

Nativization of English among L2 learners: Development in the grammar of adverbs in Cameroon English

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Abstract: In the discussion of Postcolonial Englishes, Cameroon English is a well-known variety, yet many of its features have not been fully described. One of these features is adverbs and their syntactic positioning. Hence, the present paper aims to show that the input-oriented feature specifications of adverbs and their syntactic positioning have undergone certain innovation processes in Cameroon English. These innovations include placement of adverbials to permit the SVAO information structure, employment of adjectives ending in -ly as adverbs, formation of adverbs from nouns by adding the suffix -ly, substitution of adjectives for adverbs, placement of adverbials after the verb in verb + long object clause, placement of an adverb modifying a participle after the word it modifies, and placement of adverbials of time between the subject and verb. The paper argues that the motivation behind novel adverbs as well as novel syntactic positioning of adverbs stems from the co-existence of English and many other languages in the linguistic ecology of Cameroon. The innovations can be codified into a variety-specific grammar of Cameroon English in its construction and semiotization of Cameroonians' sense of socio-cultural and linguistic identity.

Keywords: Adverbs, syntactic positioning, innovation, Cameroon English, World Englishes.

1. Introduction

This paper discusses adverbs and their syntactic positioning in the grammar of L2 speakers of English in Cameroon to highlight an aspect of the distinctiveness of Cameroon English in constructing, imprinting and semiotizing Cameroonians' sense of socio-cultural and linguistic identity. Each human language has a buildup of meaning-making resources and different ways of combining them, and **such combinations** are themselves meaningful (Van Valin 2004). Besides, according to Universal Grammar (Chomsky 1981), every language has unique parameter settings (specific rules) in combining meaning-bearing elements.

Regarding the semantics and syntax of adverbs, Stockwell & Trask (2007: 6-7, italics original) make the following observation:

an adverb describes the circumstances of an action - where it is done (*here, elsewhere, overhead*), when it is done (*tomorrow, often, rarely, never*) or how it is done (*fast, well, carefully, dramatically, resentfully*). [...] A typical property of adverbs is their position in the sentence. [...] A typical adverb like *carefully* can be inserted into any one of three positions: *Carefully she poured the wine; She carefully poured the wine; She poured the wine carefully*. [...] But not all adverbs are so flexible: *yesterday* and *downstairs* can only fit into the first and third of the three typical positions, while *fast* can only fit into the last.

From this observation, we deduce that adverbials may occur after the verb phrase: *Nicholas plays football slowly* (SVOA); in pre-subject position: *Tactfully, Nicholas scored five goals* (ASVO); and in medial position, i.e., between the subject and the verb: *Nicholas always plays football* (SAVO) etc (Ogura et al. 1997). Though there may be several appropriate positions for an adverbial in a particular context, some positions result in non-idiomatic or diffident, ambiguous, or incoherent linguistic output (Zhong & Stent 2009: 229).

Based on the above-mentioned feature specifications, this paper explores adverbials and their

syntactic positioning in the grammar of L2 speakers of English in Cameroon, with the aim of highlighting an aspect of the distinctiveness of Cameroon English. The article is divided into four sections: theoretical framework (2), adverbs and syntactic positions (3), data and methodology (4), and analysis and discussion of findings (5).

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical premise adopted for this study is the World Englishes framework, i.e., the concept of institutionalized second language varieties of English spoken around the world (Wolf & Polzenhagen 2009). These new varieties have been conceptualized as the “linguistics of particularity” (Figuerola 1994:5), being focused on local identities of various national varieties of English. Further, the present study is premised on the notions of languages in contact (Weinreich 1970), nativization of English (Kachru 1982, 1986, 1992, 1996, 1997), and the Dynamic Model of the Evolutionary Development of New Englishes (Schneider 2003, 2007).

2.1 *Languages in contact*

When two or more languages come into contact, mutual influence is inevitable (Weinreich 1970) and the outcome of the contact, so called “interference phenomena” (Weinreich 1970:1), involves “those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language” (Weinreich 1970:1). The deviations may be related to pronunciation, syntax, semantic shifts or extension, and lexis. The mutual influence of languages in contact is especially evident and pervasive in a multilingual setting such as Cameroon, where 286 indigenous languages co-exist side by side with two official languages (French and English) and four major lingua francas: Mongo Ewondo (spoken in the Centre and South Regions, where speakers of the Fang-Beti language group are found), Arab Choa (spoken in the Far North Region), Fulfulde (spoken in the Adamawa and North Regions) and Pidgin English (predominantly spoken in the South West, North West, West, Centre and Littoral Regions). The Cameroonian situation is thus a clear case of “multiple language contact”.

