

# Cultural conceptualisations and the cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY in Nigerian English

Anna Finzel

Department of English and American Studies,  
University of Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany

## Correspondence

Anna Finzel, Department of English and  
American Studies, University of Potsdam, Am  
Neuen Palais 10, 14469 Potsdam, Germany.  
Email: [finzel@uni-potsdam.de](mailto:finzel@uni-potsdam.de)

## Abstract

The article scrutinises the concepts of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY as reflected in Nigerian English. For this, a mixed-methods approach is suggested that uses the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* as a resource to shed light on lexical frequency and collocations, as well as a newspaper corpus of online articles from *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* for an analysis of cultural conceptualisations. On the basis of the findings, a Nigerian cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY is proposed in the form of a network of inter-related cultural conceptualisations. It is also discussed how this model is conceptually connected to neighbouring cultural models. The aim of this article is, first, to show that Nigerian English has been conceptually adapted to the local setting and is fully capable of expressing cultural conceptualisations and, second, to highlight the usefulness of analytical concepts from Cultural Linguistics to the study of world Englishes.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Studies on structural features of Nigerian English (NigE), an Outer Circle variety in the Kachruvian sense (Kachru, 1985), have shown that it has developed distinct characteristics on all linguistic levels (see Josiah & Babatunde, 2011, on phonological features; Alo & Mesthrie, 2008, on morphosyntactic features; Adegbija, 1989, and Bamiro, 1994, on lexico-semantic variation; also compare Mesthrie, 2008, and Jowitt, 2019). The variety is acquired by most speakers as an L2 (Ugwuanyi, 2022), which implies that they master at least one other language. Given that Nigeria is per

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2025 The Author(s). World Englishes published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

se a multilingual and multicultural environment, NigE gets in touch with other languages not only in the individual speaker but also in the speech community at large (compare Jowitt, 2019, pp. 11ff.). Since languages can be considered carriers of cultural knowledge, it is thus not surprising that culture-specific beliefs and worldviews are expressed in NigE because—as Schmid et al. (2008, p. 93) nicely put it—its ‘speakers have to juggle ideas and concepts from totally different historical and cultural contexts’.

It is certainly interesting to ask in advance at which stage of a variety in the making such cultural knowledge enters. One of the most widely known approaches to describing the development of postcolonial varieties like NigE is Schneider’s (2007) dynamic model. This model proposes five stages of the developmental process: foundation, exonormative stabilisation, nativisation, endonormative stabilisation and differentiation. Of these, the nativisation phase is an apt candidate to the entry of ideas from the locally prevalent conceptual systems into a variety of English. Incidentally, NigE seems to have well passed this stage, as argued by Ugorji (2015) and Ugwuanyi (2022; 2023). It should be noted, however, that Schneider’s model maintains a low profile concerning the role of culture in shaping the ‘New Englishes’ (see the remarks at the beginning of Wolf & Peters, 2022). Akinlotan’s (2019) model on the evolution of NigE is more outspoken in this regard. As the author suggests, in the process of the development of a NigE, it was especially in the stage of what he calls ‘naturalisation’ (which corresponds to Schneider’s nativisation stage) that English was more and more adapted to the local context, meaning that culture-specific conventions now began to shape NigE:

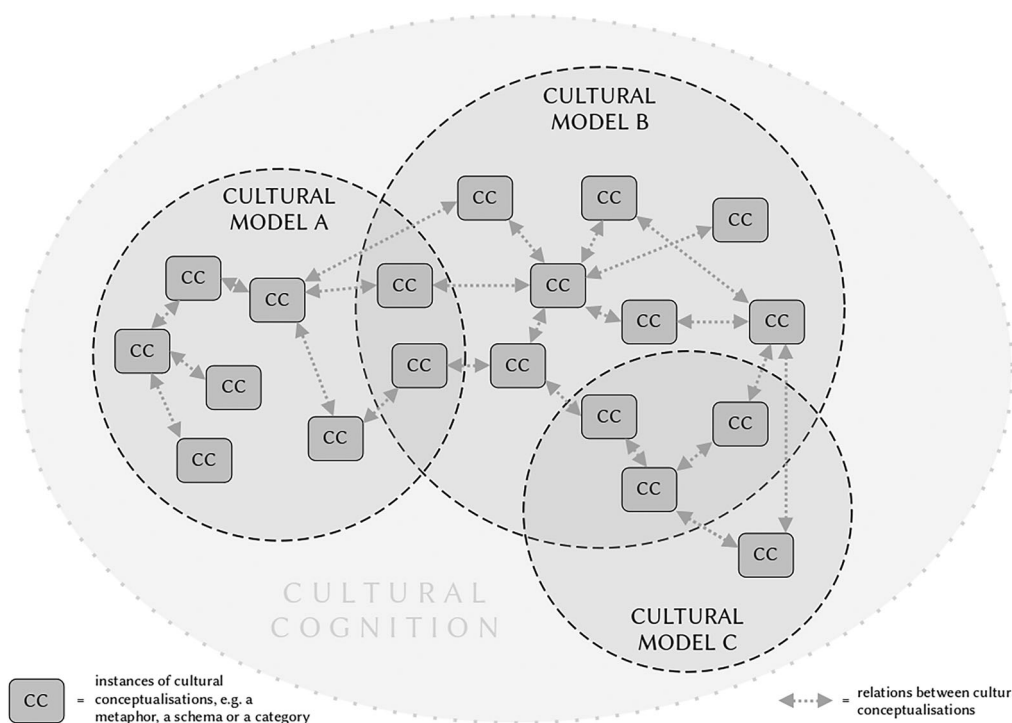
Hence, experimentation and creativity started with the language, leading to the development of new norms, new constructions, new forms and functions that might have been described as irregular and unconventional in the initiation and stabilisation stages. In other words, there was a positive attitude towards fusing the language into the local languages, such that effective communication, which takes into cognisance cultural nuances, was attained. (Akinlotan, 2019, p. 53)

In cultural-linguistic terms, cultural conceptualisations began to surface in NigE. While the study of structural features alone cannot fully account for the ‘cultural nuances’ mentioned by Akinlotan, the analytical toolbox of Cultural Linguistics, as will be seen, is in fact an indispensable addition to a comprehensive exploration of NigE, arguing that NigE is worthwhile studying not only from a structural perspective but also from a cultural-linguistic viewpoint. By means of the topics of fertility and infertility, this paper demonstrates that NigE is a variety that expresses culture-specific ways of thinking and shows how interconnected cultural conceptualisations form complex cultural cognitive models. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. How frequent are the lemmas FERTILITY and INFERTILITY in the Nigerian component of the *Corpus of Global Web-based English*, also in comparison with other country-specific components? Do the lexical profiles of the Nigerian component stick out in any way?
2. What does an analysis of ‘fertility’- and ‘infertility’-related collocational patterns in the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* reveal about connotations and the setup of the concepts of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY?
3. Which cultural conceptualisations pertaining to FERTILITY and INFERTILITY can be detected in articles in Nigerian online newspapers?
4. How do these combine to form a cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY?
5. How does this cultural model connect to other cultural models?

## 2 | CULTURAL-LINGUISTIC KEY TERMS

The research field of Cultural Linguistics, which draws on cognitive-linguistic key concepts, is dedicated to exploring patterns of thought that underlie people’s language use across different cultural groups. These patterns are subsumed under the notion of ‘cultural conceptualisations’ (see Palmer, 1996; Sharifian, 2011, 2017). It should be noted here



**FIGURE 1** Schema of how interrelated cultural conceptualisations form the conceptual networks that constitute cultural models.

that Sharifian, who can without exaggeration be called one of the founding fathers of Cultural Linguistics, repeatedly mentioned explicitly three types of cultural conceptualisations: cultural schemas, cultural categories and cultural metaphors. Although few studies actually claim that these are the *only* three types, the repeated reproduction of this triad has led to its becoming almost a mantra (Fang, 2019; Xu & Sharifian, 2018). However, in the view adopted here, any culture-specific manifestation of a cognitive–linguistic phenomenon can be considered a type of ‘cultural conceptualisation’ when, scrutinised from a cultural–linguistic perspective, it is embedded in a certain cultural context and heterogeneously shared among the members of a cultural group. In this sense, cultural conceptualisations may not only encompass ‘Sharifian’s triad’, but further types of phenomena such as culture-specific concepts or conceptual blends.

