linguistic, cultural and literary norms).

We in Ghana can learn from other L2 countries such as India, Singapore, Nigeria and Kenya, where the push for this change has been more strong and forceful. In these countries, people now fully appreciate that users of English speak and write differently, and as a transplanted language in many countries, it has inevitably undergone local changes that reflect, as expected, the cultural norms of those countries (Cheshire, 1991; Widdowson, 2003). What things therefore can we learn from these other countries?

Some Lessons from Other Countries

First and foremost has to do with attitudinal change. We need to have a positive attitude towards our English, Ghanaian English. Kachru (1986) has indicated that the first enemy of the New Englishes is not the foreign native (purist), but the new nations themselves who are constantly resisting divergence of any sort, and are taking up the purist-minded position so strongly. Kachru (1992: 67) further states that “the acceptance of a model depends on its users: the users must demonstrate a solidarity, identity, and loyalty toward a language variety”.

In India, Singapore and Nigeria, for example, this negative attitude has changed drastically. There is now a strong feeling of ownership of the English language in these countries where internal norms are replacing external ones. So in India for instance, Indian English is recognised as one of India’s languages.

Secondly, we must engage in vigorous research that aims at describing the features of Ghanaian English, as has been done extensively for Indian English, Nigeria English, Singaporean English, and Kenyan English among others. In these non-native varieties of English, a great deal of research has been undertaken with a view to describing the linguistic norms of the variety of English spoken and written by the citizens (Platt et al, 1984). In India and Singapore, for instance, there has been an adoption of the localised variety of English in the internal activities of these countries. Thus standard Indian English today functions as the language of government, education and the media, having taken over from a previously supposed British standard variety (Kachru et al, 2006).

Thirdly, one of the most important things that can be done to encourage the intensification of research into the features of Ghanaian English is the creation of Corpora to serve as database for linguistic research. The use of corpora has been a major source of development for many varieties of English, native and non-native. For British English, existing corpora such as the Survey of English Usage, the LOB, the Bank of English, the British National Corpus, just to mention four, have led to the accumulation of studies that have shown the features of the variety.

L2 environments (where Ghana is grouped) such as India, Kenya and Nigeria have made admirable progress in this regard. In India, the building of the Kolhapur Corpus of Indian English (KCIE) by Shastri (1988) and his colleagues at Shivaji University, Kolhapur, has eventually become instrumental in creating an urge for generation of corpus research aimed at describing features of Indian English. It has also encouraged the building of other corpora of Indian English and the Indian languages.

In addition, a number of countries have been engaged in the International Corpus of English (ICE) project which was proposed by its principal designer, Sidney Greenbaum. The ICE project began in 1990 with the primary aim of collecting material for comparative studies of English worldwide as well as for studies into the national varieties of the countries involved.

Currently, there are a number of L2 environments whose ICE corpora have been completed and are available for linguistic research. These include ICE – India, ICE – Singapore and ICE – East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania). Although Ghana was originally one of the research teams to be set up for this project, we still have not taken it up. There is the need to get the ICE project started in Ghana so as to enhance systematic investigation into our national variety of English, and comparative studies of Englishes.

Finally, it is necessary that we get an internal reference point for our English. This requires that we begin to codify the norms of usage that are revealed through investigation. Codification means producing reference materials such as dictionaries and books for the variety. Without codification, we would have no choice but to continue to use native models as the yardstick for the teaching and learning of English. Again, we can learn from some New English varieties that are doing well in this respect. For instance in Nigeria, researchers such as Bamgbose (1992), Bamgbose, Banjo and Thomas (1995) and Bokamba (1984) have made great efforts in codifying Nigerian English. Grammar books and dictionaries have been written and compiled so that teachers and other speakers of English in Nigeria may have some points of reference for standard Nigerian English.

Concluding Remarks

The aim of this paper has been to use an aspect of Ghanaian English pronunciation, spelling pronunciation, to demonstrate that it is the very nature of language (in this particular instance, English) to adapt itself to the varying socio-cultural and linguistic needs of its users. Spelling pronunciation is pervasive in the English spoken by educated Ghanaians and this is largely influenced by two inseparable factors: the inconsistent relationship between English orthography and sound, and the converse situation in our L1 languages which the majority of Ghanaians first acquire.

The main point, however, is that spelling pronunciation qualifies as one of the innovative features of pronunciation that are giving Ghanaian English a character that is different from standard native Englishes like British English.

I am of the view that it is not a marker of errors and deficiency because while Ghanaian speakers of English have no intentions of advancing towards the so-called better and prestigious native variety, RP, spelling pronunciation has become the normal and most comfortable way of pronouncing many English words. Besides, the phenomenon satisfies two important criteria non-native varieties of English ought to meet to be recognised. First, to a great extent, it maintains international intelligibility and, second, it retains local and cultural identities (Bamgbose, 1998).

With the evidence derived from this study, it is suggested that Ghana should intensify efforts to identify the features that characterise Ghanaian English in all aspects of English language, so that we can eventually have our own codified variety of English to serve as the model for teaching and learning of English in Ghana. Although this would require a lot of time, effort and commitment, it is necessary because the British norms and models of English currently being used as reference points for proficiency do not just seem to fit into the Ghanaian context, especially as English expands its range of uses and further deepens its roots in the country. However, in an effort to develop a local model of English, there should be checks to avoid unintelligibility both at the national and international levels.

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