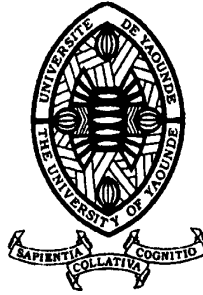


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UNIVERSITE DE YAOUNDE I
ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE
DEPARTEMENT DE DEPARTEMENT
D'ANGLAIS



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Peace – Work – Fatherland

UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I
HIGHER TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE
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THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE USE OF SBE PREPOSITIONS AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION : THE CASE OF GBHS ETOUG-EBE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDEI

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Award of a Postgraduate Teacher's Diploma(DIPES II) in English

Par :

DIVINE NDESAN ADE
BA in English

Sous la direction
ALOYSIUS NGEFAC
Associate Professor

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Sera Boma, for her boundless love and support.

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This work would not have come to a successful completion through my sole effort. I would like to thank all those who helped me to realize it.

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ABSTRACT

This work set out to investigate the correlation between the use of SBE prepositions and level of education in the English sub-system of education in Cameroon. In order to investigate this correlation, 30 students from each of the classes considered for the investigation (Form Four and Lower Sixth of GBHS Etoug-Ebe and Level Two of the Department of English, University of Yaounde I) constituted the sample population. A questionnaire with 20 closed-ended questions was administered to assess the informants' knowledge of prepositions. The findings reveal that there is no significant correlation between the use of SBE prepositions and level of education. Interestingly, out of a total score of 20, Form Four scored 6.1, Lower Sixth scored 5.7, while Level 2 scored 6.5. Surprisingly, even those at the university level who study English at all its levels face as much difficulty as those in the secondary school in using SBE prepositions. In a similar light, it was also revealed that second language learners face enormous difficulties in using SBE prepositions correctly, considering that out of 90 informants, only 3 scored a pass mark in the test. This led to the conclusion that pedagogic efforts are not producing the expected results, as there is no guarantee that learners become more proficient as they climb the educational ladder.

RESUME

Ce travail est établi pour étudier la corrélation entre l'utilisation des prépositions en Anglais et le niveau de l'éducation dans le sous-système anglophone de l'éducation au Cameroun. Considérant que notre population cible apprend l'anglais grâce à des efforts pédagogiques, il est avéré intéressant de savoir si leur capacité à utiliser les prépositions SBE est susceptible d'améliorer en tant qu'ils gravirent les échelons de l'éducation. Afin d'étudier cette corrélation, trente (30) étudiants chacun de *Form 4* et *Lowersixth* du Lycée d'Etoug-Ebe et trente (30) du niveau 2 du Département d'anglais, Université de Yaoundé I, ont constitué la population de l'échantillon. Une épreuve de 20 questions a été administré pour vérifier si ces apprenants étaient conscients des prépositions correctes dans certains cas, ainsi que la non-existence de prépositions dans d'autres instances. Les résultats ont révélé qu'il n'y a pas de corrélation significative entre l'utilisation des prépositions en Anglais et le niveau d'éducation. Cela a été clairement prouvé par le score moyen de chaque classe. *Form 4* a enregistré 6,1/20, *Lowersixth* a eu 5,7/20 tandis que le niveau 2 a eu 6,5/20. En effet, même ceux au niveau universitaire qui étudient l'anglais à tous ses niveaux font face à autant de difficultés que ceux du niveau secondaire. Cela a conduit à la conclusion que l'objectif du système éducatif n'est pas suffisamment atteint, car il n'y a aucune garantie que les apprenants deviennent plus compétents avec une augmentation de la classe.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

- %:** Percent
- CA:** Contrastive Analysis
- CamE:** Cameroon English
- EA:** Error Analysis
- ENG2:** Level Two of the Department of English, University of Yaounde I.
- ESL:** English as a Second Language
- F4:** Form Four
- GBHS:** Government Bilingual High School
- L1:** First language or mother tongue
- L2:** Second or foreign language
- LS:** Lower Sixth
- Q:** Question
- SBE:** Standard British English
- WE:** World Englishes

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this research work, entitled “The Correlation between the Use of SBE Prepositions and Level of Education: the Case of Students of GBHS Etoug-Ebe and the University of Yaounde I”, was carried out by Divine Ndesan Ade, a student at the Department of English, Higher Teacher Training College (ENS) Yaounde.