Cultural models, a more encompassing notion, are ‘networks of interrelated cultural conceptualisations’ pertaining to a particular semantic domain (Wolf & Polzenhagen, 2009, pp. 69f.; also compare the continued discussion of the notion in Wolf & Polzenhagen, 2024). Cultural models therefore organise more specific cultural conceptualisations and they provide a fundamental logic to the field of knowledge in question. Moreover, they link to neighbouring cultural models, so that the cultural cognition of a social group can be regarded as one big network of interrelated cultural conceptualisations that are intertwined in numerous cultural models. Figure 1 schematically illustrates this understanding.

While these conceptual patterns are pre-linguistic, they constitute the conceptual foundation on which language use is built. Investigations in cultural conceptualisations and cultural models thus go beyond the analysis of structural features. It becomes clear that the field of world Englishes offers numerous research possibilities for cultural–linguistic explorations, as the diverging socio-cultural experiences of the speakers trigger broad conceptual variation that becomes manifest in the varieties of English. Likewise, the adoption of pre-linguistic conceptual material into an

L2-variety (or L3, L4, ..., for that matter) of English bears witness of a localisation of the given variety (see Callies, 2023; Sharifian, 2015).

As a corollary of the abovementioned claim that cultural conceptualisations typically surface in the stage of nativisation/naturalisation, their observation in NigE would support the argument put forth in Ugorji (2015), Ugwuanyi (2022, 2023) and Akinlotan (2019), namely that NigE has well passed beyond these stages and become a localised variety in its own right. A number of studies on cultural conceptualisations in NigE have yielded evidence for this ongoing localisation process situated at the conceptual level. In their comprehensive presentation of the African cultural model of COMMUNITY, Wolf & Polzenhagen (2007, 2009) and Polzenhagen & Wolf (2007) have given plenty of examples from Nigeria. In a thematically linked strand of research, Callies (2017, 2023, 2024) sheds light on proverbs and idioms in NigE and Nigerian Pidgin English. Various instances of manifestations of cultural conceptualisations and cultural models of GENDER and HOMOSEXUALITY in NigE are presented in Finzel & Wolf (2017, 2019) and Finzel, 2021a, 2021b). Keškić (2021) analyses how EAGLE is conceptualised in NigE. Taiwo et al. (2023) turn towards a Yoruba gospel song and carve out the cultural conceptualisations contained in it. They also mention further research on metaphors in various Nigerian music genres, although these studies do not adopt a markedly cultural-linguistic standpoint. The present article seeks to add to this body of research by investigating cultural conceptualisations and the cultural model pertaining to FERTILITY and INFERTILITY as represented in NigE. In what follows, a brief overview on the topic of fertility/infertility is given.

### 3 | FERTILITY AND INFERTILITY AS SALIENT NIGERIAN DISCOURSES

Fertility and procreation are highly valued in Nigerian society, a circumstance for which there are several reasons. For example, having children guarantees the perpetuation of the lineage and the retention of the self in cross-generational memory (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994). Social phenomena associated with these driving forces and, likewise, observable in the Nigerian setting are ancestral cult and polygamy (Hayase & Liaw, 1997, p. 296). Ancestor worship aids in spiritually connecting to past and future generations (see Callaway, 1981; Lawuyi, 1988) and Wolf & Polzenhagen (2009, pp. 101ff.) even showed that the ancestors and living family members are understood to share the same realm of being. Additionally, a more pragmatic reason for valuing fertility is the role of children as caregivers to their parents. A lack in retirement homes and insufficient pension schemes renders them an important provision for old age (Fapohunda, 2013; Tanyi et al., 2018).

In turn, infertility (medically phrased as 'the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse'; World Health Organization, 2023) and childlessness are factors that may lead to strong stigmatisation. This is especially true for women, since womanhood and motherhood are conceptually very closely linked and marriage is expected to result in children (Taiwo & Adebayo, 2022). Wolf (2006, p. 46; original emphasis elided) moreover adds that 'childlessness may be understood as breaking the continuation of the sacred community and therefore as sin' and that 'in the African context, community and family are interchangeable terms'. So in effect, the significantly important cultural concepts of FERTILITY and COMMUNITY are closely connected through the conceptual chain FERTILITY → PARENTHOOD → FAMILY → COMMUNITY. The next section lays out the methodology on which the current analysis is based.

### 4 | METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed-method approach in order to carve out cognitive patterns of thought concerning FERTILITY and INFERTILITY in NigE. Like previous studies on cultural models (e.g. Borschke & Wolf, 2024; Wolf & Polzenhagen, 2009), the current paper seeks to benefit from combining a corpus-linguistic investigation with other methods, in this case, an analysis of online newspaper articles. This mixed-method approach offers a more comprehensive view

on the cultural model in question than a single-method approach. Employing the *Corpus of Global Web-based English* (GloWbE) was motivated by its usability for cultural analyses (Davies & Fuchs, 2015), although the author is aware of the disadvantages of the corpus pointed out in Polzenhagen (2022).

For an analysis of lexical frequency, GloWbE was searched for the lemmas FERTILITY and INFERTILITY. In the case of FERTILITY, this also included verb forms, but excluded 'fertiliser' and 'fertilizer' (and misspelled variants), as these words obviously refer to agricultural issues. In the case of INFERTILITY, the absence of verb forms within the lemma (for example, '\*to infertilise') reduced the number of hits. The sheer size of GloWbE offered the advantage that the lexical frequency analysis produced tens of thousands of search hits. However, this came with the trade-off that, out of economic reasons, these hits could not be cleaned up for unwanted results, a circumstance that needs to be kept in mind.

An analysis of collocational patterns was conducted in order to get a more fine-grained image of the concepts FERTILITY and INFERTILITY in the Nigerian component of GloWbE. Particular focus in this analytical step was put on connotations, to which collocational patterns give hints (Stubbs, 2005). Selected components of GloWbE were searched for collocates of the terms 'fertility' and 'infertility', each with a collocational span of 3 to the left and to the right. Minimum mutual information was set to 3 in order to remove less interesting high-frequency words like 'and' or 'of' from the list of collocates. The results were grouped by lemmas and sorted by frequency. For each selected GloWbE component, the ten most frequent collocates were considered for the analysis. In cases in which more than one collocate was at rank 10 of the list, the other, equally frequent collocates were also included. After these steps, all instances were individually checked and cleaned up so that, eventually, Tables 1 and 2 would only feature collocations that deal with human (in)fertility, rather than soil (in)fertility. Here, GloWbE revealed some shortcomings in respect of inaccuracies in lemmatising: for instance, TREATMENT and TREAT, as well as DECLINE and DECLINING were displayed as separate lemmas, which might have distorted the results. Nevertheless, since these inaccuracies were equally applicable to all sections in GloWbE, the lists in Tables 1 and 2 are still considered comparable.

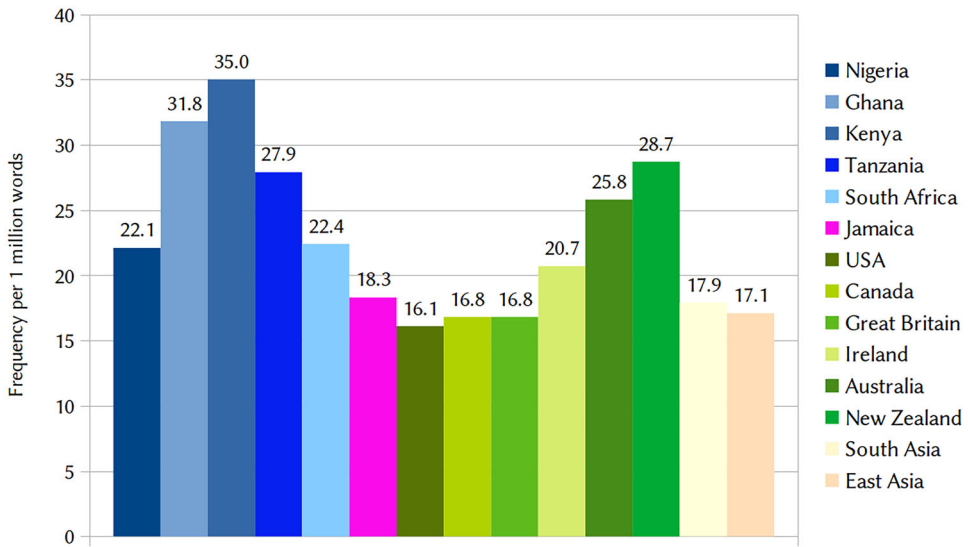
For an analysis of cultural conceptualisations pertaining to FERTILITY and INFERTILITY, the online platforms of two Nigerian newspapers were consulted: *The Guardian* (<http://guardian.ng/>) and *Vanguard* (<https://www.vanguardngr.com/>), both of which are widely read and perceived as independent from political control (Isaac & Roper, 2021). The platforms were searched for the terms 'fertility' and 'infertility'. Errors in the search algorithms were not accounted for, so all articles rendered as search hits were integrated into the corpus. In total, 170 articles on fertility (1 from *The Guardian*, 169 from *Vanguard*) and 111 articles on infertility (6 from *The Guardian*, 105 from *Vanguard*) were taken into account and analysed for conceptualisations of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY. Many articles reported on scientific studies, but medical, psychological or otherwise scientific facts were not annotated as conceptualisations; myths, beliefs or worldviews described in the articles, however, were.

