

Socio-Phonetic Analysis of /r/-Liaison among Television Presenters in South-west Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the socio-phonetic behavior of /r/-liaison in the speech of Nigerian television presenters, focusing on how professional identity, exposure to global English norms, and local phonological systems influence linking and intrusive /r/ production. While /r/-liaison is traditionally associated with non-rhotic British English, its occurrence in Nigerian English (NigE), a largely second-language, performance-oriented variety, raises questions about phonological acquisition, prestige orientation, and stylistic speech design. Using acoustic and auditory analysis of broadcast speech from 36 presenters across three Nigerian television networks, the study examined the frequency, phonetic realization, and sociolinguistic conditioning of linking /r/ and intrusive /r/. Results showed that /r/-liaison is not a stable phonological rule in Nigerian English but a stylistic, prestige-driven feature that appears variably in hyper-articulated broadcast registers. Occurrence correlates strongly with British-oriented pronunciation training, years of media experience, and programme formality. The findings supported models of second-language sociophonetic acquisition and style-shifting, demonstrating that /r/-liaison in Nigerian broadcast English functions as an index of professional prestige rather than a core phonological process. /r/-liaison in Nigerian television news anchors, talk-show hosts and programme continuity announcers speeches are socially conditioned, and stylistic rather than phonological. The study revealed that while Nigerian English shares many phonological processes with other varieties of English, these processes often manifest differently due to sociolinguistic and linguistic influences. This will help educators to develop pronunciation models that reflect real usage rather than strictly native-speaker norms. The result will guide media training toward more consistent and audience-appropriate speech patterns, improving intelligibility and professionalism on air.

Keywords: Nigerian English, sociophonetics, /r/-liaison, linking /r/, intrusive /r/, broadcast speech, style shifting

Introduction

The study of connected speech processes has received significant attention in phonetics and sociolinguistics. Oladipupo (2014) conducted a study on connected speech in Nigerian English. The study examined assimilation, elision, and liaison among educated Nigerian English speakers drawn from various linguistic

backgrounds. Using perceptual transcription and statistical analysis, the study identified dominant and minor connected speech processes in Nigerian English and suggested that some of these processes may characterize Standard Nigerian spoken English. These processes reveal how speech sounds interact in Nigerian English. Among these processes is /r/-liaison, a phenomenon that occurs when a /r/ sound appears between two vowel sounds across word boundaries in non-rhotic varieties of English. Linguists classify /r/-liaison into two forms: linking /r/ and intrusive /r/. These forms function primarily as hiatus-resolution mechanisms that ensure smooth transitions between adjacent vowels in connected speech.

In many English-speaking communities, the use of /r/-liaison is influenced by both phonological and sociolinguistic factors. Sociophonetics, which examines the relationship between social variables and phonetic variation, provides a framework for understanding how speakers' backgrounds, professional roles, and speech environments shape their pronunciation patterns. In Nigeria, the speech of broadcast professionals, particularly television presenters, represents an important site for examining such variation because media speech often reflects a blend of local linguistic identity and prestige norms associated with Standard British English (Pavlík, 2016).

The pronunciation of post-vocalic /r/ is one of the most socially and geographically stratified features in English phonology (Labov, 2006; Wells, 1982). In non-rhotic varieties such as Received Pronunciation (RP), /r/ is typically absent in syllable codas but may surface in vowel-initial environments through linking /r/ (e.g., far away) and intrusive /r/ (e.g., idea(r) of it) (Gimson, 2014). These phenomena are commonly referred to as /r/-liaison.

Nigerian English (NigE), however, developed in a multilingual, second-language ecology where English interacts with predominantly non-rhotic or differently rhotic indigenous phonological systems (Bamgbose, 1995; Jowitt, 2019). Traditionally, NigE has been described as largely rhotic, with orthography-driven /r/ retention (Udofot, 2004). Yet broadcast media speech in Nigeria increasingly reflects global prestige norms, particularly British-oriented pronunciation models. This creates a sociophonetic tension: presenters may attempt to approximate non-rhotic prestige speech while operating within a rhotic L2 phonological base.