Supervisor

Professor Aloysius Ngefac

Department of English

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Prepositions are a vital, an indispensable, and a frequently used word class in English. We are, therefore, not surprised when Fang (2000) ascertains that in a corpus study of one million English words, one in ten is found to be a preposition. Despite their indispensability and frequent occurrence in the English language, prepositions remain problematic to learners (Leikin, 2002; Littlefield, 2006; Parrot, 2000; and Djuidje, 2012). Among word classes in English, they pose the most serious threat to English language learners (Takahashi, 1969; Tenjoh-Okwen, 1974; Mukattash, 1977; Simo Bobda, 1978; and Kenmogne, 2002). Considering the observation made in the above-mentioned works, it can be maintained that despite their importance, prepositions present a serious challenge to English language users, especially learners. Even though a plethora of studies have reported the difficulties prepositions pose to EFL and ESL learners, there has been little or no research on the correlation between the use of prepositions and level of education.

This study, entitled “The Correlation between the Use of English Prepositions and Level of Education”, is aimed at investigating the extent to which students with different levels of education use Standard British English prepositions promoted in the English Language classroom. Learners of English in Cameroon in general and those evaluated in this study in particular learn English as second language and, in most cases, encounter many problems involved in second language acquisition, including the influence of the first language on the second. As a result of these factors, learners acquire the second language with many difficulties and can hardly become as fluent in the second language as in their first. During the acquisition process, some researchers such as Selinker (1972) and Ellis (1997) assert that learners produce a type of language called “interlanguage”. In other words, the idea of “interlanguage” is based on the premise that second or foreign language learners, at any given moment in their learning experience, use a language system which is neither the L1 (first language) nor the L2 (second or foreign language), with their own grammar, lexicon, and so on. The features of the learners’ language are accounted neither by the rules of their L1 nor by those of their L2. Considering the challenges involved in second language acquisition, it is not surprising that many users of English in Cameroon face severe difficulties in the use of SBE prepositions. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the extent to which competence in the use of prepositions is determined by speakers’ level of education.

This investigation was motivated by a number of reasons. First, it has been observed that nowadays, the English language has been appropriated by non-native speakers, including Cameroonians, and used in a way that deviates from Standard British English norms. As previous studies (e.g. Epoge, 2014) indicate, these non-native speakers, for the most part, are not conscious of any standard form when it comes to using English prepositions. Second, it has been reported that second language learners, in general, face considerable difficulties in using prepositions correctly (Kenmogne, 2002). Considering that our target population learns English through pedagogic efforts, it is important to investigate whether their ability to use SBE prepositions is likely to improve as they climb the education ladder. In other words, the investigation was motivated by the desire to investigate the impact of level of education on the speakers' ability to use the prepositions following SBE, the variety of English promoted in the Cameroonian classroom. Third, the work was motivated by the need to investigate whether Cameroon English also displays predictable prepositional peculiarities, as is the case with the different syntactic aspects of English, given that Cameroon English syntax has also been recognized in previous studies (e.g. Kouega, 2005; and Mbangwana and Sala, 2009). The present study is guided by well-defined research questions. These questions focus the study, determine its methodology and guide all its stages of inquiry, analysis and reporting. The questions are as follows:

- a. How well do students use SBE prepositions?
- b. What is the correlation between their level of education and their use of prepositions?
- c. What are the specific errors they make?
- d. What are the possible pedagogic and sociolinguistic implications of the findings?

The study has clearly defined linguistic and sociolinguistic scopes. Linguistically, the work focuses on a particular aspect of grammar: prepositions. As concerns the sociolinguistic scope, the study is limited to a single sociolinguistic variable, namely, level of education. The focus was on secondary school students of GBHS Etoug-Ebe and those of the University of Yaounde I. It was observed that the use of prepositions is likely not to be significantly graded according to level of education. This explains why students from GBHS Etoug-Ebe and students from the University of Yaounde I were selected for the investigation, as an attempt to find out whether the knowledge university students have about the use of prepositions is significantly better than that of those in secondary schools. It is also worth pointing out that

the investigation was limited to Yaounde and what obtains in other cities in Cameroon was not the concern of the study. The linguistic scope was, therefore, limited to prepositions and the sociolinguistic scope to level of education.