## 5 | FINDINGS

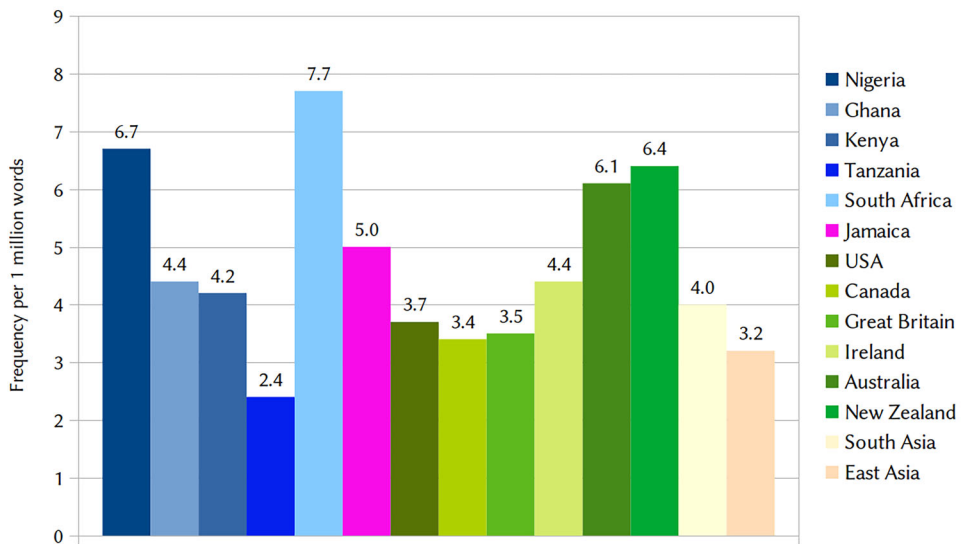
### 5.1 | Lexical frequency

In this part of the analysis, the frequency of the lemmas FERTILITY and INFERTILITY in GloWbE sought to give hints on the salience of these topics across different English varieties (compare the 'cultural keyword' approach by Wierzbicka, 1997).

Figure 2 shows that the lemma FERTILITY is indeed most frequent in the African components (blue bars) of GloWbE, with two notable exceptions: for some reason, the lemma was third and fifth most frequent in the New Zealand and the Australian component, so fertility seems to be a much-discussed topic in these speech communities. In all other sections, which include the Jamaican component (pink bar), the remainder of the Inner Circle varieties (green bars) and the collectively bundled South Asian and East Asian sections (beige bars), the lemma was less frequent.



**FIGURE 2** Frequency of the lemma FERTILITY in GloWbE. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]



**FIGURE 3** Frequency of the lemma INFERTILITY in GloWbE. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]

When taking a look at the African section, it can be seen that the lemma is the least frequent in the Nigerian and South African components of GloWbE. In contrast, Kenya, Ghana and Tanzania display considerably more occurrences. The visible variation within the African section is unexpected, but it is possible that the search was affected by the influx of agricultural fertility topics, even though this was sought to be countered (see Section 4 on the methodology). It is nonetheless also conceivable that fertility is simply less of a salient topic in Nigeria than in Kenya, Ghana or Tanzania.

The results for the lemma INFERTILITY, illustrated in Figure 3, are partly converse, although not in respect of the New Zealand and the Australian component, where the lemma is once more surprisingly frequent. Again, the African

section in general features the lemma more often, but in this case, Tanzania displays the lowest frequency of all varieties. In contrast, the South African and the Nigerian components are the ones in which instances of INFERTILITY occur most frequently, as opposed to the findings from the African section in Figure 2. Therefore, infertility issues are possibly more of a salient topic there. Another noteworthy point is the circumstance that the Jamaican component stands out as well, which could point to the salience of infertility discourses in Jamaican English.

## 5.2 | Collocations and connotations

In the next step, singled-out components of GloWbE were searched for collocates of 'fertility' and 'infertility', in order to detect connotations, which 'can be inferred from their recurrent collocates' (Stubbs, 2005, p. 15). This analytical step sought to get a more fine-grained image of the concepts FERTILITY and INFERTILITY in NigE as represented in GloWbE.

Based on the findings displayed in Figure 2, Table 1 draws a comparison of collocational patterns involving 'fertility' between the following three components:

1. the Nigerian component as the one in focus of this study, which incidentally had featured the lemma FERTILITY least frequently within the African section;
2. the Kenyan component, where the lemma FERTILITY was most frequent across all sections that were compared;
3. the British component, in order to enable a comparison with an Inner Circle variety.

When categorising the collocates in Table 1 according to the connotations they convey, as is done in Figure 4, it becomes visibly obvious that the three connotational profiles show some striking differences.

Two thirds of the 'fertility' collocates in the Nigerian component of GloWbE can be subsumed under the label *demographic connotations* (RATE, DECLINE, HIGH, MORTALITY, LOW). Another 23% of the collocates have *medical connotations* (CLINIC, TREATMENT), while 12% could be considered as alluding to *social connotations* (AFFECT).

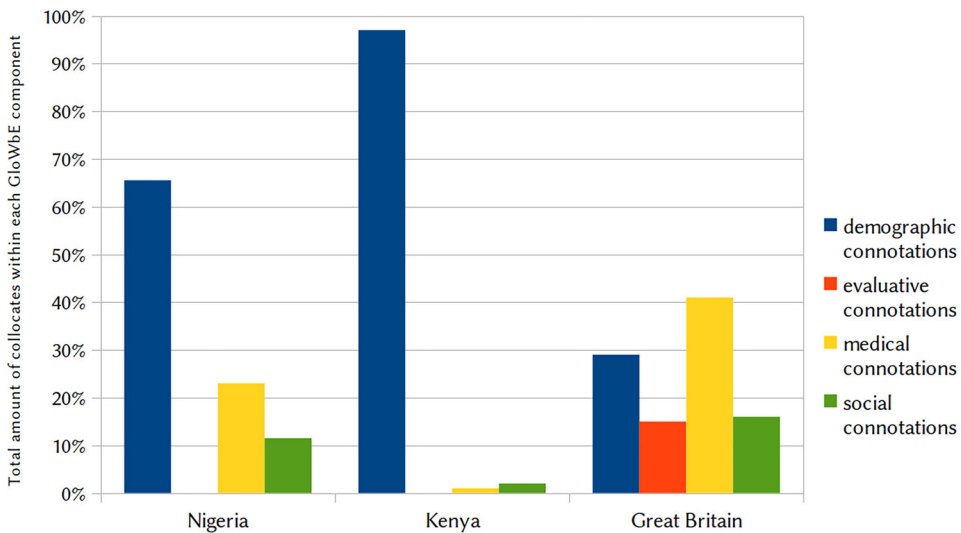
In comparison, in the Kenyan component, in which the lemma 'fertility' was highly frequent in general (see Figure 2), the collocational analysis reveals that with 97%, almost all of the collocates insinuate *demographic connotations* (RATE, HIGH, DECLINE, LOW, INCREASE). Only a marginal number of 3% pertains to the categories *social connotations* (POOR) and *medical connotations* (IMPROVE).