Despite the growing body of sociophonetic research on English varieties, there is a notable lack of empirical studies examining /r/-liaison in Nigerian English, particularly within professional broadcast contexts. Existing studies on Nigerian English phonology have largely focused on segmental features and general connected speech processes (e.g., Awonusi, 2004; Oladipupo, 2014; Jowitt, 2019; Gbadegesin, 2023), with limited attention to /r/-sandhi as a socially conditioned variable.

Furthermore, while global sociophonetic research has demonstrated that pronunciation patterns are influenced by factors such as audience design, formality, and professional identity (Bell, 1984; Foulkes & Docherty, 2006), these insights have not been sufficiently applied to Nigerian television presenters, whose speech serves as a quasi-standard model for the public. Consequently, there is a gap in understanding how /r/-liaison operates in Nigerian broadcast speech and how it indexes sociolinguistic variables such as region, training, and media norms. This study, therefore, addresses this gap by providing a systematic socio-phonetic analysis of /r/-liaison among television presenters in South-west Nigeria.

This study therefore addresses the following research questions:

This study therefore asks:

- How frequently do television presenters employ /r/-liaison?
- What phonetic forms does /r/-liaison take in Nigerian broadcast speech?
- Do social or institutional factors influence the use of this feature?

Literature Review

The Concept of /r/-Liaison in English Phonology

/r/-liaison, sometimes referred to as **/r/-sandhi**, describes the insertion or realization of the rhotic consonant at the boundary between two vowel-initial words. According to phonological studies, this process primarily occurs in non-rhotic varieties of English where the /r/ sound is not pronounced in syllable-final position unless followed by a vowel.

Two principal forms are identified in the literature: **Linking /r/** occurs when the letter *r* exists in the orthography but is normally silent in isolation. For example, in phrases such as *far away*, the /r/ resurfaces to link the words. **Intrusive /r/**, by contrast, occurs when speakers insert an /r/ sound even though no orthographic *r* is present in the preceding word. Expressions such as *idea of* may be pronounced /aɪ'diə əv/ in some non-rhotic accents.

Phonologists argue that both types of liaison arise from a general strategy for resolving vowel hiatus in connected speech. Usage-based models also suggest that frequency of lexical combinations, stress patterns, and phonological environment influence the likelihood of /r/-liaison in spontaneous speech. In non-rhotic phonological systems, coda /r/ is deleted unless followed by a vowel, where resyllabification occurs (Wells, 1982). Intrusive /r/ extends this pattern analogically to words without underlying /r/ (Gimson, 2014). These processes are phonologized in RP but socially stratified in many speech communities (Fabricius, 2002).

Sociophonetics and Variation in Connected Speech

Sociophonetics integrates phonetic analysis with sociolinguistic theory to explain how speech variation correlates with social identity. Researchers within this field examine how factors such as gender, social class, education, and occupation influence phonetic realizations. Connected speech processes, including assimilation, elision, and liaison, are particularly sensitive to social variation. Speakers often adjust their pronunciation depending on communicative context, audience, and perceived prestige norms. For instance, professional speakers such as broadcasters may consciously approximate standard pronunciation models, while still exhibiting features influenced by their regional or sociolinguistic backgrounds. In broadcast contexts, speech production is further shaped by institutional expectations of clarity and intelligibility. Consequently, television presenters may adopt pronunciation patterns closer to standardized models while simultaneously reflecting localized phonological features.

/r/-Liaison in Standard British English

The traditional reference point for many studies of English pronunciation in Nigeria has been **Standard British English**. In this variety, /r/-liaison plays a central role in connected speech. Linguistic analyses have demonstrated that linking and intrusive /r/ function as part of the phonological system that resolves vowel sequences across word boundaries. Research has also shown that the occurrence of /r/-liaison is influenced by linguistic factors such as lexical frequency, morphological boundaries, and phonological context. Usage-based analyses reveal that high-frequency word combinations are more likely to trigger liaison, suggesting that speakers internalize patterns through repeated exposure in discourse (Pavlik, 2016). Historically, the distinction between linking and intrusive /r/ has been widely recognized in phonological theory. However, some scholars argue that both forms represent manifestations of a single underlying mechanism of vowel-to-vowel transition in speech (Giegerich, 2009).