The work is significant in many ways. First, it provides further evidence of the extent to which the English spoken in Cameroon is different from Standard British English, the variety of English recommended in the Cameroonian classroom. It should be noted that most of the previous studies that have described the deviations inherent in the English spoken in Cameroon are phonological in nature (e.g. Simo Bobda, 1994), but studies describing the lexico-syntactic aspects of Cameroon English are very few. This explains why this study provides further evidence to the fact that Cameroon English is very different from British or American English. Second, the study will show whether pedagogic efforts are yielding the expecting fruits. If pedagogic efforts are creating the expected impact on learners, university students are supposed to have a better mastery of English prepositions than those in secondary schools. If there is no significant difference between the performances of these two categories of students, there will be many pedagogic and sociolinguistic implications. Third, the study is an attempt to assess the feasibility of some correlation patterns reported in previous studies (e.g. Labov, 1966).

It is worthwhile to define the structure of the work. It is divided into three chapters, besides the General Introduction and the Conclusion. The first part, entitled General Introduction, discusses the background, the purpose, the objective, the motivation, the scope, the significance and the structure of the study. It also presents the research questions. Chapter One presents the theoretical frameworks and reviews related literature. As concerns the theoretical frameworks, the focus is on Error Analysis, the sociolinguistic theory and World Englishes, which define the perspectives from which the investigation was carried out. With regard to literature review, the focus is on Cameroon English, Cameroon English syntax, prepositions, and correlation. Through this review, the differences between this work and previous works are highlighted and the contribution of the work is underscored. The second chapter describes the methodology used in carrying out the investigation. Specifically, it describes the informants chosen for the study, the methods of data collection, the method of data analysis, and the difficulties encountered during the investigation. Chapter Three presents and discusses the findings of the study. The General Conclusion summarizes the findings, discusses the pedagogic and sociolinguistic implications, and identifies possible areas for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks upon which the study is based, situates the study within the global knowledge pool, and underscores its contribution. With regard to the theoretical frameworks, the focus is on the sociolinguistic theory, Error Analysis (EA) and World Englishes (WE). As shall be seen in the later part of the study, it is in conformity with the principles of EA that the learners' productions will be checked for idiosyncrasies to see how they deviate markedly from SBE norms. For its part, the WE framework will be relevant in justifying the deviant use of English prepositions by learners. In the following sub-sections, the theoretical frameworks, the relevant literature and the contribution of the work will be explored.

1.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This study is guided by three frameworks, namely, the sociolinguistic theory, Error Analysis and World Englishes.

1.1.1 The Sociolinguistic Theory

William Labov's (1966) sociolinguistic theory, correlation, is a framework which affirms that linguistic variation is systemic, and affected by social factors. Labov (1966) investigated many linguistic variables but the one which yielded the most impressive result was the use of the post-vocalic "r" in such words as "car" and "cart". He categorized his informants into two main social groups: the Middle Class and the Working Class. The Middle Class, the socially superior group, comprises the Upper Middle Class, Middle Middle Class and Lower Middle Class. The Working Class, on the contrary, is divided into the Upper Working Class, the Middle Working Class and the Lower Working Class. This is considered as the socially-inferior group. Labov studied the speech of 157 informants and their children, selected from the above-mentioned social classes. In the investigation, his aim was to find out if the use of the post-vocalic "r" and other linguistic variables had any predictable correlation with these social classes. Interestingly, Labov discovered that the post-vocalic "r", the prestige linguistic variable, was significantly graded accordingly to the social status of the informants. The investigation revealed that this phonological variable (the post-vocalic "r") was more frequent

in the speech of the Middle Class speakers than in that of the Working Class speakers. The only unusual pattern that emerged from the investigation is the score of the Upper Working Class which surpassed that of the Lower Middle Class.