**TABLE 1** Collocates of 'fertility' in GloWbE.

Nigeria (42,646,098 words)			Kenya (41,061,220 words)			Great Britain (387,615,074 words)		
Collocate (lemmatised)	Freq.	Freq./1m words	Collocate (lemmatised)	Freq.	Freq./1m words	Collocate (lemmatised)	Freq.	Freq./1m words
RATE	40	0.9	RATE	61	1.5	TREATMENT	326	0.8
DECLINE	26	0.6	HIGH	20	0.5	RATE	225	0.6
AFFECT	16	0.4	DECLINE	8	0.2	PROBLEM	182	0.5
CLINIC	16	0.4	LOW	8	0.2	CLINIC	116	0.3
TREATMENT	16	0.4	INCREASE	5	0.1	WOMAN	105	0.3
HIGH	11	0.3	POOR	2	0.1	AFFECT	93	0.2
MORTALITY	11	0.3	IMPROVE	1	0.0	CONTROL	70	0.2
LOW	3	0.1				DRUG	68	0.2
						DECLINE	60	0.2

**TABLE 2** Collocates of 'infertility' in GloWbE.

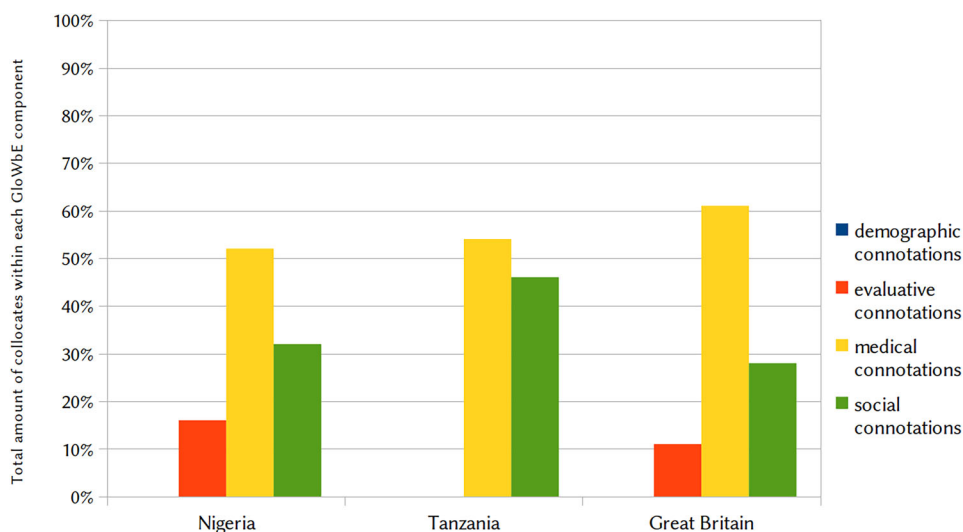
Nigeria (42,646,098 words)			Tanzania (35,160,034 words)			Great Britain (387,615,074 words)		
Collocate (lemmatised)	Freq.	Freq./1m words	Collocate (lemmatised)	Freq.	Freq./1m words	Collocate (lemmatised)	Freq.	Freq./1m words
CAUSE	31	0.7	CAUSE	8	0.2	CAUSE	110	0.3
UNEXPLAINED	12	0.3	MALE	7	0.2	TREATMENT	91	0.2
MALE	10	0.2	MAN	6	0.2	WOMAN	48	0.1
COUPLE	10	0.2	WOMAN	4	0.1	PROBLEM	45	0.1
ISSUE	9	0.2	DEATH	3	0.1	UNEXPLAINED	36	0.1
BOTH	8	0.2	REASON	3	0.1	MALE	32	0.1
PROBLEM	8	0.2	SICKNESS	3	0.1	SECONDARY	24	0.1
MISCARRIAGE	6	0.1	TREAT	3	0.1	COUPLE	23	0.1
TREATMENT	6	0.1				NETWORK	18	0.1
FEMALE	6	0.1						

**FIGURE 4** Distribution of connotational categories of 'fertility' collocates in GloWbE. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]

In the British component, most collocates (41%) have *medical connotations* (TREATMENT, CLINIC, DRUG), followed by a 29% share of collocates with *demographic connotations* (RATE, CONTROL, DECLINE) and 16% with *social connotations* (WOMAN, AFFECT). Another category labelled *evaluative connotations* (PROBLEM), 'which signal speaker attitude' (Stubbs, 2005, p. 23), makes up 15% of the collocates.

It was shown in Figure 3 that the Nigerian section of GloWbE featured the lemma INFERTILITY second most frequently. Table 2 provides an overview of the most frequent collocates of 'infertility' in the following three components of GloWbE:

1. the Nigerian component, again because it is obviously the focus of interest here;



**FIGURE 5** Distribution of connotational categories of 'infertility' collocates in GloWbE. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://wileyonlinelibrary.com)]

- the Tanzanian component, where the lemma INFERTILITY was least frequent across all sections that were included in the comparison;
- the British component, as representative of an Inner Circle variety.

Figure 5 illustrates how the connotational categories of 'infertility' collocates, derived from Table 2, are distributed. Contrary to the observations made for the collocates of 'fertility', the category *demographic connotations* is completely absent in collocational patterns pertaining to 'infertility', suggesting that questions of population growth rates are less central to the concept INFERTILITY than to the concept FERTILITY.

In the Nigerian component of GloWbE, collocates with *medical connotations* (CAUSE, UNEXPLAINED, MISCARRIAGE, TREATMENT) are most frequent, accounting for 52% of all collocates in the Nigerian component. Furthermore, *social connotations* (MALE, COUPLE, BOTH, FEMALE) make up 32% of 'infertility' collocates and a considerable share of 16% indicate *evaluative connotations* (ISSUE, PROBLEM).

The collocates in the Tanzanian component are almost equally split between *medical connotations* with 54% (CAUSE, DEATH, REASON, SICKNESS, TREAT) and *social connotations* with 46% (MALE, MAN, WOMAN). No other connotational categories were identified.

In turn, the British component resembles the Nigerian component in terms of category distribution. Most collocates can be assigned to the category *medical connotations* (CAUSE, TREATMENT, UNEXPLAINED, SECONDARY), adding up to 61% of all collocates in total. About a quarter, namely 28% of collocates in the British component are considered as holding *social connotations* (WOMAN, MALE, COUPLE, NETWORK). The remainder of 11% is subsumed as *evaluative connotations* (PROBLEM).

With regard to the connotational profiles, three interesting observations can be made. First, the Kenyan profile of 'fertility' collocates and the Tanzanian profile of 'infertility' collocates visibly stand out when juxtaposed to their respective Nigerian and British counterparts. This observation is in line with the findings from the analysis of lexical frequency, where the Kenyan and the Tanzanian sections also occupied prominent positions in the cross-sectional comparison. The differences in the connotational profiles and the patterns of lexical frequency might bear witness to a general uniqueness of the concepts FERTILITY in Kenyan English and INFERTILITY in Tanzanian English.

Second, it is noteworthy that both British connotational profiles, the one for 'fertility' collocates and the one for 'infertility' collocates, emphasise medical and evaluative connotations. This could mean that FERTILITY and INFERTILITY in British English are central concepts to a cultural schema of MEDICINE and a cultural category of MEDICAL ISSUES, AND VICE VERSA, and vice versa, and that cultural conceptualisations have a markedly emotive colouring.

Third, the Nigerian connotational profiles exhibit some peculiarities. On the one hand, the 'fertility' profile seems to be positioned at an interstage between the Kenyan and the British profile. In terms of demographic connotations, it resembles the Kenyan profile, but in terms of medical and social connotations, it is more similar to the British one. This intermediate position could mean that the concept FERTILITY in NigE blends elements from both Inner Circle discourses as well as from local African discourses. On the other hand, the Nigerian connotational profile of 'infertility' collocates shows some parallels to the British profile. This suggests that the concept INFERTILITY in NigE more closely resembles the concept in British English as an Inner Circle variety.

This section aimed to point out that connotational profiles created on the basis of a collocate analysis may offer a first glimpse into the setup of a particular concept. In the following section, a conceptualisation analysis seeks to shed further light on the concepts of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY in NigE.