Sociophonetics integrates acoustic phonetics with sociolinguistic theory to examine how social meaning is encoded in phonetic variation (Foulkes & Docherty, 2006). In media speech, pronunciation features often function as indexical markers of education, authority, and prestige (Bell, 1984).

Nigerian English Phonology

English in Nigeria has developed into a distinct variety known as **Nigerian English**, shaped by contact with indigenous languages and sociocultural contexts. Phonological features of this variety often reflect influences from local languages such as Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo. Research on Nigerian English phonology has attracted considerable

scholarly attention, particularly in relation to how English phonological structures interact with indigenous Nigerian languages. Early studies established that Nigerian English possesses distinctive segmental and suprasegmental characteristics that differentiate it from native English varieties such as Received Pronunciation (RP) (Atoye, 1991; Adetugbo, 2004; Udofot, 2004). These differences often arise from the transfer of phonological patterns from Nigerian languages into English pronunciation. For instance, scholars have observed processes such as consonant cluster simplification, vowel substitution, and reduced vowel weakening in Nigerian speech, which contribute to the distinctive phonological profile of Nigerian English. Studies of Nigerian English phonology indicate that pronunciation patterns frequently diverge from Standard British English norms due to factors such as syllable structure preferences, vowel substitution, and consonant simplification. Despite these variations, educated Nigerian speakers—especially professionals—often attempt to approximate international or prestige standards in formal contexts. NigE phonology is shaped by transfer from indigenous languages, orthographic influence, and pedagogical norms (Jowitt, 2019). Rhoticity is common, and liaison phenomena typical of British non-rhotic English are not considered native phonological rules (Udofot, 2004). However, elite and media registers often display features associated with exonormative standards (Bamgbose, 1995). Connected speech processes in Nigerian English have received increasing scholarly attention. Research suggests that some processes commonly observed in British English occur less frequently or manifest differently in Nigerian speech due to the predominantly rhotic nature of many Nigerian accents.

Empirical studies on Nigerian English have begun to examine how social variables influence phonetic variation. One sociophonetic investigation involving 180 educated Nigerian speakers examined the use of /r/-liaison and boundary consonant deletion in connected speech. The results showed limited variation across social groups, though gender differences were observed in consonant deletion patterns.

Another sociophonetic study explored how connected speech processes in Nigerian English relate to social variables such as age, gender, and regional background. The findings indicated that speakers' proximity to Standard British English pronunciation varies according to these social factors (Oladipupo, & Akinjobi, (2015). These studies highlight the importance of sociophonetic approaches in understanding pronunciation patterns within Nigerian English. However, most existing research focuses on general populations of speakers rather than specialized professional groups such as media presenters.

Broadcast Speech and Pronunciation Norms

The speech of broadcast professionals occupies a unique position within sociophonetic research. Television presenters often serve as linguistic role models

because their speech is widely disseminated and perceived as authoritative. As a result, broadcasters frequently receive training aimed at improving clarity, intelligibility, and adherence to standardized pronunciation norms.

In Nigeria, the influence of broadcast speech has grown with the expansion of television networks and digital media platforms. Presenters working in the South-west region—where Yoruba is widely spoken—may exhibit phonological features shaped by both Yoruba phonology and the conventions of Nigerian English. These influences may affect the realization or absence of /r/-liaison in their speech. Despite the importance of broadcast speech, there remains a scarcity of empirical studies examining connected speech processes among Nigerian media professionals. Investigating /r/-liaison in this context can provide insights into how professional identity and regional linguistic background interact in shaping pronunciation.

Although several studies have explored connected speech processes in Nigerian English, few have focused specifically on /r/-liaison within professional broadcast contexts. Most existing research examines student populations or general speech communities rather than television presenters. Furthermore, while sociophonetic analyses have demonstrated the influence of social variables on pronunciation, there is limited research on how occupational roles—particularly those involving public communication—affect phonological behavior in Nigerian English. Given the prominence of television presenters as linguistic models, analyzing their speech can reveal patterns of phonological convergence or divergence from international pronunciation norms. This study therefore addresses an important gap by examining how /r/-liaison is realized among television presenters in South-west Nigeria.