As a result of the significant correlation between the post-vocalic “r” and social class, Labov concluded that there is in fact a significant relationship between language and society, yielding a situation whereby social hierarchy necessarily reflects linguistic hierarchy. As a result, he theorized that the use of prestige linguistic features is more frequent in the speech of high status speakers than in the speech of low status speakers, and vice versa.

The postulation of Labov (ibid) has been considered by many scholars as a universal claim and this explains why the theory has been given a universal dimension. Trudgill (1972 and 1974), most notably, submitted most of Labov’s (1966) linguistic variables into further investigation. In these investigations, Trudgill, like Labov, reported that the choice of standard linguistic features significantly depends on the social status of the speakers. Trudgill’s conclusion further expanded the scope of Labov’s theory, given that findings similar to Labov’s were obtained. In addition, Macaulay, Newbrook and many other sociolinguists further carried out similar studies in different speech communities and concluded that linguistic hierarchy, in fact, reflects social hierarchy. The fact that similar studies were conducted in different speech communities and yielded similar results made many scholars conclude that Labov’s theory is universal in scope.

The present study is principally anchored by the sociolinguistic theory since it correlates the use of SBE prepositions (a linguistic variable) and level of education (a sociolinguistic variable) in the English sub-system of education in Cameroon. In this case, it will be important to see if the systemic relationship between language and society, as seen in Labov (1966) and Trudgill (1972 and 1974), applies in a different context with a different linguistic variable. In a whole, the work, being a correlational one, is principally guided by the sociolinguistic theory.

1.1.2 Error Analysis

EA is a framework of linguistic analysis concerned with the errors ESL learners make. In principle, EA consists in comparing learners’ spoken and written productions in relation to the target language to check errors. In this light, Corder (1974) posits that “what has come to be known as error analysis has to do with the investigation of the language of second language learners”. From this viewpoint, there is no doubt that one of the main aims of error analysis is to help teachers in detecting the errors and weak points of their learners. Error Analysis, as

Corder (1974) opines, provides a teacher with clues to the areas that need reinforcement in the course of teaching. Error Analysis, in relation to this study, therefore, serves to check the errors students make in their use of prepositions, with SBE being the reference language.

1.1.2.1 A Historical Background of Error Analysis

In the late 1960s, there was an increasing interest in EA. Corder (1974) propounded this theory due to the unpopularity of the Contrastive Analysis (CA hereafter) theory which preceded EA and was prominent in the late 1950s and early 1960s. CA was popular as a theory in the domain of Applied Linguistics after its introduction into the literature. It was propounded by Lado (1957). This theory was based on the premise that learners' first language continuously affects their acquisition of the second language, and that the first language constitutes a major hindrance to any successful acquisition of the second language. Weinreich (1953:10) described this process, of first language affecting the effective learning of the second language, as negative transfer. He observed that if the structure of L1 differs from the structure of L2, errors will obviously be realized. However, if the structure of L1 is similar to the structure of L2, it will lead to positive transfer. In effect, CA stemmed from the proposition that learners' linguistic background could be used to solve their difficulties in acquiring a new language. CA became unpopular when different empirical studies proved that a significant proportion of learners' errors could hardly be traced to their linguistic backgrounds, but rather to the impact of their L2. It is at the backdrop of this that Corder (ibid) came up with the EA framework.

1.1.2.2 Types of Errors

There exist two broad categories of errors: intra-lingual and inter-lingual errors (O'grady et al. 1981). Intra-lingual errors refer to errors that occur within the L2 while inter-lingual errors refer to errors that occur as a result of negative transfer from L1 to L2. O'grady et al. (1981:310) observe that intra-lingual errors are developmental, since they occur within the L2 system. Intra-lingual errors have been described as a reflection of learners' competence at a specific level of acquisition (Richards, 1974:175). In effect, these errors are found within the structure of the target language through pedagogical and methodological lapses in the process of knowledge transmission.

O'grady et al. (ibid) considers performance errors as a sub-class of intra-lingual errors. Performance errors are not the effects of incompetence in the target language, but the effect of lapses in the spontaneous flow of speech production as a result of excitement, stress, fear,

fatigue, etc. Such an error is temporary and not usually the case in every instance of speech production. They further observed that errors could either be omissive, additive, or substitutive. Omissive errors refer to those errors that involve the exclusion of grammatical elements which may make a word or sentence ungrammatical. For their part, additive errors refer to those errors which involve the insertion of ungrammatical segments in the case of a word, or ungrammatical word for a sentence that may render an entire construction ungrammatical. Substitutive errors refer to the replacement of grammatical structures for ungrammatical ones.