### 5.3 | Conceptualisations

In total, 22 different conceptualisations were found to be instantiated 108 times across the 281 articles of the newspaper corpus. In Table 3, these conceptualisations are thematically sorted according to how they can be subsumed under an overarching topic (see first column), a sorting by which they will be discussed in this section in descending order of each topic's share.

#### 5.3.1 | (In)Fertility as societal issue (topic share = 39.8%)

There is a substantial number of 43 occurrences of conceptualisations that relate to societal matters, for example, FERTILITY IS A CRUCIAL COMPONENT TO COMMUNITY (eight occurrences; see example (9)) but also a unique occurrence of FERTILITY IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT as in (10):

(9) Fertility care, including infertility treatment, should be considered *a principal component of family building and family planning*. (The-Guardian\_Infertility\_006)

(10) In some circles, fertility treatment is perceived as waste of money. However, this argument, which is usually based on the belief that *the business bearing children is a fundamental human right*, will not stand the test of time. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_122)

From these two logical baselines, it follows that INFERTILITY is considered a TABOO, which occurred once (see example (11)), and, with 11 occurrences, INFERTILITY IS A STIGMA in example (12):

(11) Despite the devastating nature of infertility, it has remained one problem anyone would want to bury. Why? *It is perceived as a taboo*. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_158)

(12) People who go through IVF to achieve pregnancy don't talk about it because of our cultural beliefs. They are afraid of being stigmatized but the truth of the matter is that I feel that *if I am childless, that is when I will be stigmatised*. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_126)

The status of infertility as a stigma is coherently associated with the circumstance that it constitutes a societal taboo topic. Although men get stigmatised, too, it is especially the women who suffer from stigmatisation, as becomes

**TABLE 3** Conceptualisations of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY in the newspaper corpus.

Topic	Conceptualisations	Occurrences
<i>(In)Fertility as societal issue</i>	INFERTILITY IS THE WOMAN'S FAULT	21
	INFERTILITY IS A STIGMA	11
	FERTILITY IS A CRUCIAL COMPONENT TO COMMUNITY	8
	FERTILITY IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT	1
	INFERTILITY IS A TABOO	1
	INFERTILITY IS CAUSED BY FAMILY PLANNING	1
	Total:	43
	Topic share:	= 39.8%
<i>Personification</i>	INFERTILITY IS AN ENEMY	18
	INFERTILITY IS A PERSON	4
	FERTILITY IS A PERSON	1
	Total:	23
	Topic share:	= 21.3%
<i>Journey metaphor</i>	FERTILITY/PARENTHOOD IS A JOURNEY	9
	INFERTILITY IS A JOURNEY	5
	INFERTILITY IS A RACE	2
	FERTILITY IS A QUEST	1
	Total:	17
	Topic share:	= 15.7%
<i>Spiritual realm as a causal factor</i>	FERTILITY IS CAUSED BY SPIRITUALITY	9
	FERTILITY IS GOD'S WILL	4
	INFERTILITY IS GOD'S WILL	2
	INFERTILITY IS CAUSED BY WITCHCRAFT	1
	Total:	16
Topic share:	= 14.8%	
<i>Gender identity</i>	FERTILITY IS FEMININITY	3
	FERTILITY IS MASCULINITY	2
	Total:	5
	Topic share:	= 4.6%
<i>Others</i>	INFERTILITY IS A MENACE	2
	INFERTILITY IS A NATURAL FORCE	1
	FERTILITY IS A WAITING GAME	1
	Total:	4
	Topic share:	= 3.7%

clear in the following examples of the conceptualisation INFERTILITY IS THE WOMAN'S FAULT, which was instantiated 21 times:

- (13) Owolabi said: 'As result of high premium place on child bearing, and since in this environment, child-bearing is the sole purpose for marriage, infertility or childlessness is socially destabilising for couples. Infertility carries several stigmas, causes marital disharmony, divorce, suicide, separation, remarriage, social ostracisation and *physical violence against women, even when it is a male factor that is responsible* (Vanguard\_Fertility\_091)
- (14) Commenting on *the discrimination that comes with infertility especially against womenfolk*, the fertility expert explained that the situation is changing for the better because people are getting more educated on the factors responsible for infertility. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_142)

Another single occurrence of the conceptualisation INFERTILITY IS CAUSED BY FAMILY PLANNING bears witness to the beliefs that link to how infertility and its causes are perceived:

- (15) Worried about the myths and misconception surrounding family planning, Country director of Pathfinder International Nigeria, Dr. Farouk Jega has dismissed insinuation that *adopting family planning may cause the development of fibroid and infertility*, saying it is safe for all women. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_051)

All these conceptualisations that embed the issues of fertility and infertility within the broader society connect to the African cultural model of COMMUNITY mentioned before. As Wolf & Polzenhagen (2009, p. 77) remark, 'two interchangeable metonymies based on the kinship concept constitute the core of the African community model: COMMUNITY FOR KINSHIP and KINSHIP FOR COMMUNITY'. In the current context, this means that fertility and infertility cease to be issues that concern only the partners and maybe the closest relatives, and instead become a matter that is relevant to the community at large. In this way, the NigE examples given here relate to and confirm findings from previous research.

### 5.3.2 | Personification (topic share = 21.3%)

Personification is a mechanism that is employed in 23 conceptualisations. For example, in one case, FERTILITY is conceptualised as the SIAMESE TWIN OF POVERTY and the OLDER SIBLING OF CRIME. In four cases, instances of the conceptualisation INFERTILITY IS A PERSON paint the picture of a rather unlikeable and even brutal person:

- (20) *infertility does not discriminate* (Vanguard\_Fertility\_011)
- (21) *1 Ordinary Yet Very Effective Natural Way to Cheat Infertility* (Vanguard\_Fertility\_092)
- (22) *My infertility beat me down*, but by no means did it break me. I am and will always remain, a mother in my heart. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_111)
- (23) There is alarm in reproductive health circles. *Male infertility is on the rampage*. (Vanguard\_Infertility\_090)
- In 18 further occurrences, a more specific type of personification is reflected, namely INFERTILITY IS AN ENEMY. As can be seen, this metaphor is instantiated in quite some variation, and this way vividly elaborates the conceptualisation:
- (24) If you asked me, I think the human race is *losing the battle against infertility* (Vanguard\_Fertility\_015)
- (25) So I don't think we're *winning on the fertility war*. But we have more equipment now *to fight infertility*. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_015)
- (26) *Conquering infertility* in marriage through IVF (Vanguard\_Fertility\_126)

(27) branches of the world famous Scandinavian Nordica Fertility institutions renowned for their exploits and advancements in fertility research, have been *at the forefront of tackling infertility* as a socio-medical problem (Vanguard\_Fertility\_153)

(28) Over the years, we have seen a steady though slow success rates in *the crusade against infertility* in Nigeria, courtesy of half-the-cost discount. (Vanguard\_Infertility\_083)

Again, previous research connects to this finding, because Taiwo & Adebayo (2022, p. 6) also mention an occurrence of INFERTILITY IS AN ENEMY. This shows how conceptualisations are consistently represented in NigE across various sources, which allows us to consider them as systematically entrenched in Nigerian cultural cognition.

### 5.3.3 | *Journey metaphor* (topic share = 15.7%)

Another striking finding is that the journey metaphor is instantiated 17 times. Both FERTILITY (or PARENTHOOD) and INFERTILITY are found to be understood as a (DIFFICULT) JOURNEY (in total, 14 occurrences):

(1) Another thing is that I always follow-up with them on their treatment by sending them messages via WhatsApp, to encourage them as they go along on this *fertility journey* and to assure them that they are not alone. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_019)

(2) Nassar, a renowned fertility specialist at One Wellness Centre, Lagos, said while *infertility can be a difficult journey*, miracles do happen. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_008)

As more specific versions of the general metaphors FERTILITY IS A JOURNEY and INFERTILITY IS A JOURNEY, FERTILITY is also conceptualised as a QUEST (one occurrence) and INFERTILITY as a RACE (two occurrences):

(3) So by the time she begins that *quest for child*, they would have gotten too old. (Vanguard\_Infertility\_054)

(4) With the *journey of infertility*, anyone who stops is regarded as a failure in the *race*. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_003)

In some occurrences of the FERTILITY IS A JOURNEY metaphor, further aspects of the source domain JOURNEY are mapped, for example:

- INFERTILITY as a TRAVEL COMPANION;
- GAMETE DONATION, EMBRYO DONATION, IN-VITRO FERTILISATION, SURROGACY and ADOPTION as STOPS;
- SHAME, STIGMA and SOCIETAL PRESSURE as OBSTACLES;
- PARENTHOOD as the DESTINATION.