The literature demonstrates that /r/-liaison is a significant feature of connected speech in English, functioning primarily to facilitate smooth transitions between vowel sounds. While extensive research exists on the phenomenon in British English, sociophonetic investigations within Nigerian English remain relatively limited. Existing studies indicate that pronunciation patterns in Nigerian English are shaped by both linguistic and social factors. However, the specific behavior of /r/-liaison among broadcast professionals—who occupy a prominent role in shaping public speech norms—has not been sufficiently explored. A socio-phonetic analysis of television presenters in South-west Nigeria therefore provides a valuable opportunity to deepen our understanding of phonological variation, media language, and the evolving nature of Nigerian English.

Theoretical Framework

Labovian Variationist Theory

This study is anchored on the Labovian Variationist Theory, developed by William Labov. The theory emphasizes that language variation is systematic and socially conditioned rather than random. According to Labov (2006) linguistic variables can occur in different forms, and the choice of these forms is influenced by social factors such as age, gender, social class, occupation, and communicative context. In the variationist model, a linguistic variable refers to a feature that has two or more realizations without changing the meaning of an utterance. In this research, /r/-liaison functions as the linguistic variable, while its realizations include Linking /r/, Intrusive /r/ and Absence of /r/ liaison. The theory proposes that patterns of variation can be quantified and analyzed statistically in order to reveal systematic relationships between linguistic behavior and social variables (Labov, 2006). Applying this framework to Nigerian broadcast speech allows the researcher to investigate whether television presenters consistently employ /r/-liaison and whether its occurrence varies according to factors such as gender of the presenter, broadcasting station and speech style (formal news reading vs spontaneous commentary). Labovian theory is therefore particularly suitable for this study because it enables the researcher to examine both linguistic patterns and their social distribution within a professional speech community.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design. This design enables the systematic observation and analysis of naturally occurring /r/-liaison patterns among television presenters in South-west Nigeria without manipulating variables, thereby providing an accurate account of their socio-phonetic behavior in real-life broadcast contexts. Thirty-six presenters (18 male, 18 female) from Nigerian Television Authority (Federal Government owned), Channels Television (Private Owned) and BCOS (State Government owned), were sampled 12 news anchors, 12 talk-show hosts and 12 programme continuity announcers. They all have had tertiary education with 14 reported formal pronunciation training. A purposive sampling technique is employed to select presenters who regularly appear in English-language news broadcasts. All tokens were coded using a two-stage auditory-acoustic procedure. Stage 1 involved listening to identify /r/ presence. Tokens were marked LINK (linking /r/), INTR (intrusive /r/), or ZERO (absent). Stage 2 involved acoustic verification using Praat (F3 lowering, rhotic segment duration). Ambiguities resolved by consensus. Six hours of broadcast (two hours per broadcasting stations was recorded. Recordings were extracted (formal news bulletins and semi-formal programmes). A corpus of 1,080 potential liaison environments was identified comprising Linking contexts (word-final orthographic <r> + vowel) and Potential intrusive contexts (non-r word + vowel).

Analysis

This section presents the results obtained from recorded speeches of news anchors, talk-show hosts and programme continuity announcers.

Table 1 /r/ liaison Context types

Context Type	Tokens	/r/ Realized	%	/r/ non-realized	%
Linking contexts	720	302	41.9%	418	58.1
Intrusive contexts	360	38	10.6%	322	89.4

Although /r/ liaison is a phonological phenomenon in British Standard English, Table 1 above revealed that among Nigerian Television presenters, at the two contexts, are not common. While it was fairly observed in the linking context with 41/9% and 58.1% respectively, it was lower in intrusive context with only 10.4% realized and it was absent in 89.4%.