In Cameroon today, the users of English are spread across the different ethnic groups in the country, and the mutual influence that exists between the myriad of languages in the Cameroon linguistic ecology, as a result of the contact, is especially evident when Cameroonians speak or write English. Consequently, linguistic borrowing, interference, code switching, loan translation, transliteration and other manifestations of language contact characterize this particularly dense multilingual situation. The inter-lingual influence may be from the official languages to the indigenous languages (Bitja’a Kody 1998), from the indigenous languages to official languages (Echu 1999; Epoge 2017a, 2015), from the indigenous languages to Cameroon Pidgin English (Mbassi Manga 1973; Epoge 2017), from Cameroon Pidgin English to the official languages (Kouega 1998; Epoge 2012), and from one official language to the other (Mbangwana 1999; Kouega 2005; Epoge 2017b). The present paper presumes that influence from the myriad of languages co-existing with English in the linguistic ecology of Cameroon is partly responsible for the novelty in adverbs and their syntactic placements in Cameroon English. This leads us to the notion of nativization of English.

2.2 *Nativization of English*

Although English is the world’s leading language today, it does not maintain its purity in spreading across the globe. Rather, it accommodates the linguistic and cultural values of the different settings in which it is used. Thus, Kachru (1986: 31) asserts that the English language today “is acquiring various international identities and thus acquiring multiple ownerships”. It has developed local forms and characteristics, so much so that people enjoy using it in their own way to express a sense of belonging to a place which finds expression through local culture (Schneider 2011). Schneider (2011:

2) points out that,

wherever you go on this globe, you can get along with English. Either most people speak it anyhow, or there is at least somebody around who can communicate in this language. But then, you realize that mostly there's something you may find odd about the way English is used there. If you are abroad English is likely to be somewhat different from the way you speak it: people use strange words; it may take you a while to recognize familiar words because they are pronounced somehow differently; and sometimes people build their sentences in ways that will seem odd to you in the beginning.

This observation reveals that English has lost its homogeneity, and linguists have come to talk of different 'Englishes'. In view of this, the 'ecology of language' approach, "as a convenient heuristic metaphor for the explanation of linguistic processes such as language change and the emergence of contact languages" (Wolf & Polzenhagen 2009:12), is identified as one of the strands of the World Englishes Paradigm. This approach views language as part of an overarching ecology which comprises not only the linguistic and socio-cultural values, but also the natural environment" (Wolf & Polzenhagen 2009:12). Hence, the English language has been undergoing complex processes of nativization and acculturation in many colonial and postcolonial contexts (Kachru 1986, 1996).

In his broadly applied framework for the spread and use of English around the globe, Kachru (1992, 1996, 1997) posits "three concentric circles": Inner, Outer, and the Expanding (Kachru 1992: 358). The circles represent the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional use of English in diverse cultural contexts (Kachru 1992: 356). The Inner Circle presents the countries where English is the primary language and is used in daily life and government institutions, such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. The Outer Circle includes countries that have British colonial ties, and English is widely used in social life or in the government sector. Most of these countries that belong to this circle are former colonies of the British Empire, such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Malaysia, Ghana, Kenya, India, Singapore, and others. Finally, the Expanding Circle includes countries such as Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, Korea, etc. that introduce English as a foreign language in education, mainly for the purpose of communicating in English with the Inner and Outer Circles. Although Kachru's model has been criticized by researchers such as Graddol (1997), Modiano (1999), Bruthiaux (2003), Mollin (2006), Canagarajah (2006), and Kachru (2005) for its oversimplification and the unclear membership to the circles, the model presents a valuable contribution for language researchers regarding English language in the world. It is one of the most influential models for understanding the use of English in different countries. The distinction shows that,

the English language includes at least three types of varieties: (i) those that are used as the primary language of the majority population of a country, such as American and British; (ii) varieties that are used as an additional language for intra-national as well as international communication in communities that are multilingual, such as Indian, Nigerian, Ghanaian, Cameroonian, and Singaporean English; and (iii) varieties that are used almost exclusively for international communication, such as Chinese and German English. (Kachru & Smith 2008: 2).