Incidentally, Taiwo & Adebayo (2022) made very similar observations in a discourse-analytical approach to posts in a Nigerian online forum for women who are trying to conceive. They also found that the metaphorical journey these women are thought to take was conceptualised as a SLOW JOURNEY and a DIFFICULT JOURNEY. Moreover, their data also bear witness to the mappings EVENTS PREVENTING PREGNANCY ARE OBSTACLES and PARENTHOOD IS THE DESTINATION, as well as of the conceptualisation FERTILITY IS A QUEST.

The use of the journey metaphor relates to the more generic metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which is a frequently found metaphor in many languages and varieties of English around the world (see for example Kövecses, 2019; Polzenhagen & Frey, 2017). The fact that it is also represented in the data of this study, all the more with such elaborated mappings, adds to the picture of NigE as a variety that is conceptually adapted to the local context and capable of adequately expressing (presumably) universal conceptual metaphors, just like Inner Circle and other Outer Circle varieties as well.

### 5.3.4 | Spiritual realm as causal factor (topic share = 14.8%)

There are 16 occurrences of conceptualisations that make reference to the spiritual realm, a realm in which explanations for fertility and infertility are sought. The understanding that FERTILITY IS CAUSED BY SPIRITUALITY (nine occurrences) is reflected in examples like (5). Some findings also resort to God as the licenser of children in cases pertaining to FERTILITY IS GOD'S WILL (four occurrences), as in (6), and to INFERTILITY IS GOD'S WILL (two occurrences), as in (7):

- (5) While most Nigerians continue to *attribute infertility to spiritual problems* and *resort to prayers* instead of seeking for medical attention, the public and most frontline healthcare providers are still not aware that distressing and life-altering pelvic pain is not normal. (The-Guardian\_Infertility\_001)
- (6) There are people who refer to the bible that *God decreed that we should multiply and replenish the Earth* (Vanguard\_Fertility\_097)
- (7) Infertility is sometimes seen as *divine punishment* (Vanguard\_Fertility\_053)

But not only prayers are mentioned as a means of spiritual solution to gaining fertility; other articles mention healers as fertility consultants, or sacrifices to the river goddess Osun in the form of chickens, ochre powder, potato chips or gin.

In conjunction with these conceptual links to the spiritual realm is the conceptualisation INFERTILITY IS CAUSED BY WITCHCRAFT, which occurred once:

- (8) Nkemdili's mother-in-law suddenly became a thorn in her flesh, daily raining abuses on her, calling her all sorts of names, and even accusing her of being *a witch that eats up the babies in her womb*. (Vanguard\_Infertility\_064)

Since parenthood seems to be considered the norm for an adult person in Nigeria, witchcraft in some cases provides an explanation for childlessness. Wolf & Polzenhagen (2009) and Wolf & Peters (2022) have given deep insights into the embeddedness of conceptualisations involving witchcraft in African Englishes, showing how it is a force that serves as an explanation to many everyday experiences for members of African communities. Finzel & Wolf (2017) and Finzel (forthcoming) actually carve out the conceptualisation INFERTILITY IS CAUSED BY WITCHCRAFT itself in their NigE film data and investigate how its cinematic depiction is strongly motivated by the African cultural model of WITCHCRAFT. NigE thus seems to be a useful instrument to express culturally salient beliefs, as is the case with beliefs concerning locally prevalent topics such as witchcraft.

### 5.3.5 | Gender identity (topic share = 4.6%)

Another observation can be made in regard to the status of fertility as an important factor to gender identity. Having children is not only pivotal to the identity of a woman, see the conceptualisation FERTILITY IS FEMININITY (three occurrences) exemplified in (16), but also to the identity of a man, as in FERTILITY IS MASCULINITY (two occurrences), rendered in example (17).

- (16) My thinking was, 'If you can't carry a pregnancy, then *how are you a woman?*' That is *the essence of femininity* and it's being taken from me. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_053)
- (17) The typical male wants to *preserve his manliness* and *perpetuate his masculinity*, particularly with regards to fertility and vitality. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_121)

The latter conceptualisation is also described in a film analysis that is part of the data scrutinised in Finzel (forthcoming). In the Nigerian film *30 Days in Atlanta*, a protagonist happily shouts out when learning that a middle-aged man has recently had a baby:

(18) Uncle Wilson, you still childbear! You still reproduce at this age! (Finzel, forthcoming)

The conceptualisation was furthermore observed in the film *Tango With Me*. There, the female protagonist Lola is raped by strangers during her wedding night. Her husband Uzo struggles to come to terms with his wife's wish to keep the baby that she expects from one of the rapists, seeing his masculinity compromised:

(19) Uzo: What do you want from me?

Lola: Support! I want you here, is that too much to ask?

Uzo: To do what? To hold your hands while you insist on making a mockery of my manhood? I mean of this marriage?

Lola: How? How am I doing that?

Uzo: By insisting on keeping that thing inside you.

The example shows that fertility and masculinity need to be thought together, even in extreme cases where rape is involved. This finding links up with the Nigerian cultural model of GENDER that is explored in more detail in Finzel (forthcoming). Procreation is described there as one of the central aspects of the understanding of gender roles, and the study also relates the model of GENDER to the model of COMMUNITY.

### 5.3.6 | Others (topic share = 3.7%)

The conceptualisation INFERTILITY IS A MENACE (two occurrences) conceptually relates to INFERTILITY IS AN ENEMY, but it is not clearly a personification:

(29) Why allow *such menace* destroy your marriage, home and life ... (Vanguard\_Fertility\_065)

In two more cases with one occurrence each, INFERTILITY is conceptualised as a NATURAL FORCE, see (30), and FERTILITY as a WAITING GAME, as in example (31).

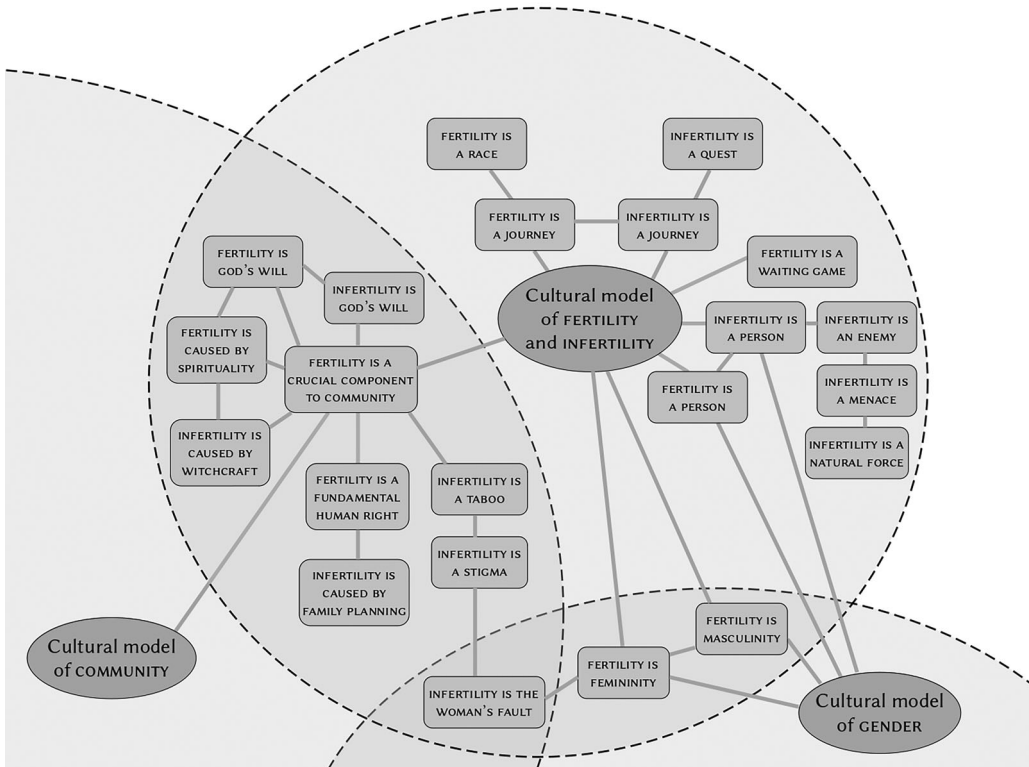
(30) 'The conference will feature seminars and plenary breakout sessions to be led by medical experts and testimonies from couples that have *waded through the waters of infertility*' she disclosed. (Vanguard\_Infertility\_049)

(31) There is a steadily growing number of couples playing the *fertility 'waiting game'*. (Vanguard\_Fertility\_167)

In the following section, the conceptualisations described in this section will be compiled to form a network of interconnected cultural conceptualisations, which make up the cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY. It is, furthermore, shown how this model links to neighbouring cultural models.