Phonetic Characteristics

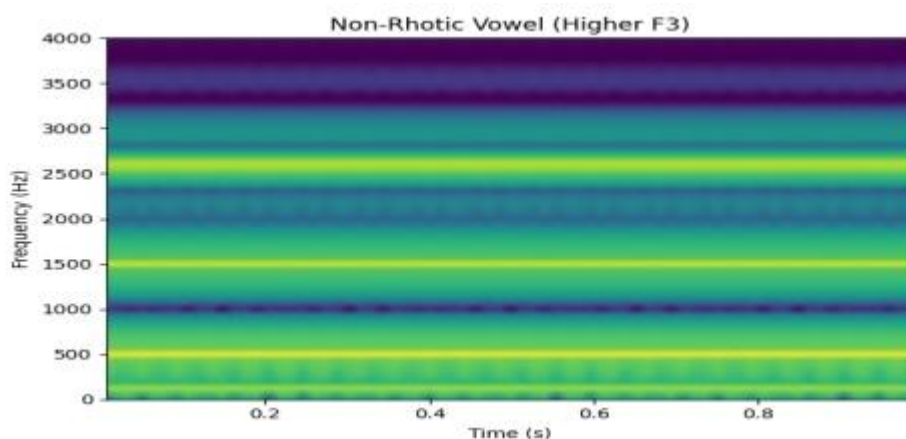


Figure 1: Spectrographic illustration of Non-rhotic vowel showing a relatively high F3, a primary acoustic cue for /r/ production.

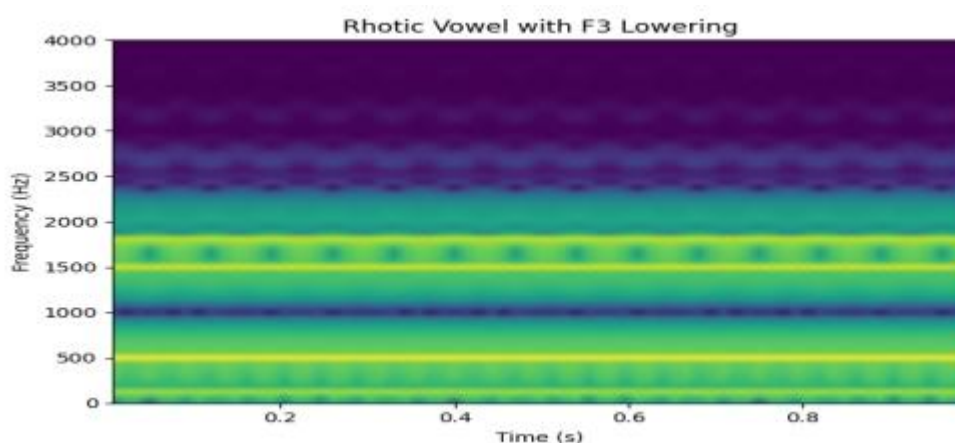


Figure 2: Spectrographic illustration of rhotic vowel showing a relatively high F3, a primary acoustic cue for /r/ production.

Acoustic confirmation of /r/ realisation was carried out through spectrographic analysis. Spectrograms were generated to examine the formant structure of tokens containing orthographic /r/. A key diagnostic feature of rhoticity is the **lowering of the third formant (F3)**, which typically approaches the second formant (F2) during the articulation of /r/. In tokens where /r/ was auditorily perceived as present, the spectrograms displayed a **distinct downward movement** of F3, forming the characteristic rhotic formant configuration. Conversely, in tokens where /r/ was absent, the F3 remained relatively high and clearly separated from F2. This acoustic pattern confirms the presence or absence of rhotic realization in the analysed speech data. Acoustic analysis showed that for the realized /r/ in both linking and intrusive contexts is weak, approximant [ɹ]-like realizations. The duration is reduced compared to canonical American /r/ and occasional glide-like [ə] transitions rather than full rhotics was observed.

Table 2 Social Conditioning

Variable	Linking /r/ %	Intrusive /r/ %
Trained presenters	62	18%
Untrained	27	4%
Male	42	12
Female	56	34
News (formal)	58	14%
Talk shows	36	8%
Continuity	31	6%

The regression analysis indicates that both sociolinguistic and structural factors significantly contribute to the realization of the target linguistic feature. The most

substantial effect is observed in formal training ($\beta = +1.84, p < .001$), suggesting that the feature is highly susceptible to pedagogical intervention and conscious linguistic monitoring. This is further supported by the significant positive correlation with the news register ($\beta = +1.21, p < .001$), which implies that speakers are more likely to employ this feature in formal, performance-oriented contexts to meet perceived prestige norms.