English is thus no longer the property of a small handful of countries; it belongs to all who use it, especially in the Outer Circle countries, where new norms are rapidly emerging and solidifying as a

result of the on-going acculturation and nativization processes taking place. For this reason, Kachru (1986) argues that it will be a ‘linguistic genocide’ trying to dispossess people of their linguistic rights. He goes further to contend that the norms and standards that guide usage should no longer be solely determined by Inner Circle varieties. His view correlates the argument that non-native users of the English language have the right to express themselves in a way that suits them: “the very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it” (Widdowson 1994: 385). Besides, in many countries where English is used as a non-native variety, the users of English have developed a strong emotional attachment to the language, an indication that they feel they own English, and therefore think of it as one of their languages (Kachru 1982). This mindset leads us to the notion of the dynamic model of the evolutionary development of new Englishes.

2.3 Dynamic Model of the evolutionary development of New Englishes

The Dynamic Model (Schneider 2007) hinges on contact-induced changes as the basis for the development of postcolonial varieties of English. In language contact ecology, a “feature pool” (i.e., a number of novel distinctive features of a language collected together for shared use) is composed (Mufwene 2001, 2008) and the features selected need time to stabilize. The mechanisms for the composition of the “feature pool” may be referred to as “accommodation”; while “identity” may be the logical entity underlying the mechanism (Schneider 2007: 26-27), i.e., the identification and assembling of the novel distinctive features of a language for shared use is to enable the construction of a particularized linguistic identity. Therefore, Schneider (2007) discusses the development of postcolonial varieties of English from the perspective of contact linguistics, and proposes a Dynamic Model as an investigative paradigm. The theory comprises five phases explaining the distinctive features that emerge. The first phase, foundation, refers to the stage where a significant group of settlers bring English to a new territory where indigenous languages are spoken. Since most members of the settler group may not bother to learn the language of the territory, the task of learning the imported language is imposed on the indigenous group.

The second phase, exonormative stabilization, is entered when the invaded territory has been fully established as a colony and English is formally instituted as the medium of education, administration, law, etc. Though the standard linguistic norms of Britain are maintained, cross-cultural language contacts initiate a process of linguistic change; and the settler group gradually adapt their spoken English to local realities.

The third phase, nativization, is the starting point of the evolution of a distinctive local variety, characterized by marked restructuring of the language, affecting lexis, syntax, and discourse styles and genres (Schneider 2007).

The fourth phase, endonormative stabilization, is where English is retained as an official language in the Outer Circle, serving a wide range of functions internally in domains such as the press, business, governance, and education. In consequence, it presupposes that local linguistic norms are accepted also in formal contexts and a community is entitled to decide language matters as affairs of its own. At this stage, a stabilized variety is developed and noticeable social and ethnic dialects are discernable as markers of identity.

The fifth phase, differentiation, covers the stage where the endonormatively stabilized variety may further develop a plethora of regional, social, and ethnic dialects.

In view of the five phases discussed above, English in Cameroon currently finds itself somewhere between the nativization phase and the endonormative phase as many of its features have not fully stabilized.

3. Adverbials and syntactic positions

This phase presents an account of grammatical characteristics of adverbs and adverbials in

standard/non-dialectal English. The focus is on the morphological, syntactic and semantic aspects. The adverb is a word-class just like noun, verb and adjective (Crystal 2003:14).

Morphologically, some adverbs are single, indivisible words (e.g. *yet, down, up, then, too*), whereas others are derived from adjectives by the addition of the suffix *-ly* (e.g. *quickly, clearly, splendidly, sadly, easily, fortunately*); still others are formed from two words (e.g. *anywhere, sometimes, however*).

Semantically, adverbs are usually treated as one-place predicates and often sub classified with respect to distinct conceptual notions such as time (e.g. *now, yesterday*), place (e.g. *around, here*), manner (e.g. *slowly, well*), reason (e.g. *therefore, consequently*), degree (e.g. *extremely, rather*), or express connections between sentences (e.g. *however, nevertheless*).

