THE CORRELATION BETWEEN LIAISON AND TWO SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIABLES: LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STATUS

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Abstract

The study set out to investigate the correlation between liaison and two sociolinguistic variables, namely level of education and professional status. In order to collect the raw data needed for the study, 80 informants, selected according to the sociolinguistic factors under study, were subjected to the reading of some pre-prepared sentences containing targeted phonological variables involving liaison and a tape recorder was used to record their phonological renditions. The analysis of the data revealed many interesting findings. With regard to level of education, it is revealed that it does not determine competence in liaison. Surprisingly, there was no difference in the performance of Form Four and Lower Sixth students, given that the two classes scored 30 % in the approximation of the Standard British English (SBE) variants of the variables investigated. Also surprising was the fact that Lower Sixth students and Form Four students were more competent in liaison than undergraduate students, considering that they scored only 25%in the approximation of the SBE variants of the variables. It is only the performance of postgraduate students that is significantly better than that of the other categories of students, given that they scored as high as 45%. This implies that knowledge of liaison does not very much depend on educational attainment. As concerns professional status, journalists scored higher than all the other professions, scoring 33.3% in the use of the SBE variants of the variables involving liaison, but the fact that teachers and lawyers scored only 26.7% each challenges the assertion that professionals of English are better language users. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that one's level of education and professional status do not significantly determine his or her knowledge of liaison.

Résume

La présente étude analyse la corrélation entre la liaison, un concept phonologique, et deux variables sociolinguistiques à savoir : le niveau d'étude et le statut professionnel. Pour collecter les données, 80 personnes ont été choisies selon les critères sociolinguistiques sélectionnes pour ce travail. La population choisie a été soumise à la lecture des phrases contenant les variables phonologiques visées impliquant la liaison et le magnétophone a été utilisé pour enregistrer leur production orale, l'analyse des données révèle d important résultats, le niveau d'éducation ne détermine pas la parfaite utilisation de la liaison, curieusement, il n'y avait pas de différence entre la production de élevés de *Form Four* et ceux de *Lower Sixth* car dans les deux classes, on a obtenu 30 pourcent d élevés qui ont approximativement produit la version standard des variantes des variables choisis, un autre fait étonnant est que les élevés de *Lower Sixth* et de *Form Four* était plus compètent en liaison que ceux du premier cycle car ils ont approximativement produit 25 pourcent la version standard des variantes des variables recherches, juste les élevés du second cycle ont eu une performance meilleure car leur production est de 45 pourcent% . Ceci implique que l'usage de la liaison ne dépend pas forcement du niveau d'étude des élevés. Concernant le statut professionnel, les journalistes ont eu un meilleur score c'est à dire 33,3 pourcent dans l'utilisation de ces variantes, par rapport à d'autres professions, mais le fait que les enseignants et les avocats ont eu juste 26,7 pourcent des résultats contredit l'assertion selon laquelle les professionnels en anglais sont des meilleurs utilisateurs de cette langue.

De cette étude, l'on peut t conclure que ce n'est ni le niveau d'étude, ni le statut professionnel d'une personne qui détermine sa maitrise de la liaison en phonologie.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late parents, Ngayer Emmanuel and Rose Ngayer

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this research entitled "The Correlation between Liaison and Two Sociolinguistic Variables: Level of Education and Professional Status", was carried out by **COURAGE YAAH**, a student of the Department of English in the Higher Teacher Training College (ENS) Yaounde.

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

NE – New Englishes

SBE: Standard British English

ELT: English Language Teaching

ENL: English as a Native Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

EFT: English as a Foreign Language

RP: Received Pronunciation

L1: First language

L2: Second Language

CamE: Cameroon English

GBHS: Government Bilingual High School

CRTV: Cameroon Radio and Television

EA: Error analysis

CA: Contrastive Analysis

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The English language, spoken some years ago by a few Western countries such as Britain, America, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, has emerged as a world language. This language has travelled across national, international, and continental boundaries (Kachru 1985, 1986; Schneider 2007, and Ngefac 2010). It is now used in all the six continents of the world, and it enjoys the status of either a first, second, or foreign language in these continents (Crystal 1997). Swan (1996:12) maintains that the English language "is more widely scattered, more widely spoken, and written than any other language has ever been. It has become the language of the planet, the first truly global language". This language is so widely spread that different communities with a French colonial heritage, such as Burundi, Gabon, and South Sudan, are gradually embracing it (Plonski and Teferra 2013), quoted in Angwah (2015). As a result of this unprecedented spread, it has acquired the status of a world language, spoken in different countries of the world. Kachru's (1985) three concentric circle paradigm classified the English-speaking countries in the world into the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. Even though Cameroon does not feature on this model, it can be classified under the Outer Circle, considering that it has a colonial experience and has adopted English for diverse functions as is the case in countries classified under the Outer Circle in the model.

Cameroon has a complex multilingual landscape, where many languages co-exist. Besides English and French serving as the official languages of the country, there is Pidgin English serving as a lingua franca, Camfranglais serving the communicative needs of urban youths, and about 280 indigenous languages that are used as means of communication among speakers from different tribes that make up the country.

As concerns the situation of English in this multilingual context, it is worth mentioning that the language has acquired many context-specific aspects that are significantly different from those of Standard British English at all linguistic levels (phonology, syntax, morphology, and lexicology). In spite of the falling standards of English in Cameroon, Standard British English (henceforth SBE) is the pronunciation model that is officially recommended in the English language teaching industry and teachers are expected to teach SBE norms. Considering this pedagogic prescription aimed at drilling students on SBE norms, it is necessary to investigate the extent to which such prescriptions are

productive. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to investigate whether level of education and professional status have any significant effect on the use of liaison.

In recent years, the term "liaison" has taken a central stage in the literature. Jackson (1982), quoted in Kouega (1999), argues that "liaison involves the insertion of a sound that is by and large unmotivated from the phonetic context". According to Simo Bobda and Mbangwana (1994:84), liaison consists in joining the last sound of a word (especially a consonant) with the first sound of the following word (especially a vowel). Kouega (1999:113), on his part, holds that liaison is not just the insertion of a new sound between a sequence of phonemes, but also the articulation of a sound that already exists in the phonetic shape of a word, or at least, in its orthography. All these definitions seem to suggest that spoken language is more than a matter of consonants, vowels, and stress as observed by Tench (1981), quoted in Simo Bobda and Mbangwana (1993:13).

This study was motivated by two observations. First, in spite of the fact that SBE is both the variety recommended as a medium of instruction and the model to be promoted in the classroom, features of indigenized Cameroon English dominate the speech of most Cameroonian speakers of English. Previous studies have reported that even English Language teachers, who are looked upon as linguistic models by the general public and are expected to teach and promote RP features in Cameroon, are not exempted from this situation (Atechi 2006, Ngefac 2010, Angwah 2015). With regard to pronunciation, it has been observed that English Language teachers focus on sounds in isolation in their classrooms and shy away from aspects of connected speech such as liaison, because they consider them challenging. Given this situation, what is then the fate of the learners who depend on these teachers for knowledge, considering that the linguistic input they receive is poor? .Second, SBE is the target in English Language textbooks, but in most of these textbooks, the focus is always on sounds in isolation and aspects of connected speech (such as liaison), which characterize the speech of proficient or fluent speakers of English, are ignored.

This study is hinged on the hypothesis that there is no significant correlation between level of education and professional status, and the ability to link words in connected speech. It has been observed by many researchers that English Language teachers in the teaching of pronunciation always focus on sounds in isolation and they find aspects of connected speech such as liaison challenging, and so, tend to recede from it. Consequently, when these teachers are teaching pronunciation, they give students the impression that a letter is equal to a sound,

which is rather misleading because sounds undergo a number of modifications when they come in contact with other sounds. As these learners are not exposed to aspects of connected speech at first hand, when they eventually come across it, as they climb the educational ladder or pursue education, most of them see themselves as going through some sort of "linguistic re-incantation".

The study has a well-defined linguistic and sociolinguistic scope. Linguistically, the study investigates the phonological aspect of liaison. Sociolinguistically, it focuses on two sociolinguistic variables, namely level of education and professional status. As concerns level of education, the focus was on Form Four, Lower Sixth, undergraduates (Level Two) and postgraduates (Level Four). This was aimed at investigating whether the ability to observe the rule of liaison is likely to improve as one climbs the educational ladder. With regard to professional status, the study was limited to professionals of English like journalists and teachers of English, and non- professionals of English, like medical practitioners and lawyers.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the correlation between level of education and competence in liaison?
2. What is the relationship between professional status and knowledge of liaison?
3. What are the possible pedagogic and sociolinguistic implications of the correlation pattern that will emerge between the above-mentioned sociolinguistic variables and liaison?

This study is significant in many ways. First, most previous studies on the phonological features of Cameroonians have focused on strings of isolated phonemes or segmental aspects (Masanga 1983, Kouega 1991, Simo Bobda, 1994), and works targeting sounds in company such as liaison are very limited. Second, the correlation between linguistic variables and sociolinguistic variables has been studied mostly in the Western world (see Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974; Macaulay, 1976; Newbrook, 1982) and very little has been done in a postcolonial context like Cameroon. Finally, this work is an attempt to further codify the Cameroon variety of English, since it is the variety spoken by almost every Cameroonian. Considering that the promotion of RP in Cameroon is not yielding the expected results, indigenized Cameroon English, which dominates the speech of most Cameroonians, needs to be adequately described or codified for eventual standardization.