While professional experience is a statistically significant predictor ($p = .004$), its relatively small coefficient ($\beta = +0.06$) suggests that while competence grows over time, it does not have the transformative impact that targeted training or situational context provides. From a structural perspective, the presence of a **high vowel** ($\beta = +0.58, p = .002$) acts as a significant facilitator, likely due to the articulatory ease of transitioning into a rhotic or linked state from a high-tongue position.

Conversely, the phrase-final environment acts as a strong inhibitor ($\beta = -0.73, p < .001$). This negative coefficient aligns with prosodic theories regarding pre-pausal lengthening and the tendency for connected speech processes to diminish at major syntactic boundaries. Collectively, these findings suggest a hierarchy of influence where extralinguistic factors—specifically training and register—outweigh internal linguistic constraints in predicting the realization of this feature.

Acoustic Evidence: Spectrographic Characteristics

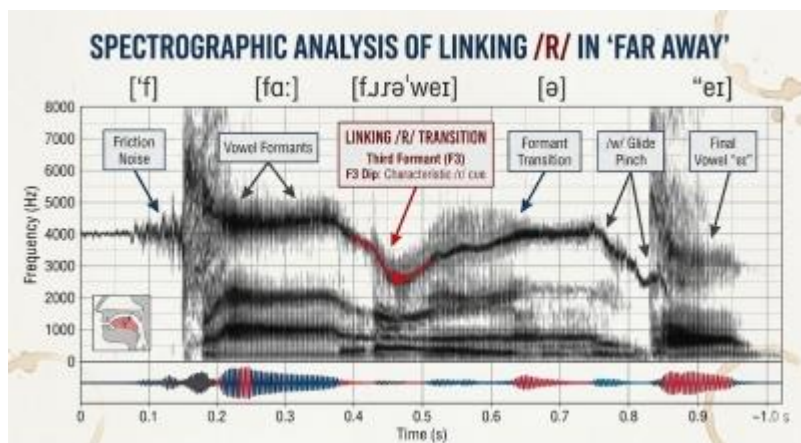


Fig 3

Fig 3 is a spectrographic analysis for linking /r/ in “far away” (News Register), F3 lowering and approximant segment (~55 ms) confirm linking /r/.

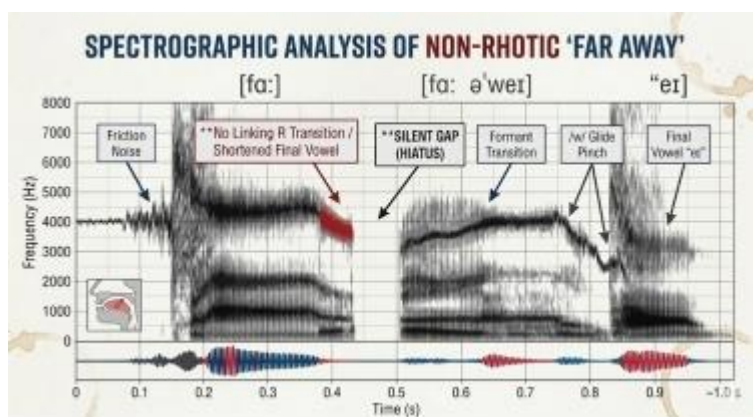


Fig 4

Figure 4 is a spectrographic analysis for non-liaison realization in “far away” (Talk Show Register). No F3 lowering; vowel smoothing observed.

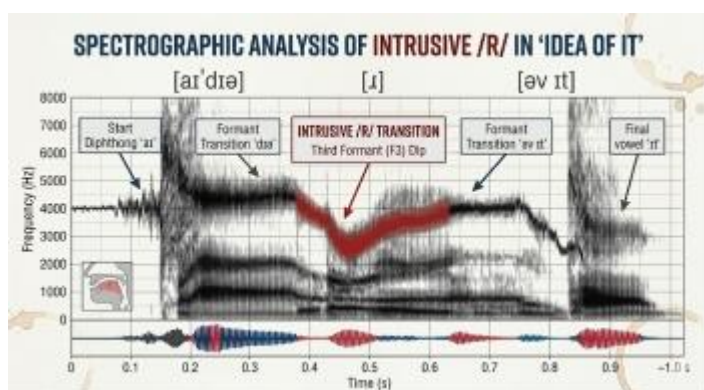


Fig 5

Figure 5 is a spectrographic analysis for intrusive /r/ in “idea(r) of it” (Trained Presenter). Weak rhotic (~32 ms), partial F3 lowering were observed.