Syntactically, adverbs can be characterized with respect to their functions and scope. Adverb or adverb phrase can function as complement of a verb (e.g. She behaved badly), modifier of a verb (e.g. He ran *quickly*), modifier of an adjective (e.g. It is *very* hot today), or modifier of another adverb (e.g. He plays *extremely* well).

The term “adverbial” refers to a syntactic function at clause level *which* can be realized by an adverb, adverb phrase, a noun phrase, a prepositional phrase, or a subordinate clause. Additionally, non-finite adverbial clauses exist, which may be subdivided into four categories: *to*-infinitive clauses, *ing*-clauses, *ed*-clauses, and verbless clauses, as example (3) drawn from (Svartvik & Sager 1996: 398, italics added) illustrates.

- (3) a. She went *to see her sick mother*.
 b. *Being an only child*, Claire has to take the whole responsibility.
 c. *When asked to help*, she couldn't refuse.
 d. *A basket in each hand*, she ran to the car.

The adverbial clause is a *to*-infinitive clause in (3a), an *ing*-clause in (3b), an *ed*-clause in (3c), and a verbless clause in (3d).

In summary, adverbs have two syntactic functions: They serve as clause element adverbials (e.g. John *quite* forgot about it), and as premodifiers in adjective phrases (e.g. Daniel's parents are *quite* happy) and adverb phrases (e.g. The Tribute Sisters sang *very* well). Thus, there is a difference between adverbs and other elements in the relative freedom with which adverbs can take up different positions in a sentence. The sentential positioning of adverbs is influenced by several factors, one of which is information structure. Therefore, Quirk et al. (1985: 491) point out that adverbs broadly occur in three positions: initial (i.e., before the subject), medial (i.e., between the subject and the verb) and end (i.e., after the end of the verb and any complement).

(I) Initial position

Syntactically, initial position is taken up by adverbials that can readily constitute the ground, theme, or “scene-setting” for what follows (Quirk et al. 1985).

- (5) a. *Suddenly*, the driver started the engine.
 b. *Perhaps*, my suggestion will be accepted.

In direct questions, it is the position immediately before the operator or wh-element.

- (6) a. *Seriously*, do you believe in ghosts?
 b. *Anyhow*, since when has she been ill?

In subordinate or coordinated clauses, it is the position following the conjunction.

- (7) a. I had scarcely got into the taxi when *suddenly* the driver started the engine.
 b. Are you afraid of the dark and, *to be blunt*, do you believe in ghosts?

(II) Medial position

Adverbials that occur in medial position are for most part rather short phrases, especially solitary adverbs.

- (8) a. The driver *suddenly* started the engine.
 b. They *seriously* considered him for the post.

When the verb phrase includes an operator, medial position is immediately after the subject and the operator. This also applies to interrogative and imperative sentences.

- (9) a. Did the driver *suddenly* start the engine?
 b. Don't *suddenly* start the engine!
 c. Do *seriously* consider him for the post!

It is important to note here that the verb *to be* is treated as an operator, even when it is the sole realization of the verb phrase (Quirk et al. 1985). As a result, adverbials usually come after the main verb *to be*, except in emphatic clauses, where they come before the verb.

- (10) a. She is *always* late for everything.
 b. Why should I have gone to see Celine Dion? I *never* was a fan of hers. (emphatic)

It should also be noted that only for a heavily special effect would a clause or lengthy prepositional phrase be placed at medial position. In such a situation, it would be clearly marked off by commas in writing and by prosody in speech (Quirk et al. 1985: 493).

- (11) a. You have, *though you may say it was accidental*, ruined this man's chances of a happy life.
 b. She had not, *despite years of anxious endeavours*, succeeded in leaving down that initial mistake.

Semantically, the medial position is especially associated with modality and degree as the following examples illustrate:

- (12) a. We *really* might be going to the party on Saturday.
 b. This wedding cake is *absolutely* wonderful.

(III) End position

Examples of adverbials in end position (from Quirk et al. 1985: 498) are:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| (13) a. The light was fading <i>rapidly</i> . | (adverbial after SV) |
| b. Dr Blackett is <i>in Tokyo</i> . | (adverbial in SVA) |
| c. She was digging a trench <i>in the garden</i> . | (adverbial after SVO) |
| d. They became teachers <i>in the end</i> . | (adverbial after SVC) |
| e. He put the vase <i>in the cabinet without a word</i> . | (adverbial in SVOA) |

As example E shows, more than one adverbial can be found in the end position (e.g., She kept writing *feverishly in her study all afternoon*).