It is important to describe the structure of this work. The work comprises four chapters and a general introduction, which is made up of the purpose of the study, research

objectives, research questions, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the structure of the work. Chapter one focuses on theoretical issues and review of related literature. Chapter Two describes the methodology used in carrying out the study. Chapter Three presents and discusses the findings. Chapter Four discusses the sociolinguistic and pedagogic implications of the findings and presents recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONSAND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks considered for the investigation and makes an appraisal of related literature. As for the theoretical frameworks considered, the focus will be on Error Analysis (EA), propounded by Corder, the correlation framework, propounded by Labov (1966), and World Englishes framework, propounded by Kachru. With regard to literature review, works on Cameroon English phonological features and socio-phonetics will be reviewed.

1.1 Theoretical Frameworks

In this part of the work, our focus is on theoretical frameworks that determined the perspective from which this work was carried out. These theoretical models include Error Analysis, Kachru's World Englishes paradigm, and the sociolinguistic theory (also referred to as the theoretical frameworks).

1.1.1 Error Analysis

Error Analysis was established by Stephen Corder in the late 1960s as an alternative to Contrastive Analysis (CA), which at this time had become more and more unpopular. CA was propounded by Lado (1957) and it was a theory that preceded EA. CA considered native language interference as a major source of errors in second language learning. It focused on the difference between the first language and the target language, and other aspects which may affect the second language learners' performance such as overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, and incomplete application of rules. This limitation of the CA led to the birth of EA. Supporters of EA are Schacher (1974), Kleinmann (1977), Marcia and Hawkins (1985) James (1998).

Error analysis (EA), according to Crystal (1987:112), is "a technique of identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone or a group of people learning a foreign language, using any principles and procedures provided by linguists". It is a procedure used by both researchers and teachers, which involves - collecting samples of learners' language, identifying the errors in the samples, describing these errors,

classifying them according to their nature and causes, and evaluating their seriousness (Corder1974:170). The basic task of EA is to describe how learning occurs by examining the learner's output which includes his/her correct and incorrect utterances. Thus, EA is based on the identification of learners' difficulties in studying a second language and providing solutions to them.

1.1.1.1 Sources of Errors

Generally, there are two sources of errors: inter-lingual transfer and intra-lingual transfer. Inter-lingual transfer refers to errors that come from the L1; they occur as a result of negative transfer from the first language (L1) to the target language (L2). Intra-lingual transfer, on its part, refers to errors that come from the target language itself. Intra-lingual errors have been described by Richards (1974:175) as "a reflection of learners' competence at a specific level of acquisition". They result from overgeneralization of the rules of the target language.

Other sources of errors have been identified by researchers, which include the context of learning where teachers produce incorrect information and the teaching material (Mbuakoto 2009:22). Norrish (1983) observed that some teaching materials use the present progressive aspect to describe a simple present tense. Other errors include interference and developmental errors.

1.1.1.2 The Importance of Errors in Second Language Learning

Dulay (1982:138) highlights three ways in which errors are important in second language learning. First, they help teachers know how much progress their learners make; they provide the teacher with a picture of linguistic development and can give indications as to the learning process. This guides the teacher in his or her choice of material. Second, errors provide evidence to the researcher on how the second language is acquired and various learner strategies in the learning of a new language. Third, errors are indispensable to the learner because the making of errors is an indication of a learner's learning strategies.

 Sharma (1980) holds a similar view as Dulay (1982). To her, error analysis can provide a strong support to remedial teaching, because during the teaching program, it can reveal both the successes and the failures of the program.

1.1.1.3 The Relevance of EA to the Present Study

EA is relevant in this study because it investigates the informants' ability in connected speech and analyses the difference between their speech and what obtains in the standard variety of English. This is because the speech of the informants will be assessed in relation to RP norms, which is the variety of English pronunciation recommended in the Cameroonian classroom. EA is important to the present study because it will show the extent to which the rules that bind sounds in company (with reference to liaison) are violated and the reasons for this violation.

1.1.2 The World Englishes Framework

Traditionally, English was classified as ENL (English as a Native Language), ESL (English as a Second Language), and EFL (English as a Foreign Language). This traditional classification of English was seriously criticized, especially by Kachru (1985 and 1986). He argued that this approach of presenting the situation of English in the world promotes a dichotomy of "us" and "them", and places some speakers at the center and others at the periphery. Consequently, those who use English as a second or foreign language were considered strangers in the language, with less linguistic right than those who use English as a first or native language. Kachru came up with the three concentric circle model, which has been adopted in many studies as a theoretical paradigm for the study of world Englishes.

The World Englishes framework stipulates that English is no more restricted to a few Western countries. Kachru (1985, 86, and 92) maintains that the English language is no longer the property of a few nations. The language has been transported from its original seat, and has been transplanted in different parts of the world and, as a result, it has developed context-specific peculiarities. In fact, the language has evolved according to the ecological, cultural, and sociolinguistic realities of such contexts (Kachru, 1986; Graddol, 1997; Mufwene, 2001; Achimbe, 2005; Ngefac, 2008). So, instead of presenting the situation of English in the world in terms of ENL, ESL, and EFL and excluding some speakers from English linguistic rights, Kachru proposed the three concentric circles, which, to him, accommodate every user of English in the world, irrespective of his or her position.

Kachru (1985, 1986) sees the spread of the English language in terms of three concentric circles, representing the way the language has spread and how it is currently used. These circles are the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding circle. The Inner

Circle is made up of countries where English is used as a first language or a mother tongue such as Canada, Britain, United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand. The Outer Circle is made up of countries where English has a colonial history and shares its communicative functions with other languages, especially the indigenous languages. In these countries, the English language has undergone significant "twists and turns" which make the language different from what obtains in Inner Circle contexts. These countries include, "but not limited to", Nigeria, Singapore, Ghana, Kenya, and Cameroon. English here enjoys the status of a second language. The Expanding Circle refers to those countries where English is simply a subject in the curriculum and performs only an international communicative function. Such countries are China, Gabon, Tunisia, and Morocco. Here, English enjoys the status of a foreign language.

Kachru's world Englishes framework is very relevant for this study in many ways, in spite of the fact that EA and the correlation or sociolinguistic frameworks are the main models that define the perspectives from which this investigation is carried out. First, it accounts for the marked differences that exist between the English spoken in Cameroon and Inner Circle Englishes. In other words, it is Kachru's theoretical model that accounts for context-specific peculiarities that define the English spoken in Cameroon. Second, it explains the fact that Cameroonian speakers of English are still evaluated in terms of basic language issues, like connected speech, which are quite elementary to traditional native speakers of English. Third, the model provides a framework for the understanding of the findings that will emerge from this investigation.

1.1.3 The Correlation Framework

The correlation theory is a language model that seeks to show that there exists a predictable relationship between linguistic variables and sociolinguistic variables such as social status, gender, sex, ethnicity, originality, profession, and level of education. This model was first introduced by William Labov in 1966, when his New York investigation revealed a significant correlation between linguistic variables and social variables. In Labov's (1966) study, he investigated many linguistic variables, but the one that yielded the most impressive result was the use of the post-vocalic 'r'. He found out that the use of the post-vocalic 'r' significantly depended on the social status of the speakers.

Labov's (1966) findings inspired many scholars who tested this theory within the same community at different times and in different parts of the globe, and obtained the same

results (see Trudgill, 1974; Macaulay, 1976; Newbrook, 1977; Chambers, 1995). These scholars considered Labov's postulation, that social hierarchy necessarily reflects linguistic hierarchy, as a universal claim and this is why the theory has been given a universal dimension.

However, Ngefac (2006) carried out a similar study in a postcolonial context, Cameroon, and found out that Labov's social class structure does not capture the realities of postcolonial nations, because these New English contexts have socio-political, economic, cultural, and sociolinguistic realities that are different from those of the Western industrialized contexts. Ngefac (ibid) proposed different correlation patterns which capture the realities of such contexts. These sociolinguistic patterns are educationally-based, gender-based, age-based, ethnicity-based, sex-based, and profession-based (area of specialization).

This framework is very relevant to the present study. This is because the present study, like Labov (1966), Trudgill (1972), and Ngefac (2008), sets out to investigate the correlation between some sociolinguistic variables and language use.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

This section will discuss related literature, and the focus will be on previous works on Cameroon English phonological features, connected speech, and existing literature on the correlation between phonological variables and sociolinguistic variables.

1.2.1 CamE Phonology

Many studies have been carried out on Cameroon English phonology (Masanga, 1983; Simo Bobda 1997, 1994, 2000; Mbangwana 1987, 1992; Kouega 1991, 1999, Achimbe 2005, Simo Bobda and Mbangwana 1993). All these studies have established that Cameroon English phonology differs significantly from RP at the segmental and supra-segmental levels. The different aspects of Cameroon English phonology will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

1.2.1.1 Cameroon English Vowels

The vowel system in Cameroon English is very different from that of RP. RP has a vowel system containing 12 monophthongs, eight diphthongs, and five triphthongs, but Cameroon English rather has eight monophthongs, 12 diphthongs, and no triphthongs Simo Bobda and

Mbangwana (1993:200ff) .The eight monophthongs they identify are [ɪ, e, ɛ, a, u, o, ə, ɔ) as exemplified below.