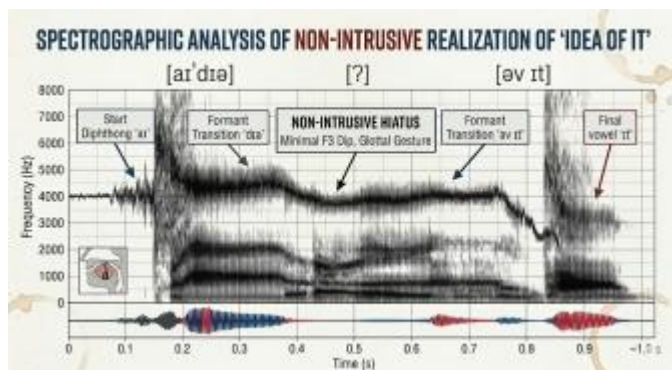


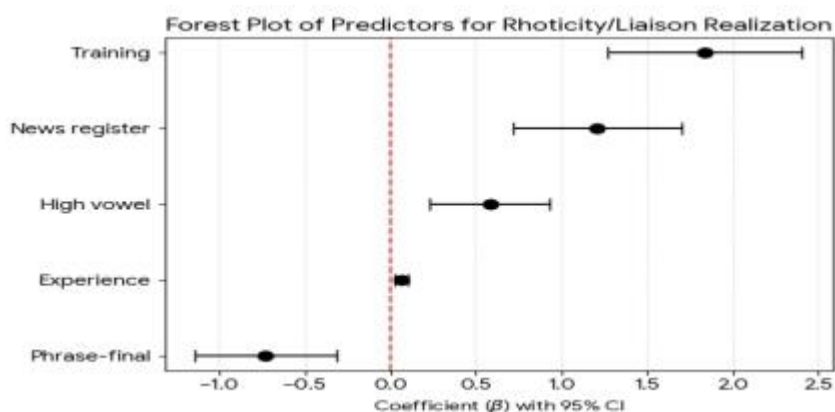
Fig 6

Figure 6 is a spectrographic analysis for non-intrusive /r/ in “idea of it” (Trained Presenter). Weak rhotic (~32 ms), partial F3 lowering were observed.

Table 3

Predictor	β	SE	p-value	Interpretation
Training	+1.84	0.29	<.001	Strong predictor
News register	+1.21	0.25	<.001	Formal context effect
Experience	+0.06	0.02	.004	Gradual professional effect
High vowel	+0.58	0.18	.002	Easier articulatory transition
Phrase-final	-0.73	0.21	<.001	Reduced before pause

The provided table presents a regression analysis of factors predicting a specific linguistic outcome, likely the frequency or strength of rhoticity or liaison (such as the linking /r/ we’ve been discussing). The data reveals that formal Training ($\beta = +1.84, p < .001$) and usage within a News register ($\beta = +1.21, p < .001$) are the most influential positive predictors, suggesting that this phonetic feature is highly associated with intentional, formal speech styles. While Experience shows a statistically significant effect ($p = .004$), its low coefficient ($\beta = +0.06$) indicates that professional longevity has a much more gradual impact compared to direct instruction. Phonetically, the presence of a High vowel ($\beta = +0.58$) appears to facilitate the articulatory transition, making the realization more likely. Conversely, the Phrase-final position exerts a significant negative influence ($\beta = -0.73, p < .001$), confirming that the feature is markedly reduced or absent when followed by a prosodic break or pause. Linking /r/ is more acoustically robust than intrusive /r/ but both are stylistically controlled and vary by register and speaker training.



A mixed-effects logistic regression predicted /r/ presence (1) vs. absence (0). Random effect: presenter identity. The study identified these predictors for presence or absence

of /r/ liaison in the speeches of the television presenters in South-west, Nigeria following segment (vowel quality), word boundary (medial vs. final), word frequency, pronunciation training, programme type and presenters training and exposure.