## 6 | A Nigerian Cultural Model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY and Its Relation to Neighbouring Models

The network graph in Figure 6 illustrates the interconnections of the conceptualisations found in the data collected for this study. In their entirety, they comprise a presumed cultural model that is thought to function as the fundamental logic of how fertility and infertility are conceived of in the Nigerian cultural context. This way of understanding



**FIGURE 6** Conceptual interconnections within the Nigerian cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY and connections to neighbouring models.

is transmitted and negotiated by means of NigE, which should thus be regarded as a variety that is fully capable of expressing conceptually anchored culture-specific beliefs. To the best of my knowledge, such a visualisation of empirical data in research on cultural models is hardly ever done, although Wolf & Polzenhagen (2009, p. 176) present a small conceptual network of the LEADERSHIP IS EATING conceptualisation in their analysis of the cultural model of COMMUNITY.

The large round shape in the centre of Figure 6 represents the Nigerian cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY, with the dashed outline indicating the fuzzy boundaries of the hypothetical conceptual network. The conceptualisations are added in clusters, according to the topics by which they are categorised in Table 3.

At the very top is the cluster of conceptualisations that are based on the journey metaphor (FERTILITY IS A JOURNEY, FERTILITY IS A RACE, INFERTILITY IS A JOURNEY, INFERTILITY IS A QUEST). It is, in theory, possible that they are furthermore part of a cultural model of LIFE, since the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor directly connects to these conceptualisations. Going clockwise, after the conceptualisation FERTILITY IS A WAITING GAME that does not seem to connect to other conceptualisations found in the data, there is a cluster of conceptualisations that draw on personification (FERTILITY IS A PERSON, INFERTILITY IS A PERSON, INFERTILITY IS AN ENEMY). This cluster not only links up with INFERTILITY IS A MENACE, which is itself connected to INFERTILITY IS A NATURAL FORCE, but also with a presumed neighbouring cultural model of GENDER. Clearly, gender roles and ideals come into play where an object or a circumstance is understood as a person. In the bottom part of the figure, the conceptualisations FERTILITY IS FEMININITY and FERTILITY IS MASCULINITY, previously discussed under the label *Gender identity* (see Table 3), are located in the overlapping area between the cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY and the cultural model of GENDER. In the previous section, this was expounded by examples of findings from the analysis of the Nigerian cultural model of GENDER presented in

Finzel (forthcoming). On the left-hand side of the figure, one can find the conceptualisation FERTILITY IS A CRUCIAL COMPONENT TO COMMUNITY, which plays a decisive role in the network. On the one hand, it is the central node of the conceptualisations that insinuate the spiritual realm (INFERTILITY IS CAUSED BY WITCHCRAFT, FERTILITY IS CAUSED BY SPIRITUALITY, FERTILITY IS GOD'S WILL, INFERTILITY IS GOD'S WILL) and it is furthermore connected to conceptualisations that highlight the importance of discourses about fertility and infertility to society (FERTILITY IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT, INFERTILITY IS CAUSED BY FAMILY PLANNING, INFERTILITY IS A TABOO, INFERTILITY IS A STIGMA). On the other hand, it also links up the cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY with the neighbouring cultural model of COMMUNITY, since FERTILITY IS A CRUCIAL COMPONENT TO COMMUNITY and the related conceptualisations emphasise that fertility and infertility are issues that concern the community at large rather than individuals (on the African cultural model of COMMUNITY, see Wolf & Polzenhagen, 2009). Lastly, the conceptualisation INFERTILITY IS THE WOMAN'S FAULT is also thought to play a central role in Figure 6, as it is placed in the area in which the three neighbouring cultural models of FERTILITY/INFERTILITY, GENDER and COMMUNITY overlap. This means that the conceptualisation draws on all three areas of knowledge and conceptually links them with each other.

This visualisation is of course skeletal, as it only depicts a tiny fragment of the whole cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY. It also omits various other models that are conceptually related. For instance, there will surely be a neighbouring cultural model of SEXUAL INTERCOURSE and another neighbouring model of HOMOSEXUALITY. The NigE data scrutinised in Finzel (forthcoming), for instance, has revealed that homosexuality is negatively connoted and understood as an obstacle to procreation. If procreation, as was shown in this study, is considered a crucial element to community, then it is logical that homosexuality may be perceived as preventing the continuation of lineage.

## 7 | CONCLUSION

The first insight from the study presented in this article is that NigE is a variety that is conceptually well adapted to the local context, so speakers take ownership of English and use it to negotiate their distinctive Nigerian experiences. In other words, NigE is an apt resource to express culturally salient beliefs and is fully capable of conveying cultural conceptualisations, which was demonstrated with the example of the cultural model of FERTILITY and INFERTILITY.

As the second insight, it was suggested that the analytical toolbox of Cultural Linguistics is a useful extension to the exploration of NigE. With the help of interconnected cultural conceptualisations and complex cultural models reflected in the variety in question, it was argued that the cultural-linguistic viewpoint is a worthwhile addition to the traditional structural perspective on NigE.

The study at hand has also aimed to show that a combination of methods, for instance, corpus-linguistic approaches with textually oriented analyses, offers a more comprehensive view on the conceptual setup of the varieties of English. Nevertheless, to grasp cultural models more fully, studies would have to be conducted on a larger scale and in more detail. For example, corpus-linguistic investigations could take into account more carefully administered resources such as the ICE corpora, or they could be extended by cultural keyword chain analyses (see Peters, 2017). Future studies might also employ further methods to warrant an encompassing exploration of a particular cultural model, like interviews, questionnaires or experimental tasks, to name but a few.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Open access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

## REFERENCES

- Adegbija, E. (1989). Lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English. *World Englishes*, 8(2), 165–177. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.1989.tb00652.x>
- Akinlotan, M. (2019). The evolution of outer circle varieties: A new model for Nigerian English. *Socjolingwistyka*, 33, 43–57. <https://doi.org/10.17651/SOCJOLING.33.3>