[i]: seat, sit, period

[e]: late, medical

[ɛ]: pen, rest

[a]: pat, part

[u]: pool, pull, plural

[o]: go, so

[ɔ]: pot, port, notice

[ə]: able, tribalism

(Simo Bobda and Mbangwana 1993:200)

1.2.1.1.1 Replacement of RP vocalic segments

In Cameroon English, RP monophthongs are replaced with locally determined monophthongs. The NURSE vowel is one of the most discussed vowels with regard to the restructuring of RP vowels in Cameroon English (Atechi 2000: 83). In Cameroon, the vowel [ɜ] is generally rendered as [ɛ, a, ɔ]. It is generally produced [ɛ] in words containing the graphemes -er, -ir, ear, yr, and –ur as below.

Words	RP	CamE
Serve	[sɜv]	[sɛf]
Concern	[kənsɜn]	[kɔnsɛn]
Heard	[hɜd]	[hɛd]
Learn	[lɜn]	[lɛn]
Bird	[bɜd]	[bɛd]
burn	[bɜn]	[bɛn]

[ɜ] is rendered [ɔ] and [a] respectively in the following words

Words	RP	CamE
Purpose	[pɜpəs]	[pɔpɔs]
Work	[wɜk]	[wɔk]
further	[fɜðə]	[fɔðə]
maternity	[mətɜnətɪ]	[mataniti]

(Atechi 2000: 83)

The Schwa in CamE is replaced with [e, ɛ, ɔ, a, o, u, ɪ, ia, aya] as evident in the data below, taken from Atechi (2006: 85):

Words	RP	CamE
Common	[kəmən]	[kɔmɔn]
Again	[əgeɪn]	[egen]
Human	[hjumən]	[hjuman]
Police	[pəlis]	[polis]
Today	[tədeɪ]	[tude]
Flexible	[flɛksəbl]	[flegzibəl]
Socialist	[səʊʃəlɪst]	[sɔʃalist]
Martyr	[matə]	[mataja]

The mid-low unrounded vowel [ʌ] is completely absent in the speech of Cameroonians. It is rendered as [ɔ, a, ɛ, aʊ] as in the words blood, but, one, country which are rendered in RP as [blʌd], [bʌt], [wʌn], [kʌntrɪ] and CamE [blɔd], [bet], [wan], [kauntrɪ] respectively (Kouega 1999).

Vowel length is ignored in Cameroon English (Kouega 1999, Simo Bobda and Mbangwana 1993 and Atechi 2006). According to Atechi (2006), this non respect of vowel length causes word pairs like sit/seat, hid/heat, fit/feet to be homophonous.

1.2.1.1.2 Replacement of Diphthongs

Atechi (ibid) posits that CamE makes use of three RP diphthongs [aɪ], [ɔɪ] and [aʊ], but diphthongs such as [ɪə], and [ʊə] occur less often. The set of diphthongs that are common in CamE are as follows:

[ie]   nearly

[iɛ]   fear

[ia]   india

[iɔ] interior

[iu] Ignatius

[ua] continual

[ue] fluency

[ea] Korea

(Simo Bobda and Mbangwana 1993:200)

1.2.1.1.3 The monophthongisation of RP diphthongs

It has been established that there is a tendency in CamE to monophthongise RP diphthongs. Kouega (1999: 235) indicates that RP diphthongs [aɪ] and [ɔɪ] tend to move towards the primary cardinal vowel [i], instead of the centralized RP [ɪ].

[eɪ] is replaced by mid-high front vowels ranging from the lax and low [ɛ] to a high and tense [e], as exemplified below.

Words	RP	CamE
State	[steɪt]	[stet]
evacuated	[ɪvækjueItId]	[evakwɛtɛt]
waged	[weɪ)	[we]
Made	[meɪd]	[med]

(Simo Bobda 1994:235)

Simo Bobda (1994:236) observes that [əʊ] is replaced in final syllable by [o] and elsewhere by [ɔ], as follows:

Words	RP	CamE
Blow	[bləʊ]	[blo]
Phone	[fəʊn]	[fon]
Go	[gəʊ]	[go]
Close	[kləʊz]	[klos]
Focus	[fəʊkəs]	[fɔkɔs]
Total	[təʊtəl]	[total]
Poland	[pəʊlənd]	[pɔland]

[eə] is rendered [iɛ, ia, ɛ] in CamE as evident in words like tear, their, and parent.

1.2.1.1.4 Restructuring of Triphthongs

Simo Bobda (1994:245) states that CamE has no triphthongs. In the realization of a triphthong, the medial vowel of an RP triphthong changes into corresponding semi-vowels [j] and [w], respectively. Simo Bobda and Mbangwana (1993: 203) provide the following examples:

Words	RP	CamE
Fire	[faɪə]	[faja]
Surveyor	[səveɪə]	[sɔvejɔ]
Highest	[haɪəst]	[hajɛst].

1.2.1.2 Cameroon English Consonants

The consonant system of Cameroon is similar to that of RP, except for the dental fricatives [θ] and [ð] which are replaced with the alveolar plosives [t] and [d] (Kouega 1999 and Simo

Bobda 1994). Simo Bobda (1994: 245) observes that [θ] and [ð] are rendered [t] and [d], respectively, in the following words:

Words	**RP**	**CamE**
Think	[θɪŋk]	[tink]
Worth	[wɔθ]	[wɔt]
Together	[təgɛðə]	[tugɛda]
That	[ðæt]	[dat]

1.2.1.2.1 The Consonantal Processes in CamE

Kouega (1999) posits that CamE uses almost the same consonants as RP. He notes that the twenty four consonants that exist in RP also exist in CamE. He, however, observed that in CamE, the following consonants tend to be realized differently when they occur in certain contexts. They are [f, v], [θ,ð], [s, z], [ʃ,], [t, d].

Simo Bobda and Mbangwana (1993: 204) present the following consonantal processes which are attested in CamE:

1. The devoicing of obstruents in final position of words; e.g. [lap, tʃatʃ, bik, stifs] lab, charge, big, drugs, Steve's for RP [læb, tʃædʒ, bɪg, stivz].

2. Words in +Vsion have a [ʃ] instead of RP [ʒ] e.g. [diviʃɔn, intruʃɔn] for division and intrusion where RP has [ʒ].

3. Word-medially, [s] sometimes occurs for [z] and sometimes [z] occurs for [s]; e.g.[dʒosɛf, fisikal, president] (Joseph, physical and president) for RP [dʒəʊzɪf, fɪzɪkəl, prɛzɪdənt]; conversely [azjum, dizɛmba, kɔnzjum] (assume, December, consume) for RP [əsjum, dɪsɛmbə, kənsjum].

4. While in RP [gz] occurs only before stressed syllables, it is used in CamE in all environments, producing [tɛgzas, magzimum, flegzibl] (Texas, maximum, flexible) for RP [tɛksəs, mæksɪməm, flɛksɪbəl].

5. [u], rather than [ju], occurs between a consonant and a following [l] or a vowel; e.g.[mul, ambulans, anual] (mule, ambulance, annual) for RP [mjul, æmbjuləns, ænjʊəl].

6. [h] is deleted before [j]; e.g. [juman, jutʃ, jumɔ] human, huge, humour for RP [hjumən, hjudʒ, hjumə].

7. Consonant clusters are often simplified in final position. The process mostly affects [-nd, -st, -ld, -ft]; e.g. [fain aut, posɔfis, lɛfɛli] find out, post office, left early for RP [faɪndaʊt, pəʊstɔfɪs, lɛft3lɪ].

8. Postvocalic [r] is often dropped in the environment of a following vowel; e.g. [fɔawas] four hours, for RP [fɔraʊəz].

9. Stem-final [b] and [g] are not deleted, as in [bɔmbiŋ, plɔmba, siŋga, haŋgiŋ] bombing, plumber, singer, hanging for RP [bɒmə, plʌmə, sɪŋə, hæŋɪŋ].

10. –stion is pronounced [-sʃ-] instead of RP [-stʃ-]; e.g. [kwɛsʃɔn] question, instead of RP [kwɛstʃən].

11. Unlike RP, CamE has no dark l. All its 'l's are clear; e.g. [tɛl] tell, [bɛl

(Simo Bobda and Mbangwana 1993: 205).

1.2.1.3 Spelling Pronunciation

It has been observed in previous studies that the influence of spelling is very strong on the speakers of English as a second language and this is very true of CamE speakers who pronounce words based on their orthographic representation. Mbangwana (2000: 115) posits that the reason why spelling has so much influence on speakers of English like CamE speakers is because they make their first contacts with words through reading, and not through listening, as is the case with speakers of English as a first language. Simo Bobda and Mbangwana (1993:205) discuss two types of spelling-induced pronunciation. First, the case where silent letters are pronounced. Second, the case where words are given deviant phonological values as a result of their orthographic representations.

1.2.1.3.1 Silent Letters Pronounced

In English, silent letters are those that appear in words, but are not articulated. In CamE, however, these letters which are silent in SBE are pronounced, as illustrated below.

Words	RP	CamE
Sword	[sɔd]	[swɔd]
Circuit	[sɜkɪt]	[sekuit
Colonel	[kɜnl]	[kɔlɔnel]
Debt	[dɛt]	[dɛbt]

1.2.1.3.2 Other Spelling Induced Pronunciation

Cameroon English speakers rely on spelling for their pronunciation. Atechi (2006) indicates that because of the influence of spelling on their pronunciation, pairs of homophones in RP rendition with different spellings tend to be differentiated in CamE, as illustrated below.