With regard to the ESL context in Cameroon, some errors have been reported to be typical (see Mbuakoto, 2009). Some of these errors include complexities in the target language such as identifying confusables. This is the case of “council” and “counsel”, for example, which are used interchangeably by learners. In addition, Mbuakoto (ibid) identifies material-induced errors. In this light, she quotes Norrish (1983), who argues that some teaching materials use the present progressive aspect to describe the simple present tense. As can be seen, therefore, the Cameroonian context is endowed with multiple predictable deviations.

1.1.2.3 The Importance of Errors in Second Language Learning

According to Dulay 1982 (as quoted in Angwah, 2015), errors are important in three different ways in the process of second language learning. First, they help teachers to know how much progress their learners make while learning. Second, errors provide clues to the researcher on how the language is acquired and the various strategies the learner deploys in acquiring it. Third, learners’ errors could guide the teacher in his or her choice of material and teaching methods. Errors, thus, play an important role in second language learning.

1.1.2.4 The Importance of the EA Framework to this Study

Given that this study focuses on the use of prepositions in SBE, EA becomes quite relevant given that one of its main aims is to detect errors in learners’ language with regard to the target language norms. It is in this perspective that EA provides the basis upon which the students’ mastery of SBE prepositions is checked. In addition, EA will enable us to find out the types of errors learners make in using prepositions. In a nutshell, EA will propel the present study in two ways; that is, in determining what is correct or incorrect in conformity with SBE norms, and in determining the type of errors learners make in using prepositions.

1.1.3 World Englishes

World Englishes is a term used to describe emerging localized and indigenized varieties of English, especially varieties that have sprung up in territories formerly colonized by the United Kingdom such as Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana (see Kachru, 1986). The concept of World Englishes reveals the fact that the English language which was once considered the language of a few countries known as native speakers of English has spread its tentacles to new contexts where it has been modified to reflect the local realities of the contexts. As a result of this modification through processes such as acculturation, the English language now carries the flags of different cultural settings (Ngefac, 2010). According to Kachru (ibid), these new settings where English has been transported to and transplanted have the tendency of producing forms which are related to English but are different in form and meaning.

The global functions which the English language plays have made the language to be regarded as a global lingua franca (see James, 2000; McArthur, 2001; and Seidlhofer, 2001). However, Kachru (2005a) argues that the term “lingua franca” does not capture the phenomenon of World Englishes because the Englishes spoken around the world, including Euro-English (Cenoz and Jessner, 2000; Modiano, 1996), exhibit internal variation due to geographic and ethnic factors. Consequently, most linguists do not believe that there is a variety regarded as world English, international English or global English, although these terms have been given for the language that is being used in business, diplomacy, media and other spheres (McArthur, 2001). These linguists argue that such labels deny the pluricentricity of the medium and misdirect the standardization of an abstraction at the cost of the phenomenon of wide distribution and deep penetration of the medium across cultures (Kachru and Smith, 2008). Following the above-mentioned views, it is quite clear that the English language has lost its uniqueness; hence, the term “Englishes”. In line with this, Schneider (2007), quoted in Ngefac (2010:3), observes that

From Barbados to Australia, from Kenya to Hong Kong, a traveller will today get along with English, but he or she will also realize that the Englishes encountered are quite different from each other—pronounced with varying accents, employing local words opaque to an outsider, and even on closer inspection, constructing with words in slightly different ways. What is perhaps even more interesting is that our virtual traveller will encounter native speakers of English not only in Canada and New Zealand where this would be expected but also in Nigeria and Singapore, and in many other parts of the world in which English is not an ancestral language.

From the above quotation, it is understood that the English language has spread up to a point that it has developed new native speakers. Kachru (1985, 1992) captures this remarkable spread of English in his famous model of the three concentric circles.