- Alo, M. A., & Mesthrie, R. (2008). Nigerian English: Morphology and syntax. In R. Mesthrie, (Ed.), *Varieties of English 4. Africa, South and Southeast Asia*. (pp. 323–339). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bamiro, E. O. (1994). Lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English. *World Englishes*, 13(1), 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.1994.tb00282.x>
- Borschke, A., & Wolf, H.-G. (2024). Cultural model of FAIRY in Scottish English. In J. B. Kóczy, & V. Szelid, Eds., *Cultural linguistics and (re)conceptualized tradition*. (pp. 405–427). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-6325-2\\_20](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-6325-2_20)
- Callaway, H. (1981). Spatial domains and women's mobility in Yorubaland, Nigeria. In S. Ardener, (Ed.), *Women and space: Ground rules and social maps*. (pp. 168–186).
- Callies, M. (2017). 'Idioms in the making' and variation in conceptual metaphor. *Cognitive Linguistic Studies*, 4(1), 63–81.
- Callies, M. (2023). Contact in world Englishes at the nexus of language and culture. In N. Levkovych, (Ed.), *Diversity in contact*. (pp. 91–109). De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111323756-002>
- Callies, M. (2024). Cultural conceptualisations in Nigerian Pidgin English proverbs. *World Englishes*, 43(3), 471–490.
- Davies, M., & Fuchs, R. (2015). Expanding horizons in the study of world Englishes with the 1.9 billion word Global Web-based English Corpus (GloWbE). *English World-Wide*, 36(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1075/eww.36.1.01dav>
- Fang, N. (2019). Chinese–Australian cultural conceptualisations of ancestor worship, death and family. *World Englishes*, 38(4), 644–658. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12358>
- Fapohunda, T. (2013). The Pension system and retirement planning in Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(2), 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2013.v4n2p25>
- Finzel, A. (2021a). Segregation and cooperation: Cultural models of GENDER in Indian and Nigerian English. In M. Callies, & M. Degani, Eds., *Metaphor in language and culture across world Englishes*. (pp. 183–217). Bloomsbury.
- Finzel, A. (2021b). Innate or acquired? HOMOSEXUALITY and cultural models of GENDER in Indian and Nigerian English. In H.-G. Wolf, D. Latić, & A. Finzel, Eds., *Cultural-linguistic explorations into spirituality, emotionality, and society*. (pp. 185–212). John Benjamins.
- Finzel, A. (Forthcoming). *Cultural models of GENDER and HOMOSEXUALITY in Indian and Nigerian English*. John Benjamins.
- Finzel, A., & Wolf, H.-G. (2017). Cultural conceptualizations of gender and homosexuality in British, Indian, and Nigerian English. *Cognitive Linguistic Studies*, 4(1), 110–130.
- Finzel, A., & Wolf, H.-G. (2019). Conceptual metaphors as contact phenomena? The influence of local concepts on source and target domain. In E. Zenner, A. Backus, & E. Winter-Froemel, Eds., *Cognitive contact linguistics: Placing usage, meaning and mind at the core of contact-induced variation and change*. (pp. 187–211). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Hayase, Y., & Liaw, K. -L. (1997). Factors on polygamy in Sub-Saharan Africa: Findings based on the demographic and health surveys. *The Developing Economies*, 35(3), 293–327. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1049.1997.tb00849.x>
- Isaac, A., & Roper, C. (2021 June 23). *Nigeria*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2021/nigeria>
- Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C. (1994). Reproductive motivation and family-size preferences among Nigerian men. *Studies in Family Planning*, 25(3), 149–161.
- Josiah, U. E., & Babatunde, S. T. (2011). Standard Nigerian English phonemes: The crisis of modelling and harmonization. *World Englishes*, 30(4), 533–550. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-971X.2011.01697.x>
- Jowitt, D. (2019). *Nigerian English*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk, & H. G. Widdowson, Eds., *English in the world. Teaching and learning the language and literatures*. (pp. 11–30). Cambridge University Press.
- Keškić, K. B. (2021). Conceptualizations of EAGLE in varieties of English: The case of Nigerian English. In M. Callies, & M. Degani, Eds., *Metaphor in language and culture across world Englishes*. (pp. 83–104). Bloomsbury.
- Kövecses, Z. (2019). Metaphor universals in literature. *Argumentum*, 15, 264–276.
- Lawuyi, O. B. (1988). Obituary and ancestral worship: Analysis of a contemporary cultural form in Nigeria. *Sociological Analysis*, 48(4), 372–379. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3710874>
- R. Mesthrie, (Ed.). (2008). *Varieties of English 4. Africa, South and Southeast Asia*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Palmer, G. B. (1996). *Toward a theory of cultural linguistics*. University of Texas Press.
- Peters, A. (2017). FAIRIES, BANSHEES, and THE CHURCH: Cultural conceptualisations in Irish English. *International Journal of Language and Culture*, 4(2), 127–148.
- Polzenhagen, F. (2022). Critical reflections on the use of corpora for cross-varietal metaphor research. In U. Schröder, M. de Oliveira, & A. Tenuta, Eds., *Metaphorical conceptualizations: (Inter)Cultural perspectives*. (pp. 41–73). Mouton de Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110688306-003>
- Polzenhagen, F., & Frey, S. (2017). Are marriages made in heaven? A cultural-linguistic case study on Indian-English matrimonials. In F. Sharifian, (Ed.), *Advances in cultural linguistics*. (pp. 573–605). Springer.
- Polzenhagen, F., & Wolf, H.-G. (2007). Culture-specific conceptualisations of corruption in African English. In F. Sharifian, & G. Palmer, Eds., *Applied cultural linguistics*. (pp. 125–168). John Benjamins.

- Schmid, H.-J., Ibrizimov, D., Kopatsch, K., & Gottschligg, K. (2008). Conceptual blending in language, cognition, and culture. Towards a methodology for the linguistic study of syncretic concepts. In A. U. Adogame, M. Ehtler, & U. Vierke, Eds., *Unpacking the new: Critical perspectives on cultural syncretization in Africa and beyond*. (pp. 93–124). LIT.
- Schneider, E. W. (2007). *Postcolonial English: Varieties around the world*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sharifian, F. (2011). *Cultural conceptualisations and language. Theoretical framework and applications*. John Benjamins.
- Sharifian, F. (2015). Cultural linguistics and world Englishes. *World Englishes*, 34(4), 515–532. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12156>
- Sharifian, F. (2017). *Cultural linguistics*. John Benjamins.
- Stubbs, M. (2005). Conrad in the computer: Examples of quantitative stylistic methods. *Language and Literature*, 14(5), 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947005048873>
- Taiwo, R., & Adebayo, O. O. (2022). ‘Baby dust to everyone’: Emoting infertility in Nigerian online trying to conceive (TTC) forums. *Language. Text. Society*, 9(2), 1–15.
- Taiwo, R., Fawunmi, M., & Ogundare, A. (2023). Cultural conceptualisations in Elijah Akintunde’s Yoruba ballad gospel song Ijo Odi ‘Dance of the Deaf’. *Language and Semiotic Studies*, 9(3), 313–332. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lss-2023-0010>
- Tanyi, P. L., André, P., & Mbah, P. (2018). Care of the elderly in Nigeria: Implications for policy. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2018.1555201>
- Ugorji, C. U. C. (2015). Nigerian English in Schneider’s dynamic model. *Journal of English as an International Language*, 10(1), 20–47.
- Ugwuanyi, K. (2022). The development of English in Nigeria: From alien to own language. In A. Ngefac, H.-G. Wolf, & T. Hoffmann, Eds., *World Englishes and creole languages today. Vol. I. The Schneiderian thinking and beyond*. (pp. 101–116). LINCOM.
- Ugwuanyi, K. (2023). Perceptions, awareness and attitudes towards Englishes in Africa: The case of Nigerian English. In M. Akinlotan, (Ed.), *Englishes in Africa*. (pp. 141–159). Peter Lang.
- Wierzbicka, A. (1997). *Understanding cultures through their key words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*. Oxford University Press.
- Wolf, H.-G. (2006). Religion and traditional beliefs in West African English: A linguistic analysis. In T. Omoniyi, & J. A. Fishman, Eds., *Readings in the sociology of language and religion*. (pp. 42–59). John Benjamins.
- Wolf, H.-G., & Peters, A. (2022). African witchcraft revisited: New cognitive-sociolinguistic findings from a comparative perspective. In A. Ngefac, H.-G. Wolf, & T. Hoffmann, Eds., *World Englishes and creole languages today. Vol. II. The Bobdian thinking and beyond*. (pp. 63–75). LINCOM.
- Wolf, H.-G., & Polzenhagen, F. (2007). Fixed expressions as manifestations of cultural conceptualizations: Examples from African varieties of English. In P. Skandera, (Ed.), *Phraseology and culture in English*. (pp. 399–435). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Wolf, H.-G., & Polzenhagen, F. (2009). *World Englishes: A cognitive sociolinguistic approach*. Mouton de Gruyter.
- Wolf, H.-G., & Polzenhagen, F. (2024). Cultural linguistics: Some disciplinary and terminological considerations. In A. Korangy, (Ed.), *The handbook of cultural linguistics*. (pp. 109–134). Springer.
- World Health Organization. ((2023). April 3). *Infertility*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/infertility>
- Xu, Z., & Sharifian, F. (2018). Cultural conceptualizations of Chinese zodiac animals in Chinese English. *World Englishes*, 37(4), 590–606. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12351>

**How to cite this article:** Finzel, A. (2026). Cultural conceptualisations and the cultural model of fertility and infertility in Nigerian English. *World Englishes*, 45, 163–181. <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12738>