Words	RP	CamE
Kernel/colonel	[kɜnl]	[kɛnɛl, kɔlɔnel]
Baron/barren	[bærən]	[barɔn, barɛn]
Mare/mayor	[mɛə]	[miɛ, mɛjɔ]
Symbol/cymbal	[sɪmbəl]	[simbɔl, simbal]

(Atechi 2006: 93)

1.2.1.4 Stress Deviation

It has been observed that stress in CamE is very deviant from RP. This is very evident in Simo Bobda and Mbangwana (1993) who make a number of observations about the stress pattern of CamE. Unlike RP, which generally has a backward stress pattern, stress in CamE is usually established one or two syllables later than its position in RP, as exemplified below.

RP	CamE
'ancestor	An'cestor
'petrol	Pe'trol
'challenge	Chal'lenge
'Celebrate	Cele'brate
In'dustralise	Industra'lise

In some cases, stress falls earlier in the words, moving one or two syllables backward, as illustrated below.

RP	CamE
A'cute	'acute
A'gender	'agender
Ex'treme	'extreme
Di'ploma	'diploma

Compounds usually have their primary stress on the first element in RP, but in CamE, they are generally stressed on the second, as illustrated bellow.

RP	CamE
'passport	pass'port
'blackmail	black'mail
'brainwash	brain'wash
'firewood	fire'wood

Simo Bobda and Mbangwana (ibid) also reported that nouns and adjectives have a much greater tendency to be stresses initially in CamE than in RP. This is illustrated below.

RP	CamE
Pro'fessor	'professor
As'sassin	'asassin
Ad'vice	'advice
Ex'treme	'extreme
Ap'parent	'apparent

Unlike in RP where prefixes are stress-neutral, previous studies have reported that in CamE prefixes are stress determined, as illustrated below.

RP	CamE
Il'legal	'illegal
Ir'rational	'irrational
Im'possible	'impossible
In'capable	'incapable

1.2.2 Sounds in Company

Mackey (1965: 49), quoted in Kouega (1999), posits that speech is not just a string of isolated phonemes, but a flow of sounds based on how phonemes are connected, grouped, and modified in certain contexts. Sounds, therefore, undergo a number of modifications when they come in contact with other sounds or in company with other sounds. A few works have been carried out in Cameroon on connected speech (Kouega 1999, Yung 2014, Ngwa 2015).

The main concerns in previous works have been to find out how intelligible aspects of connected speech (assimilation, elision, and liaison) are to Cameroonian speakers of English (see Yung 2014 and Ngwa 2015). The concerns of these previous works are significantly different from those of this work. For instance, their main concerns were assimilation and elision and liaison did not receive any serious attention. Yung (2014), for example, used only three variables, namely "you all", "Africa and Asia", and "the answer", to test liaison, and Ngwa (2015) used just one variable, "law and order", but the present study involves main linguistic variables. Furthermore, this study correlates some sociolinguistic variables with this aspect of connected speech.

1.2.3 The correlation between phonological variables and sociolinguistic variables

A number of researchers have made some attempts to investigate the correlation between phonological variables and sociolinguistic variables in postcolonial setting (Ngefac, 1997; Njoke, 1996; Fonyuy, 2005; Ndisom, 2013).

1.2.3.1 Language use and Educational Level

Many previous studies carried out in postcolonial settings have established that as speakers advance in education, their pronunciation evolves in the direction of RP. In other words, the higher a speaker's level of education, the higher the possibility of his or her speech to move closer to the standard form. This postulation is confirmed in Ngefac (1997) and Fonyuy (2005). Ngefac (1997) investigated the speech of Form One and Upper Sixth students, selected from some Anglophone schools in Yaounde to find out the influence of level of education on their speech. In order to achieve this, he gave them some words to read out and these words were tape recorded. Some of the words that were provided to the informants were: colonel, country, bosom, and mayor. These words were analyzed based on the informants' ability to articulate in SBE. The results he obtained from his investigation revealed that 13.33% and 26.66% of Upper Sixth students articulated the words ''country'' and ''colonel'' respectively as opposed to 0% and 6.66% which was recorded by Form One students for the pronunciation of the same words. Just like Ngefac (1997), Fonyuy (2005) investigated the relationship between level of education and linguistic performance. Her focus was to trace at three lectal levels, the evolution along the educational ladder of some pronunciation features in four regional varieties of CamE: the Nso, Kom, Bafut, and Bakossi varieties. To achieve this, some words were administered to the informants to read, in a bid to check the recurrence of [i] for [eɪ] and [u] for [əʊ]. She found out that an average of 83% of the informants at the basilectal level replaced RP [eɪ] in n[eɪ]me and maint[eɪ]n by Lamso [i], yielding n[i]me and m[i]ntain, 97% replaced RP [əʊ] by Lamso[u]. The mesolectal level witnesses a change from 83% to 30% in the [i] and [u] phenomenon in Nso English, and 97.3% to 51% in the recurrence of [u] for [əʊ]. At the acrolectal level, the speakers endeavored to attain a more standard pronunciation in the direction of RP. From their findings, Ngefac (ibid) and Fonyuy (ibid) concluded that students' performance in English language, as a whole, and pronunciation in particular improve as they pursue education. In other words, their pronunciation evolves in the direction of RP. The above researchers were concerned with sounds in isolation, but the present study focuses on sounds in company, particularly, liaison.

Contrary to previous thought, Jibril (1992) says that a speaker's level of education does not determine his or her linguistic ability, but the amount of speech training which influences performance in English proficiency. This view is supported by Ndisom (2013), who sought to investigate the occurrence of hypercorrection in CamE pronunciation and how

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this phenomenon correlates with some sociolinguistic variables. He found out that hypercorrection is a phenomenon that is gradually gaining ground in CamE, given that many of such hypercorrect features were found in the speech of the informants, especially those who are highly educated. In other words, hypercorrect features were more frequent in the speech of university students than in the speech of high school students. Thus, like Jibril (1992), Ndisom (2013) observed that level of education does not cause one's pronunciation to move to the direction of RP. Jibril (ibid) concluded by arguing that it is the amount of speech training a speaker receives that influences his or her performance in English phonology, not level of education.

1.2.3.2 Language and Professional Status

 Many studies have revealed that speakers from certain professions are often expected to be more speech-conscious than their counterparts from other professions. Thus, with regard to the English language, professionals and technicians of the language such as pedagogic inspectors, journalists, and teachers have more pressure on them to be speech-conscious than professionals from other fields such as medicine and law. This is seen in Yule (1985) who opines that some professionals such as journalists and teachers are always expected to be linguistic models to be emulated by the society. However, Njoke's (1996) investigation revealed something contrary to this view.

Njoke (1996) examined the various phonological shifts produced by media professionals, university lecturers, and the clergy, and found out that there is a variation in the speech of these different persons who speak the same variety, CamE, as different pronunciations were recorded for the articulation of the word 'public' which is RP [pʌblɪk]. University lecturers, as well as media professionals realized the word as [pɔblik], while the clergy realized it as [pʌblik]. Contrary to Yule (1985)'s postulation, Njoke's findings revealed that the speech of the clergy was closer to RP than the speech of university lecturers and media professionals, who are looked upon by the public as linguistic models. It is worth noting that the above scholars drew their conclusions based only on sounds in isolation and aspects of connected speech, like liaison, which characterize the speech of fluent speakers were not included in the scopes of their investigations. Thus, the present study will move a step further as it aims at investigating the influence of level of education and profession on the use of liaison.

1.3 Gaps and Contribution

After reviewing related literature, it is evident that there are significant differences between the previous works and the present study. This work investigates the influence of educational level and professional status on the use of liaison within a non-native setting, considering that the few studies on this aspect have been carried out particularly in the Western context. A few scholars who carried out studies on connected speech in non-native settings focused on issues of intelligibility. Other researchers who attempted a study on socio-phonetics in the Outer Circle focused on the correlation between sociolinguistic variables and the use of segments in isolation, which are not sounds in connected speech. However, very little or nothing has been done on the correlation between liaison, and sociolinguistic variables in a postcolonial setting, like Cameroon.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that guided the study. The chapter focuses on the following: research design, area of study, population sampling and sampling techniques, instruments used in collecting data, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, and difficulties encountered.

2.1 Research Design

Research design refers to the researcher's plan of how to proceed as far as the study is concerned (Mbua 2003). It is, therefore, the blueprint or backbone of any investigation, implemented by the researcher to ensure a successful completion of his or her work. The research design for this study considers the area of the study, the population of the study, the various research instruments used in the investigation, how they were administered and the method of data analysis.

2.1.1 Area of the Study

This study was carried out in the city of Yaounde, of the Centre Region of Cameroon. Yaounde was chosen for this study because it is a town where people from different linguistic backgrounds live. This town is also easily accessible to the researcher, because it is her city of residence. With regard to specific institutions, informants were taken from diverse academic and professional backgrounds. Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Etoug-Ebe, The Department of English of the University of Yaounde I (UYI), Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV), the Supreme Court, Yaounde, and the University Teaching Hospital (CUSS) constituted the specific institutions where data was collected. The choice of these institutions was purposeful. First, it was meant to find out whether intelligibility of connected speech ameliorates as learners climb the academic ladder. Second, they were judged to be appropriate contexts for a study of this magnitude, considering the importance of English language use in these institutions. Finally, they were considered appropriate enough to represent professional and non-professional users of English. The professional users of English were selected from GBHS Etoug-Ebe and CRTV Yaounde while non-professionals were chosen from the Supreme Court (SC) and the University Teaching Hospital (CUSS).