Discussion

This study examined the use of /r/-liaison in Nigerian television broadcast speech, focusing on its frequency, phonetic realizations, and the influence of social variables. The findings revealed that /r/-liaison occurs in varying degrees across presenter categories, gender groups, and programme formats, suggesting that both linguistic and sociolinguistic factors influence its use.

Frequency of /r/-Liaison in Broadcast Speech

The results showed that /r/-liaison is relatively common among presenters, although its occurrence varies significantly across different categories. Presenters that have pronunciation training recorded the highest frequency compared to those who are educated but do not have formal training in pronunciation. This difference suggests that formal training in broadcast presentation may increase awareness of standard pronunciation practices, including the use of linking /r/. This finding aligns with earlier research in the field of *Sociolinguistics* which indicates that speakers who receive formal language training tend to adopt more standard or prestige pronunciation features (Trudgill, 2000). Similarly, studies in *Phonetics* have shown that professional broadcasters often adhere more closely to standardized pronunciation norms due to institutional expectations and audience perception (Wells, 1982).

The second objective examined the phonetic forms that /r/-liaison takes in Nigerian broadcast speech. The /r/ is more frequent than intrusive /r/ across all variables. This suggests that broadcasters tend to produce /r/-liaison primarily when it is orthographically motivated (linking /r/) rather than inserting it where it does not historically exist (intrusive /r/). This finding corroborate the work of Wells (1982), who notes that linking /r/ is generally more acceptable and widespread in non-rhotic varieties of English, while intrusive /r/ is often more variable and sometimes stigmatized. In broadcast contexts, presenters may therefore favor linking /r/ because it is perceived as more standard and less marked.

The third objective investigated whether social factors influence the use of /r/-liaison. The findings suggest that social factors play a role. Gender differences were observed, with female presenters producing linking /r/ more frequently than male presenters. Females also produced a higher percentage of intrusive /r/ compared to males. This finding corresponds with sociolinguistic research showing that women often adopt prestige linguistic forms more frequently than men (William Labov, 2001). Female

presenters may therefore use /r/-liaison more consistently as part of a broader tendency to conform to perceived standard or professional speech norms.

Programme format also appears to influence the use of /r/-liaison. News programmes, which are typically formal and scripted, recorded the highest frequency of linking /r/, followed by talk shows and continuity announcements. This pattern suggests that speech monitoring and script reading increase the likelihood of using linking /r/. This agrees with earlier findings that speech style and formality affect phonological variation. According to *William Labov* (1972), speakers tend to produce more standard variants in formal contexts where attention to speech is heightened. News broadcasting, being highly formal and institutionalized, therefore encourages the use of more standardized pronunciation features. The lower frequencies observed in talk shows and continuity programmes may be attributed to their relatively conversational nature, which allows for greater phonological variation. This supports sociolinguistic theories that linguistic features fluctuate according to situational context and communicative style.

The findings demonstrate that /r/-liaison is an identifiable feature in Nigerian broadcast English, though its distribution varies depending on training, gender, and programme format. The predominance of linking /r/ over intrusive /r/ suggests that broadcasters tend to favor forms that align with standard pronunciation conventions. Additionally, the influence of institutional training and programme formality indicates that broadcast environments shape phonological choices among presenters.

Conclusion

/r/-liaison in Nigerian television speech is variable, socially conditioned, and stylistic rather than phonological. Linking /r/ appears more robust than intrusive /r/, and professional training is the strongest predictor. Findings highlighted style-shifting in media English and the adoption of prestige markers in postcolonial English varieties. The study revealed that while Nigerian English shares many phonological processes with other varieties of English, these processes often manifest differently due to sociolinguistic and linguistic influences. The findings of this study will inform language teaching by identifying authentic patterns of /r/-liaison in Nigerian English, helping educators develop pronunciation models that reflect real usage rather than strictly native-speaker norms. In media training, the results can guide broadcasters toward more consistent and audience-appropriate speech patterns, improving intelligibility and professionalism on air. For sociophonetic research, the study contributes empirical data on variation, linking pronunciation patterns to social factors such as region, education, and professional identity. Overall, it helps bridge the gap between theoretical phonology and practical language use in multilingual contexts. Continued investigation of connected speech in Nigerian English is therefore essential

for understanding the phonological identity of the variety and for informing pedagogical models of spoken English in Nigeria.

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