The foregoing discussion reveals that adverbials are the most movable elements in English (Carter, Hughes & McCarthy 2000; Maclin 1996). They take different positions within the sentence: before the subject, between the subject and the verb, or at the end of the clause. Despite this, placement of an adverbial in certain positions in a sentence can either make the sentence grammatical or deviate from the Standard English norms to represent the syntactic features of a new dialect. For instance, when we place an adverbial between the main verb and a direct object, it results in an established norm in the new dialect. Though this is tenable, it should be noted that, in exceptional cases, an English adverbial may separate a verb and an object to avoid ambiguity in the sentence or to produce a dramatic effect (Close 1998) as the example below illustrates.

- (14) We must examine *carefully* the meanings of the words we use.

In this sentence, ambiguity would be the result if the adverbial *carefully* were placed after the verb *use* instead of after the verb *examine*. Thus, the point of this example is to demonstrate the placement of the adverbial to produce a dramatic effect. Hence, Bing (1989), cited by Hernández (2006: 272-274), illustrates the complexity of adverbial positioning by pointing out the following details:

(i) When an adverb of negation, such as *never* and *rarely*, is used at the beginning of a sentence, it compels inversion of S and V.

- (a) *Never* have I seen such a crowd!
 (b) *Rarely* do we invite so many people.

(ii) Adverbials of frequency come after the verb *to be*; while with other verbs, they usually come before the main verb.

- (a) It is *always* cold in Minnesota.
 (b) Have you *ever* visited London?

(iii) Adverbials of time can occur in various positions in a sentence. When they are realized by prepositional phrases, they often come at the end of sentences (e.g., I worked on that jigsaw puzzle *on Saturday*). Adverbials of time can also occur sentence-initially; particularly, when there are other kinds of adverbials at the end of the sentence (e.g., *On Sunday*, I started another puzzle *because I was bored*).

(iv) The adverbials of time *just*, *still*, and *already* usually occur either after the first auxiliary verb or

before the main verb, and the negative forms *yet* and *anymore* usually at the end of a sentence.

(a) I *just* bought it last week.

(b) I have *already* worked on it for six weeks.

(v) Adverbials of manner occur before or after the verbs that they modify but never between a verb and its object (e.g., The director *quickly* offered Sylvia the role).

This concludes the account of the grammatical characteristics of adverbs and their use in Standard English. Since language input (i.e., the processible language the learners are exposed to while listening or reading – the receptive skills) does not always equal output (i.e., the language learners produce either in speaking or writing – the productive skills), the present study focuses on the particular way in which the grammatical characteristics of adverbs and their use in Standard English are systematically subverted in the grammar of Cameroonian speakers of English to create a specific variety of English .

4. Data and methodology

The present study is based on two data sets: One consists of responses provided to a production test administered to 125 ESL learners of English in Cameroon, and the second contains observations through recordings and field investigations over the past five years.

The test consisted of a Multiple Choice Comprehension Task (MCCT), a Grammaticality and Acceptability Judgement Task (GAJT), a Sentence Preference Task (SPT), and a Sentence Manipulation Task (SMT). In the MCCT, the respondents were asked to choose an appropriate phrase from a list of phrases containing an adverbial provided in brackets at the end of each sentence, and to fill in the blank to complete the sentence [e.g., The soldiers have _____ charged with murder. (*wrongly been, been wrongly*)]. In the Grammaticality and Acceptability Judgement Task (GAJT), respondents were asked to read, analyze, and mark each sentence as correct or incorrect with regard to the Standard British English (SBE) parameter settings. If a sentence was marked as incorrect, they had to provide a correct version of the sentence [e.g., “Joan and Paul have been married happily for ten years”. “The rebel leader cowardly neutralized all his rivals”]. The Sentence Preference Task (SPT) comprised pairs of sentences. Respondents had to read and analyze each pair of the sentences and then encircle one of the options underneath it as illustrated by the following token:

a. The security forces did it purposefully: it was not an error.

b. The security forces did it purposely: it was not an error.