2.1.2 Population of the study

According to Luma et al. (1999), population is all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which we wish to generalize the results of our research. Furthermore, Nworgu (1990) holds that population is the limits within which the research findings are applicable. The population for this study is comprised of undergraduates and postgraduate University of Yaounde 1 students of the Department of English and students at ENS Yaounde, Lower Sixth and Form Four students of GBHS Etoug-Ebe, professional users of English (teachers and journalists), and non- professional users (doctors and lawyers).

2.1.2.1 The Students

The students who were retained for this study were drawn from Form Four, Lower Sixth, level 2 and level 4. In each institution, the informants were randomly selected. The following table shows the distribution of students:

Table 1. Distribution of students.

Institutions	Classes	Number of Informants
GBHS Etoug-Ebe	Form 4	10
	Lower Sixth	10
The Department of English, University of Yaounde I	Level 2	10
The Department of English, ENS Yaounde	Level 4	10

2.1.2.2 The teachers

The teachers considered for this study are those who have been trained in a Higher Teacher Training College. Teachers were retained because they are often looked upon as speech models and are the ones to transmit knowledge to the students.

2.1.2.3 Journalists

As far as journalists were concerned, CRTV journalists were retained for this study. This is because these journalists have received adequate training on pronunciation, given that their

job is basically on communication. Moreover, the general public look up to them as linguistic models.

2.1.2.4 The medical practitioners

The medical practitioners who were retained for this study were nurses and doctors of the University Teaching Hospital (CUSS).

2.1.2.5 Lawyers

The lawyers who served as informants for this study were limited to those who serve at the High court and law Chambers in Yaounde.

The distribution of the informants from various professions considered for this study is presented on the table below.

Table 2. Distribution of various professional status

Profession	Number of informants
teachers	10
journalists	10
doctors	10
lawyers	10
Total	40

2.1.3 Methods of Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through personal observation and through tape recording. The phrases and sentences involving liaison that were presented to the informants to be read aloud were collected through the observation of the way English is spoken in Cameroon. The tape recorder was then used to record the phonological renditions of the informants, which later transcribed and analyzed to obtain the findings that are presented in this work.

2.1.3.1 Tape-recorder

A tape-recorder was used to record the speech of journalists. Also, the students, doctors and lawyers were given a number of sentences and while they read them out, they were recorded

and the researcher played it later on and analyzed. This was to test their knowledge of liaison, and to find out if level of education and profession significantly correlate with the use of liaison.

2.1.3.2 Personal observation

The phrases and sentences involving liaison that were presented to the informants to be read aloud were collected through the observation of the way English is spoken in Cameroon, in formal and informal situations. This was done while speakers were in live conversations using the English language.

2.1.4 Method of Data analysis

The collection of data was followed by the analysis. The sentences read by the informants and were recorded by the researcher, were played and transcribed. The frequencies of informants' responses were calculated and presented on tables, following the sociolinguistic categories of the informants. This enabled us to find out how the use of liaison correlated with level of education and professional status.

2.1.5 Difficulties Encountered

The first difficulty I encountered was that most of my informants were seemingly too busy, especially the lawyers and the Doctors. Nevertheless, we convinced them that the exercise was not going to be time consuming and they complied. Second, to book an appointment with the English Language teachers of GBHS Etoug-Ebe whose classes were selected for the collection of data was quite challenging. They kept on rescheduling the appointment which was time consuming and costly too, given that the investigator spent much money to pay taxi fare during all her trips to this school. However, the investigator only succeeded when she was sent to this school to do her teaching practice; she succeeded in convincing her trainer who then talked to her colleagues and they accepted that the investigation could be carried out in their respective classes.

2.1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we presented the methodology that guided the study. The focus was on the area of study, the target and sample population, method of data collection, method of data analysis, and difficulties encountered. The next chapter will focus on the presentation and analysis of findings.

CHAPTER THREE

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of the findings, drawn from personal observation and tape recording of the informants' speech.

The following table presents the five linguistic items that were tested in relation to liaison.

Table 3. Target linguistic items

Linguistic Items	Pronunciation of words in isolation	Pronunciation following the rules of Liaison
Far away	/fɑ əweɪ/	/fɑrəweɪ/
The only way	/ðɪ əʊnlɪ weɪ/	/ðɪjənlɪweɪ/
Too angry	/tu æŋgri/	/tuwæŋgri/
Be actively involved	/bɪ æktɪvli ɪnvɔlvd/	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/
To answer	/tu ɑnsə/	/tuwɑnsə/

As evident from this table, the first column presents the various phrases which were tested. The second column presents the linguistic items as they occur in their ideal forms, while the third colon presents the pronunciation of the words following the rule of liaison.

3.1 Level of education and liaison

In this section, the aim was to find out whether a learner's level of education has an effect on his or her ability to observe the rule of liaison. The informants were submitted to the reading of 5 carefully designed sentences, containing 5 target linguistic items. The following results were obtained.

3.1.1 Form Four students' realization of the linguistic items

Form four students were submitted to the reading of some 5 sentences in which were embedded the 5 target linguistic features. The following results were obtained

Table 4. The rendition of the phrase 'far away'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	/fɑrəweɪ/	5	30%
		/fɑ ewe/	3	50%
		/fɑ awe/	2	20%
Total			10	100%

We realize from the above table that Form Four students realized the linguistic item 'far away' in three different ways: /fɑrəweɪ/, /fa ɛwɛ/, and /fɑ awe/. Out of all the 10 informants, 5 realized the phrase as /fɑrəweɪ/, which corresponds to RP, in relation to the rule of liaison. All the other 5 informants realized the words in isolation. As for the linguistic item 'the only way', the following result was obtained.

Table 5. The rendition of the linguistic item 'the only way'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	/ðɛ ɔnlɛ wɛ/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

The table shows that of all the 10 form 4 informants, none of them respected the rule of liaison. As seen above, all the items were rendered in isolation, and the recorded pronunciations tilted towards CamE. Another linguistic item that was tested was 'too angry' and it recorded the following results.

Table 6. The linguistic item 'too angry'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	/tuwæŋgri/	1	10%
		/tu ɑŋgri/	9	90%
Total			10	100%

As evident above, the linguistic item, 'too angry' was rendered in two different ways. 1 informant rendered it as /tuwæŋgri/, which corresponds to the RP rendition of the phrase following the rule of liaison while 9 of the informants violated the rule of liaison, as they realized the phrase as /tu ɑŋgri/, which is typical of CamE.

Table 7. The rendition of the linguistic item 'be actively involved'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	/bi aktifli invɔlv/ /bi əktivli invɔlvd/	7 3	70% 30%
Total			10	100%

As indicated above, the linguistic item 'be actively involved' was realized in two ways, but none of these pronunciations corresponded to the RP rendition of the items, neither did it respect the rule of liaison. 7 (70%) of the informants realized the phrase as /bi aktifli invɔlv/, while 3 (30%) realized it as /bi əktivli invɔlvd/, and 0(0%) realized it as /bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/. As concerns the linguistic item 'to answer', the following results were obtained.

Table 8. The rendition of the linguistic item 'to answer'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	/tu ɑŋsɑ/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

The above table shows that all the informants realized the phrase 'to answer' following CamE norms, and none respected the rule of liaison.

Table 9. Overall performance of form 4 students

Linguistic item	Correct responses	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	5	50
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	0	0
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	1	10
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlɪrɪnvɔlvd/	0	0
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	0	0
Total		6	60
Mean		3	30

It is evident from the above table that out of all the linguistic items which were tested, the only ones that scored were 'far away' with a recorded percentage of 50% and 'too angry' with 10%. This result shows that liaison is scarce in the speech of form four students as all the other linguistic items 'the only way', 'be actively involved', and 'to answer' recorded 0%.

3.1.2 Lower Sixth students' realization of the linguistic item 'far away'

Just like the form 4 students, Lower Sixth students were expected to read a series of sentences containing the target linguistic items, and the following results were obtained.

Table 10. The rendition of the linguistic item 'far away'

Linguistic item	RP	Respondents' rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	/fɑrəweɪ/	5	50%
		/fɑ ewe/	3	30%
		/fɑ awe/	2	20%
Total			10	100%

From the above table, we can observe that only the linguistic item "far away" was rendered in three different ways. While 5(50%) rendered the linguistic item "far away" as /fɑrəweɪ/, 30% realized it as /fɑ ewe/, and 20% realized it as /fɑ awe/. Thus, 50% of the informants observed the rule of liaison while 50% of the informants did not; they pronounced the words in isolation.

Table 11. Lower Sixth students' realization of "The only way"

Linguistic item	RP	Respondents' rendition	Frequency	Percentage
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	1	10
		/ðɛ ɔnlɛ wɛ/	9	90
Total			10	100%

The data above indicates that only one informant observed the rule of liaison, as the pronunciation /ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/recorded 10%. As many as 9, out of the 10 Lower Sixth informants pronounced the phrase following CamE norms, /ðɛ ɔnlɛ wɛ/, and all the words were pronounced in isolation. This means that 90% of the informants violated the rule of liaison,

Table 12. Lower Sixth students' rendition of the linguistic item "too angry"

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	/tu ɑŋgri/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

As indicated above, all the informants violated the rule of liaison in relation to the linguistic item 'too angry'. This rule stipulates that a /w/ sound be inserted between a word that ends in the vowel /u/ and the next word if it begins with a vowel sound. So, instead of realizing the phrase as /tuwæŋgri/, all Lower Sixth informants realized it as /tu ɑŋgri/, which is typical of CamE. The poor performance of these informants can be attributed to the fact that the sound /w/ which is inserted in between the words 'too' and 'angry' is not orthographically represented, especially as most Cameroonians depend on spelling for pronunciation.

Table 13. Lower Sixth students' realization of the item "Be actively involved"

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	/bi ɑktifli invɔlv/ /bi əktivli invɔlvd/	5 5	0% 50% 50%
Total			10	100**%**

As presented on this table, liaison is scarce in the rendition of the informants. Not only did the informants violate the rule of liaison, but what they rendered were /bi ɑktifli invɔlv/ 5 (5%), and /bi əktivli invɔlvd/ 5(5%), all of which are typical of CamE.

Table 14. Lower Sixth students' realization of the linguistic item "to answer"

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	/tu ɑŋsɑ/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

The above table shows that 0(0%) of the informants made use of liaison, while 10(100%) of the informants rendered the item in isolation. The reason for this, just like In the realization of the phrase "too angry" is suggested to be as a result of the influence of spelling on pronunciation. Since the /w/ sound is not orthographically represented between the words "To and Answer", the informants left it out, thereby violating the rule of liaison.

Table 15: Overall linguistic performance of Lower Sixth students

Linguistic item	Correct responses	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	5	50
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	1	10
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	0	0
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	0	0
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	0	0
Total		6	60
Mean		3	30

The sum total results of Lower Sixth students that "far away" recorded 50%, "the only way" recorded 1%, and the rest of the items recorded 0%.

3.1.3 Undergraduate students' rendition of the linguistic items

It is worth noting that the undergraduate students who served as informants for this study were Level 2 students of the Department of English of the University of Yaounde 1. From their reading of the items "far away", "the only way", "too angry", "be actively involved" and "to answer", the following results were obtained.

Table 16. Distribution table showing undergraduate students' realization of the linguistic   item "far away"

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	/fɑrəweɪ/	4	20
		/fɑ ɛwe/	8	80
Total			10	100

The above reveals that 4 (40%) of the respondents use liaison in the pronunciation of the phrase "Far away". 5 of the informants, giving a percentage of 50% violated the rule of liaison as they left out the 'r' sound which in liaison is inserted between a word ending in a vowel and another beginning with a vowel, with the first word ending in a 'r'.

Table 17. Undergraduate students' rendition of the linguistic item "the only way"

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	/ðɛ ɔnlɛ wɛ/	0 10	0% 100%
Total			10	100%

The above statistics reveal that 0 (0%) of the informants observed the rule of liaison in the articulation of the phrase "the only way". 10 (10%) of the informants rendered it as /ðɛ ɔnlɛ wɛ/, which is typical of CamE. The fact that none of the informants observed the rule of liaison shows clearly that this phenomenon is far-fetched in CamE.

Table 18. Undergraduate students' rendition of the linguistic item "too angry"

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	/tu ɑngri/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

The table shows that 0 (0%) of the informants violated the rule of liaison stipulates that a /w/ be inserted between vowel sounds at word boundaries if the vowel sound of the first word ends with an /u/ sound. All the informants 10 (10%) articulated the words in isolation, thereby neglecting one of the hallmarks of a fluent speaker, liaison.

Table 19 Undergraduate students' rendition of the linguistic item "be actively involved"

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlɪrɪnvɔlvd/	/bi ɑktifli invɔlvd/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

All the informants, as indicated above, rendered the linguistic item "be actively involved" as /bi ɑktifli invɔlvd/, and 0(0%) of the informants observed the rule of liaison in the course of their pronunciation. All the informants realized the words in isolation.

Table 20 Undergraduate students' rendition of the linguistic item "to answer"

Linguistic Item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	/tu ɑŋsɑ/	10	100%
TOTAL			10	100%

From the above table, we notice that 0(0%) of the informants rendered the linguistic item "to answer" the way it is realized in SBE? either in isolation or in company. All the 10 informants realized the above linguistic item as it is pronounced in CamE, and the rule of liaison was violated.

Table 21. Summary of the results recorded by undergraduate students

Linguistic item	Correct responses	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	40	40
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	1	10
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	0	0
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	0	0
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	0	0
Total		5	50
Mean		2.5	25%

The overall results recorded by undergraduate informants shows that liaison is far − fetched in CamE. The linguistic item 'the only way' recorded 10% while 'too angry', 'be actively involved', and 'to answer' all recorded 0%. The linguistic item 'far away' however, recorded 40%. One can conclude that 'far away' scored more than all the other linguistic items because the 'r' sound, which links the two words in connected speech is orthographically represented. This shows the extent to which spellings influence the pronunciation of most Cameroonians.

3.1.4 Postgraduate informants' rendition of the linguistic items

The class that was taken as far as the postgraduate level was concerned was Level 4, ENS Yaounde. To determine their level of competence in liaison, they were given sentences to read and this yielded the following.

Table 22. Postgraduate students' Realization of the linguistic item 'far away'

Linguistic Item	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	6	60%
	/fɑ ewe/	3	30%
	/fɑ awe/	1	10%
TOTAL		10	100%

From the above table, it can be seen that 6(60%) of the Level 4 students observed the rule of liaison. 3(30%) of them realized the phrase as /fa ewe/ and 1(10%) realized it as /fɑ ɑwe/, which are the different renditions heard in the speech of most Cameroonians.

Table 23. Postgraduate students' rendition of the linguistic item "the only way"

Linguistic Item	Recorded Pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	3	30%
	/dɛ ɔnlɛ wɛ/	4	40%
	/ðɪ əʊnlɪ weɪ/	3	30%
Total		10	100%

We realize from the above table that three different renditions were recorded for the phrase "the only way". 3(30%) of the informants observed the rule of liaison as they realized °the phrase as /ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/. 3(30%) of the informants articulated the words following RP norms /ðɪ əʊnlɪ weɪ/, but violated the rule of liaison, as the words were articulated in isolation. 4(40%) of the informants realized it as /dɛ ɔnlɛ wɛ/, which is characteristic of CamE, and violates the rule of liaison.

Table 24. Postgraduate students' rendition of the linguistic item "too angry"

Linguistic Item	RP	Recorded Pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	/tu əŋgrɪ/ /tu ɑŋgri/	3 7	30% 70%
Total			10	100%

The table above indicates that 0(0%) of the informants realized the phrase "too angry" as /tuwəŋgrɪ/. 3(30%) realized it as /tu æŋgri/ which in isolation, follows the norms of RP. Up to 7(70%) of the informants realize the phrase as /tu ɑŋgri/, which neither follows the rule of liaison, nor the RP norm in isolation, but is rather typical of CamE.

Table 25. Postgraduate students' rendition of the linguistic item "be actively involved"

Linguistic Item	RP	Recorded Pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlɪrɪnvɔlvd/	/bi aktivli invɔlvd/	10	10%
Total			10	100%

The data above shows that 0(0%) of the informants realized the phrase "be actively involved" as /bɪjəktɪvlɪrɪnvɔlvd/, meaning that none of them observed the rule of liaison. All the informants 10(100%) articulated the words as they are in their ideal forms, and their pronunciation was typical of CamE

Table 26. Postgraduate students' rendition of the linguistic item "to answer"

Linguistic Item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	/tu ɑnsɑ/	10	100%
	Total		10	100%

We realize from the above table that none of the informants respected the rule of liaison in the rendition of the phrase 'to answer', which following the rule of liaison, is realized as /tuwɑnsə/. All of the informants, 10(100%), rendered the words in isolation, and their pronunciations were typically what obtains in CamE.

Table 27. Overall performance of postgraduates

Linguistic item	Correct responses	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	6	60
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	3	30
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	0	0
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	0	0
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	0	0
Total		9	90
Mean		4.5	45%

The distribution table, showing the overall results recorded by postgraduate students above indicates that only two of the linguistic items tested registered a score. 'Far away' registered 60% while 'the only way' registered 30%. In the realization of the items 'too angry', 'be actively involved', and 'to answer', all the informants violated the RP rule of liaison. Summarily, the total percentage score recorded by postgraduate students is 45%.

3.2 The correlation between professional status and liaison

It has been established in previous works that the variety of English speakers use reflect their professions. Thus, the Pronunciations of English language professionals such as journalists and teachers are often expected to move closer to RP than those of non-professionals of English. To test this hypothesis, professionals of English (teachers and journalists) and non-professionals of English (medical practitioners and lawyers) were given five carefully constructed sentences in which five target linguistic items were embedded. The results obtained will be presented below.

3.2.1 Secondary school teachers' realization of the linguistic items

Secondary school teachers, like all the other informants, were submitted to the reading of some well-designed sentences, embedded with the five target linguistic elements. The first item that they read was 'far away', which yielded the following results.

Table 28. Rendition of the linguistic item 'far away'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	/fɑrəweɪ/	4	40%
		/fɑ ewe/	3	40%
		/fɑ awe/	3	30%
Total			10	100%

We observe that there were three different renditions of the phrase "far away" by secondary school teachers. 4 (40%) realized it as /fɑrəweɪ/, 30(30%) realized it as /fɑ ewe/, and 30(30%) realized it as /fa awe/. It is very evident, therefore, that only 3(30%) of the informants respected the rules of liaison while 7(70%) realized the phrase in isolation.