Only (a) is correct, Only (b) is correct, Both (a) and (b) are correct

The Sentence Manipulation Task (SMT) consisted of a sentence task in which respondents were given randomly shuffled sets of words, including an adverb, and asked to form a sentence using each set of these words [e.g., eat/restaurant/of/students/*most*/school/*the*/time/*the*/in]. The production test, which consisted of twenty (20) token sentences, was administered to 125 randomly selected English-major undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Department of English in the University of Yaounde I, the Higher Teacher Training College (ENS) Bamenda of the University of Bamenda, and postgraduate students of the University of Buea. The distribution of the respondents, according to institutions, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to university

| University | Number of respondents |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| Yaounde I | 49 (39.20%) |
| Bamenda | 44 (35.20%) |
| Buea | 32 (25.60%) |
| TOTAL | 125 (100%) |

The data collected through the production test were analysed using a scoring scheme whereby a response that reflected the SBE parameter settings earned a point and any other would not earn a point.

Data were also collected through recordings and field investigations through a dictaphone and a tape-recorder. The recordings mainly involved informal and formal conversations of university students, as well as educated speakers of Cameroon English at different social events, conferences, meetings, and seminars. Some data also came from radio and television programmes as well as local newspapers. The collection of data through recordings and field investigation was aimed at creating a corpus of spoken, impromptu language to supplement the one obtained via the production test. The innovations were itemized and categorized in terms of output feature specifications (i.e., the novel features of the language learners/speakers produce, either in speaking or writing).

5. Analysis and discussion of findings

Table 2 below presents the number of instances and the percentages scored by the respondents in applying the Standard British English (SBE) parameters in the identification and placement of adverbials, on the one hand, and in coming up with novel parameter settings, on the other hand.

Table 2: Respondents' performance in the placement of adverbials in sentences

| University | SBE parameter settings | Novel parameter settings | Total |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Yaounde I | 261 (26.63%) | 719 (73.37%) | 980 (100%) |
| Bamenda | 213 (24.20%) | 667 (75.80%) | 880 (100%) |
| Buea | 198 (30.94%) | 442 (69.06%) | 640 (100%) |
| TOTAL | 672 (26.88%) | 1828 (73.12%) | 2500 (100%) |

As can be inferred from Table 2, the percentage of novel parameter settings far outweighs the SBE settings. The results thus reflect the fact that respondents have produced a dialectal variety with regard to the syntactic placement of adverbials, as an index of socio-cultural and linguistic identity to indigenize the alien language. In addition, data from the spoken corpus were carefully analysed, and, in the process, a number of novel syntactic features in the use and placement of adverbs was identified. These items were recorded, together with the sentences in which they occurred. The count revealed a total of 917 instances which provided corroborating evidence to the feature specifications already identified in the written corpus. Thus, to facilitate the process of data analysis, the two data sets were analysed as a single corpus. The analysis revealed that when speakers of English in Cameroon encounter difficulties in the identification and placement of an adverb or adverbial in a

sentence, they come up with a novel adverb and/or syntactic structure that makes communicative sense to them. The frequencies of the novel features identified in both data corpuses are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Frequency of novel features

| Novel feature | Frequency of occurrence | Percentage of occurrence |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Placement of adverbials to permit the SVAO information structure | 249 | 09.07% |
| Placement of adverbial after the verb + long object sentence | 265 | 09.65% |
| Use of adjectives that end in <i>-ly</i> as adverbs | 356 | 12.98% |
| Formation of adverbs from nouns by adding the suffix <i>-ly</i> | 315 | 11.48% |
| Placement of adverbial between the subject and the verb in subordinate or coordinated clauses | 217 | 07.91% |
| Placement of adverbial between “to” of the infinitive and the root verb | 405 | 14.75% |
| Placement of adverbials of manner before the auxiliary “been” in passive constructions | 232 | 08.45 % |
| Placement of adverbials of time between the subject and verb | 212 | 07.72% |
| Substitution of some adverbs for adjectives or other adverbs | 293 | 10.67% |
| Placement of adverbial of time “already” after the object of the verb | 103 | 03.75% |
| Placement of an adverb modifying a participle after the word it modifies | 98 | 03.57% |
| TOTAL | 2745 | 100% |

In the following, the novel features will be exemplified.

(1) Placement of adverbials to permit the SVAO information structure order:

- (a) The concerned students missed *most of the time* the warm-up task activities.
- (b) This action benefited the slow learners who came *usually* late.
- (c) The advert of email has brought *simultaneously* our society closer together and farther apart.