Table 29. Rendition of "the only way"

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	/ðɪ əʊnlɪ weɪ/	4	4%
		/de ɔnle we/	6	6%
Total			10	100%

The above data shows that none of the informants respected the rule of liaison. 0(0%) of the teachers realized the phrase as /ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/, 4(40%) of the informants realized it as /ðɪ əʊnlɪ weɪ/ which is actually in accordance with RP in their ideal forms, while 6(60%) realized it as / de ɔnlɛ we/, which is typical of CamE.

Table 30. Rendition of the linguistic item "too angry"

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	/tuwæŋgri/	2	20%
		/tu ɑngri/	8	80%
Total			10	100%

From the table above, it is evident only 2 secondary school teachers respected the rule of liaison in the course of reading the linguistic item 'too angry'. All the other 8 informants

realized the words in isolation, and their speech corresponded with the CamE rendition of the phrase.

Table 31. Rendition of the linguistic item "be actively involved"

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	frequency	percentage
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	/bi ɑktifli invɔlvd/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

The table above indicates that all the ten informants violated the rule of liaison. All the informants rendered the linguistic item "be actively involved" as /bi ɑktifli invɔlvd/, which clearly indicates the predominance of CamE in the speech of the informants. Thus, no informant made an attempt to realize the linguistic item as /bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/, which is in line with SBE, in connected speech.

Table 32. Rendition of the linguistic item "to answer"

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	/tuwɑnsə/	2	2%
		/tu ɑnsɑ/	8	8%
Total			10	100%

The above table shows that 2(2%) of the informants made use of liaison in the realization of the linguistic item "to answer", while 8(80%) realized it as /tu ɑnsɑ/, which is in accordance with the pronunciation of most Cameroonians**.**

Table 33. Overall performance of secondary school teachers

Linguistic item	Correct responses	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	4	40
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	0	0
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	2	20
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	0	0
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	2	20
Total		8	80%
Mean		2.7	26.7%

3.2.2 Journalists' realization of the linguistic items

From the reading of the five sentences presented to the journalists, with the target linguistic features: "far away", "the only way", "too angry", "be actively involved" and "to answer", the following results were obtained.

Table 34. Rendition of the linguistic item "far away"

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	/fɑrəweɪ/	6	60%
		/fɑ əweɪ/	3	30%
		/fɑ ewe/	1	10%
Total			10	100%

We can observe from the above data that 6(60%) of the informants realized the phrase "far away" as /fɑrəweɪ/, which respects the rule of linking. 3(30%) realized the phrase as /fɑ əweɪ/, while 1(10%) realized it as /Fa ewe/. Thus, 40% pronounced the words in isolation.

Table 35. The rendition of the linguistic item "the only way"

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	3	30%
		/ðɛ ɔnlɛ we/	7	70%
	Total		10	100%

The table indicates that 3 out of the ten informants realized the phrase "the only way" as /ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/, which is characteristic of the speech of a fluent speaker of English. 7 informants pronounced the words separately or as they are in their ideal forms.

As concerns the linguistic item 'too angry', the following results were obtained.

Table 36. The rendition of the linguistic item "too angry"

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Too angry	/tuwæŋgi/	/tu ɑŋgri/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

The data shows that with regards to the observance of liaison, known of the informants realized the phrase "too angry" as /tuwæŋgri/. 10 (100%) of the informants pronounced the words in isolation, in the course of reading the sentence which contained this linguistic element.

Table 37. The rendition of the linguistic item "be actively involved"

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	/bi ɑktifli invɔlvd/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

The table shows that out of the 10 informants, known realized the phrase "be actively involved" as /bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/. The pronunciation that was recorded all tilted towards CamE, and all the words were realized as they are in their ideal forms.

Table 38. The realization of the linguistic item 'to answer'

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	/tuwɑnsə/	1	10%
		/tu ɑŋgsɑ/	9	90%
Total			10	100%

The linguistic item "to answer" recorded a 10% in terms of liaison. 9 (90%) of the informants realized this linguistic item as /tu ɑŋgsɑ/, which neither respects the rule of liaison nor corresponds with the RP realization of the words in isolation. The pronunciation /tu ɑŋgsɑ/, which dominated the speech of the informants, is typical of CamE.

Table 39. Distribution table showing the overall results recorded by journalists

Linguistic item	Correct responses	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	6	6O
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	3	30
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	0	0
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	0	0
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	1	10
Total		10	100
Mean		3.3	33.3%

The above table presents the overall results recorded by journalists. The item 'far away' recorded as high as 60%. "The only way" was articulated by 3 informants as far as RP is concerned, giving a total percentage of 30. The linguistic item "to answer" recorded 10%, while "be actively involved" and "too angry" recorded 0% each. The above table shows that journalists performed better than secondary school teachers, even though their linguistic performances were poor. As indicated above, the total percentage recorded by journalists was 33.3%.

3.2.3 Medical practitioners' realization of the linguistic items

Table 40. The rendition of the item 'far away'

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	/fɑrəweɪ/	3	30%
		/fɑ awe/	5	50%
		/fɑ ewe/	2	20%
Total			10	100%

As evident on the above table, three different pronunciations were recorded for the linguistic item "far away". 3 of the informants rendered it as /fɑrəweɪ/, 5 rendered it as /fɑ awe/, while 2 of them rendered it as /fɑ ewe/. It is clear that only 30% of the informants rendered the linguistic item as /fɑrəweɪ/, the way it is realized in RP in connected speech and up to 70% of the informants realized the words in isolation.

Table 41. The rendition of the item 'the only way'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	1	10
		/ðɛ ɔnlɛ wɛ/	9	90
Total			10	100

The above figure shows that 1(10%) of the informants realized the linguistic item "the only way" as /ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/, while 9(90%) realized the linguistic item as /ðɛ ɔnlɛ wɛ/, which violates the rule of liaison.

Table 42. Medical practitioners' rendition of the item 'too angry'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	/tu ɑngri/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

This table shows that 0(0%) of the informants realized the linguistic item as /tuwæŋgri/. 10(100%) realized it as /tu ɑŋgri/, which is heard in the speech of most Cameroonians. With regard to the linguistic item 'be actively involved' read by the medical practitioners the following result was obtained.

Table 43. The rendition of the linguistic item 'be actively involved'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	/bi ɑktifli invɔlvd/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

As the data above indicates, the phrase "be actively involved" was realized by 10 (100%) informants as /bi ɑktifli invɔlvd/, which does not respect the rule of liaison, and is typical of CamE. None of the informants realized this phrase as /bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/, which is characteristic of RP, in connected speech.

Table 44. The realization of the linguistic item 'to answer'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	/tu ɑŋgsɑ/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

From the above table, it is evident that the rule of liaison, which requires that a /w/ sound be inserted when a word ends with the vowel sound /u/ and the next word begins with a vowel sound is violated. 0 (0%) of the informants observed this rule, as it recorded 0%. All the 10 informants realized the phrase in isolation.

Table 45. Overall performance of medical practitioners

Linguistic item	Correct responses	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	3	3O
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	1	10
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	0	0
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	0	0
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	0	0
Total		4	40
Mean		2	20%

The overall results recorded by medical practitioners' shows that almost all the medical practitioners failed to observe the rule of liaison. All the target linguistic items recorded 0%, except 'far away', which recorded 30% and 'the only way' which recorded 10%.

3.2.4 Lawyers' realization of the linguistic items

The following pronunciations were recorded as the lawyers read the sentences embedded with the target linguistic items.

Table 46. The rendition of the item 'far away'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	/fɑrəweɪ/	4	40%
		/fɑ awe/	6	60%
Total			10	100%

As the above table shows, the pronunciation /fɑrəweɪ/, which is in accordance with RP as far as liaison is concerned recorded 4(40%) while the pronunciation /fɑ awe/, which is

predominant in CamE recorded 6(60%). As for the linguistic item "the only way", the following result was obtained.

Table 47. The rendition of the linguistic item 'the only way'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
The only way	/ðijəʊnlɪweɪ/	/ðijəʊnlɪweɪ/	2	20%
		/dɛ ɔnlɛ we/	8	80%
Total			10	100%

The data above shows that out of all the 10 informants who read the item "the only way", only 2 of the informants realized it as / ðijəʊnlɪweɪ/, which corresponds with the RP rendition of the phrase. 8 of the informants realized it as /dɛ ɔnlɛ we/, which violates the RP rule of liaison, and deviates from RP rendition in isolation. This pronunciation is typical of CamE.

Table 48. The rendition of the linguistic item 'too angry'

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	/tu ɑngri/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

From the above table, 10 (100%) of the informants violated the rule of liaison. As concerns the linguistic item "be actively involved", the following result was obtained

Table 49. The rendition of the linguistic item "be actively involved"

Linguistic item	RP	Rendition	Frequency	Percentage
Be actively involved	/bɪjæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	/bi ɑktifli invɔlv/	10	100%
Total			10	100%

The data above shows that of all the lawyers who read the sentences, none of them respected the rule of liaison. The pronunciation that was recorded was /bi aktifli invɔlv/, which can be heard in the speech of most Cameroonians.

Table 50. The rendition of the linguistic item 'to answer'

Linguistic item	RP	Recorded pronunciation	Frequency	Percentage
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	/tuwɑnsə/ /tu ansɑ/	1 9	10% 90%
Total			10	100%

Two pronunciations were recorded for the linguistic item 'to answer'. These two pronunciations are /tuwansə/, which scored 1(10%) and /tu ɑnsɑ/, which was approximated by 9 informants, giving a total percentage of 90. As the result indicates, only 1(10%) of the informants respected the rule of liaison, while 9(90%) violated this rule.

Table 51. The overall performance of lawyers

Linguistic item	Correct responses	Frequency	Percentage
Far away	/fɑrəweɪ/	4	40
The only way	/ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/	3	30
Too angry	/tuwæŋgri/	0	0
Be actively involved	/bijæktɪvlirɪnvɔlvd/	0	0
To answer	/tuwɑnsə/	1	10
Total		8	80
Mean		2.7	26.7%

The overall statistics recorded for lawyers indicate that the item 'far away' /fɑrəweɪ/ recorded the highest score with a percentage of 40. The linguistic item 'the only way' which is RP /ðɪjəʊnlɪweɪ/ with regard to liaison, registered 30%. 'To answer', realized as /tuwɑnsə/ in RP, registered 10%. The rest of the items, "be actively involved", and "too angry registered 0%. This result produced a total mean of 2.7 and a total percentage of 26.7. This score is the same as the score registered by secondary school English Language teachers.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

4.0 Introduction

This section of the work presents the summary of the results gotten from the field, discusses the findings of the study, pedagogic and sociolinguistic implications of the findings, and suggestions for further research.

This study set out to investigate the relationship between level of education, professional status, and competence in liaison. The results were analyzed based on the research questions that guided this work, or in relation to these research questions.

4. 1. Summary of Findings

The first preoccupation of this work was to find out if there is a relationship between level of education and competence in the observance of the rule of liaison. To answer the above research questions, a review of the findings will be necessary. Form Four, Lower Sixth, undergraduates (Level Two), and postgraduates (Level Four) were the classes considered as far as level of education was concerned. The findings revealed that 5(50%) of Form Four students, 5(50%) Lower Sixth students, 4(40%) undergraduate students, and 6(60%) of the postgraduate students observed the rule of liaison as far as the linguistic item "far away" was concerned. As regard the linguistic item "the only way", no form four student observed the rule of liaison, 1 Lower sixth student and 1 undergraduate student observed the rule of liaison while three post graduate student made use of liaison. As concerns the linguistic item "too angry", only one form four student respected the rule of liaison. The phrases "be actively involved", and "to answer" recorded 0% for all the classes. The overall results recorded by the classes are as follows: form four 30%, lower sixth 30%, undergraduates 25%, and postgraduates 45%.

As evident from the above results, none of the classes had a striking advantage over the other in the rendition of the linguistic items. Form four and lower sixth students registered the same scores, regardless of the fact that Lower Sixths are more advanced in education than Form Fours. The most amazing of all is the fact that the overall percentage score registered by Form Four and Lower Sixth students was higher than that of undergraduate students. The only level that managed a slightly higher score was the postgraduate level. In effect,

irrespective of educational attainment, the informants realized most of the linguistic items as they occur in their ideal forms, and most of their renditions deviated from RP and corresponded to CamE rendition of the linguistic items. In other words, the informants did not only violate the rules of liaison, but their speech produced the CamE variant, regardless of their different educational levels.

It can, therefore, be concluded that educational attainment has little or no significant influence on one's competence or ability to observe the rule of liaison in a post-colonial setting like Cameroon. As revealed in the findings, there was no difference between the overall percentages recorded by Form Four and Lower Sixth students. More surprising was the fact that Form Four and Lower Sixth students scored higher percentages than undergraduate students. This result debunks the postulation advanced by previous researchers that linguistic outputs improve as speakers climb the educational ladder.

Another concern was to find out whether there is a predictable relationship between professional status and competence in liaison. The findings revealed the following scores recorded by secondary school teachers: "far away" 40%, "the only way", 0%, "too angry" 20%, be actively involved 0%, and "to answer" 20% . With regard to journalists, "far away" recorded 60%, the only way 30%, and "to answer" 10%. As concerns medical practitioners, "far away" scored 30%, "the only way" 10%, and the rest of the items registered 0%. Finally, the percentage score recorded by lawyers were as follows: "far away" scored 40%, "the only way" 30%, and "to answer" 10%. The linguistic items "be actively involved" recorded 0% for all informants.

From the above findings, there is a clear indication that professional status does not reflect language performance. From the data collected, secondary school English Language teachers, who are often expected to be linguistic models to be emulated by society, registered the same score as lawyers. Even though the percentage score registered by journalist was slightly higher than those of the other professions, this score was not particularly striking. In Cameroon, most people expect English language teachers and journalists to be linguistically closer to prestige forms than their counterparts from other professions. As the results indicate, these supposed English language professionals are not living up to expectation. We can, therefore, conclude that in Cameroon, competence in the use of liaison, or knowledge of liaison is not determined by one's professional status.

Among all the linguistic items that were tested, 'far away' recorded the highest percentages for all the classes and all the professions. This phenomenon is in line with Kouega's (1999) findings which revealed that liaison in a vowel – vowel environment is non-existent in CamE, but can sometimes be heard in a consonant – vowel environment, in the speech of Cameroonians. One can also assert that the reason for the high score recorded by the linguistic item 'far away', is as a result of the orthographic representation of the letter 'r' at the end of the word 'far'. This assertion stems from the observation that in Cameroon, the pronunciation of a word is triggered by the words' orthographic representation, a phenomenon termed by linguists as 'spelling pronunciation'. As for the linguistic items 'the only way', 'too angry', and 'to answer', where the / j/ and /w/ are not orthographically represented, the scores were relatively low.

The overall results confirm the hypothesis that there is no significant correlation between the two sociolinguistic variables: level of education and professional status, and competence in liaison.

4.2 Pedagogic and Sociolinguistic Implication of the Findings

The results obtained in this study have a number of pedagogic and sociolinguistic implications. From a sociolinguistic standpoint, the fact that there was no significant difference in the linguistic performance of the different classes is proof that in Cameroon, competence in liaison is not determined by one's educational attainment. As evident from the findings, the percentage score of Form Four students were the same as those of Lower Sixth students. What was even more interesting was the fact that Lower Sixth students performed better than undergraduates. Finally, irrespective of professional status, liaison was far-fetched in the speech of the informants as journalists and teachers, who are often considered professionals of English recorded no better performances from non-professionals of English .This is particularly evident in the performance of teachers which was the same as that of lawyers. In Cameroon, therefore, linguistic performance does not vary from one profession to the next.

Pedagogically, the implications are manifold. First, most of the informants violated the rule of liaison, an important RP feature which qualifies a speaker as fluent, or which determines how proficient a speaker is, and not only did the informants violate the rule of liaison, but their pronunciation of the words in isolation tilted towards CamE pronunciations. The scarcity of SBE pronunciation features (such as liaison) in the speech of the informants

therefore indicates that the struggle by policy makers to promote RP in Cameroon is not only far-fetched, but very unrealistic. Second, the deplorable nature of the linguistic performance of English Language teachers, and the fact that they registered the same percentage as lawyers shows that in Cameroon, English Language teachers, who are the main government agents in the promotion of RP are still grappling with it. This situation portrays the dilemma of English Language teachers, and the overall confusion that is bound to exist in the classroom. Presented with this situation, Ngefac (2008) describes the classroom situation as that of total blindness, where the teacher on whom the students depend for knowledge of RP is as blind as the students or, in other words, the teacher himself has no mastery of RP.

4.3 Recommendations

The overall results indicate that CamE is the unavoidable companion of every Cameroonian English speaker. The fact that most of the pronunciations recorded tilted towards CamE is proof that the struggle to implant SBE pronunciation in a multilingual setting with unique contextual realities is unattainable. Thus, instead of labouring to promote SBE, CamE pronunciation should be standardized and promoted and if they must insist on RP, the state should redesign their training programs to incorporate pronunciation in general, and aspects of connected speech such as liaison in particular. Also, teachers should be provided with adequate equipment like textbooks targeting pronunciation because in most English Language textbooks, this aspect is almost, if not totally absent.

4.4 Suggestions For Further research.

The present study has investigated the correlation between two sociolinguistic variables - level of education and professional status, and competence in liaison, or knowledge of liaison. Further research can be carried out on the correlation between level of education and professional status, and the ability to observe vocalic rules such as pre-r breaking, trisyllabic laxing, and vowel reduction. Also, another study on liaison could be done by extending the sociolinguistic scope to include other social factors such as age, ethnicity and gender.

General Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between competence in liaison and two sociolinguistic variables: level of education and professional status. The sample population consisted of Form Four and Lower Sixth students of GBHS Etoug-Ebe, Level Two students of the University of Yaounde 1, Level Four students of ENS Yaounde. The data was collected through personal observation and tape recording of some five pre-prepaired sentences with the target linguistic items embedded in them. The analysis of the data, which was done using percentages, revealed essentially that though Standard British English has been chosen as the variety to be taught in schools, it is very rare in the speech of Cameroonians, regardless of their educational levels and professional status.

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Please, kindly read the following sentences aloud:

1) My mother's house is **<u>far away</u>** from here.

2) **<u>The only way</u>** to pass an exam is to read.

3) Don't be **<u>too angry</u>** at the children.

4) Everyone should **<u>be actively involved</u>** in the Youth Day program.

5) You are not allowed **<u>to answer</u>** all the questions.

   Thanks for your cooperation