In Standard British English, placement of adverbials to permit the Subject-Verb-Adjunct-Object (SVAO) order is prohibited (e.g., *Cynthia watches often television). Only the English verbs, *to have* and *to be*, have the prerogative to permit the Subject-auxiliary-Adjunct-Verb-Object (SauxAVO) order (e.g., Paul has often visited Bamenda). Despite the above-stated rule, the data reveal that adverbials are placed in the Cameroon variety of English in such a way that the SVAO syntax is produced.

(2) Placement of adverbial after the verb in *Verb + Long Object clause*

- (a) The Director General denied *angrily* that he had misappropriated the money.
- (b) The Lord Mayor and his counsellors decided *secretly* to leave the town.

In Standard British English Verb + Object clauses, the length of the object affects the position of the adverbial. If the object is short, the Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb order is used (e.g., John looked at me *suspiciously*); and when the object is long, the adverb is usually put before the verb (e.g., They *carefully* picked up all the bits of broken glass). No matter the length of the object, the Cameroonian respondents, on the other hand, tended to use Subject + Verb + Adverb + Object syntactic order.

(3) Employment of adjectives that end in -ly as adverbs

- (a) The Doctors arrived *timely*: some COVID-19 patients were already agonizing.
- (b) The rebel leader *cowardly* neutralized all his rivals.

Whereas *cowardly* and *timely* are adjectives in standard English, some of the respondents use them adverbially.

(4) Formation of adverbs from nouns by adding the suffix -ly

- (a) The Resolutions of the last Cabinet Meeting were discussed *detailly*
- (b) Students are requested to pay their schools fees *instalmentally*.

Derivational adverbs are formed from adjectives in the English language by adding the suffix -ly (*odd – oddly, interesting – interestingly*). They are formed from certain nouns by adding suffixes such as -wise (clockwise), -wards (northwards). However, in the corpus, the suffix -ly is used to form adverbs from some nouns (e.g., *detail – detailly, instalment – instalmentally*). Consequently, in Cameroon English, we can discuss something *detailly* and pay something *instalmentally*, whereas in the British variety of English we can discuss something *in detail* and pay something *by instalment*.

(5) Placement of adverbial of time between the subject and verb

Our students *most of the time* eat in the school restaurant.

The adverbial of time, *most of the time*, is placed between the subject and verb with the syntactic order Subject + Adverb of Time + Verb in Cameroon English.

(6) Substitution of adjectives for adverbs

- (a) You are taking it *personal*.
- (b) *Funny* enough they have never liked us.

In 6a, the adjective *personal* has substituted the adverbial *personally* to qualify the verb *taking*; and in 6b, the adjective *funny* has substituted the adverb *funnily* to qualify adverb *enough*.

(7) Placement of the adverbial of time *already* after the object of a verb

The Taskforce has worked on it *already* for two weeks.

Adverbial of time *already* usually occurs either after the first auxiliary verb or before the main verb. In the corpus, it is often placed after the object of a verb.

(8) Placement of an adverb modifying a participle after the word it modifies

Joan and Paul have been married *happily* for ten years.

Adverbs modifying a participle occur before the participle they modify in standard British English whereas in the corpus, adverbs modifying participles are often seen to occur after the participles they modify.

6. Conclusion

English operates in different host countries around the world, where the language is adapted to a wide variety of socio-cultural environments, i.e., a combination of socio-cultural and sociolinguistic features. This leads to a variety of influences on the English language in the different socio-cultural environments in which it operates, and English in Cameroon is no exception to this. Thus, the data on innovation processes relating to adverbs and their syntactic positioning in Cameroon English evidences certain aspects of the nativization of English as a result of the contact of English and a myriad of languages in the Cameroon linguistic ecology. Certain distinctive syntactic features can be deduced which demonstrate Cameroonian English speakers' socio-cultural and linguistic identity in terms of communicative style. The construction of a socio-cultural and linguistic identity is here considered as part of the routine everyday life and everyday interactions, where a particularized communicative style is produced in the uses of adverbials. This trend suggests a healthy development for the character of new Englishes worldwide. The pedagogical implication of the feature specifications identified in this paper will be to codify the new norms in the form of a variety-specific grammar.

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