1.1.3.1 Braj Kachru's Three Concentric Circles Paradigm

In this model, Kachru captures the spread of English through three Concentric Circles of the language: the Inner, the Outer, and the Expanding Circles.

1.1.3.1.1 The Inner Circle

The Inner Circle represents the traditional, historical and linguistic seats of the English language. In such countries, English is used as a primary language, as it is the native language or mother tongue of most of the inhabitants. Inner Circle countries include the United Kingdom, the United States of America, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland and Canada. Despite the prestige such countries may carry as the original seats of English, Kachru (1992) observes that the population of speakers in the Inner Circle constitutes only a small population in relation to speakers of English as a second or foreign language. This observation further highlights the indelible spread of English around the globe.

1.1.3.1.2 The Outer Circle

The Outer Circle encapsulates countries which received the English language through imperialist expansion by Great Britain. In such countries, English is not a native language but serves as a veritable lingua franca between people from diverse ethnic and linguistic groups. In these contexts, English serves as the language of education, commerce, judiciary, legislature, and other spheres. Countries that belong to the Outer Circle include Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Philippines, Malaysia and Cameroon. In such countries, English competes with other colonial and native languages. For instance, in Cameroon, it is used alongside French and other indigenous languages such as Ngemba and Ewondo. Due to this co-existence, the language is being re-shaped to reflect the local realities of the contexts. Yule (1996:64) notes that instead of thinking that the language is being debased, it is important to view the constant evolution of new terms as a reassuring mark of its vitality and creativity, shaped by the needs of the different users. This further highlights the significant diffusion of English across the globe.

1.1.3.1.3 The Expanding Circle

The Expanding Circle comprises countries where English plays no historical or governmental role, but where it is nevertheless used as a medium of international communication (Kachru, 1985). In such contexts, English is used as a foreign language. Outer Circle contexts include China, Russia and Non-Anglophone Europe. The population in the Outer Circle is estimated at 400 million, 25 million more than that of the Inner Circle (Crystal, 2003).

Due to the remarkable transportation and appropriation of the English language in different contexts, Kachru (1992) is of the opinion that there now exist two types of native speakers of English: genetic native speakers and functional native speakers. On the one hand, genetic native speakers refer to speakers in the original seats of the language such as Britain. On the other hand, functional native speakers refer to those outside the traditional seats of the language, who use the language for diverse functions including the expression of their world view. This view indicates to what extent the language has been appropriated in different contexts.

1.1.3.1.4 The Implications of Kachru's Model

Kachru's model has multiple salient implications. First, the model is indicative of the widening effects of English around the world to the point that Miller (2007) notes that the language has now diffused throughout the world to the extent that it is currently second only to Mandarin in terms of number of speakers worldwide. Previous studies have also estimated that for every traditional native speaker, there are at least three non-native speakers of English (see Kachru, 1996). Miller (ibid) attributes this remarkable spread to the high desire that people worldwide have in learning English. This is proof of the global importance of the English language. In line, therefore, with Kachru's three concentric circles model that classifies speakers of English around the world, it is evident that English has spread and continues to spread extensively to different nooks and crannies of the globe.

Second, Kachru's model implies that the English language has developed new native speakers outside its traditional seats. This is due to its significant transportation, followed by its appropriation and acculturation. As a result, there now exists two types of native speakers: genetic native speakers and functional native speakers (Kachru, 1992). This categorization of native speakers worldwide is tantamount to the extent to which the English language has been appropriated and contextualized in various contexts worldwide.

Kachru's model is equally indicative of the fact that no one can claim monopoly over the language nowadays. This is inherent of the fact that each context has appropriated,

indigenized and acculturated the language to reflect its local realities. In Cameroon, for instance, research on the nature of English in the country has revealed that RP features are almost absent in the speech of Cameroonians (Ngefacs, 2008). In effect, there is no world English but Englishes.

1.1.3.1.5 The Importance of Kachru's WE Framework to the Present Study

Kachru's three concentric circles model is relevant to this study in different ways. First, the model is bound to justify any predictable deviant use of English prepositions in Cameroon, an Outer Circle country. In line with Kachru's model, the English language in Cameroon is bound to have marked differences from SBE. This view is reinforced by previous research works such as Sala (2009), Anchimbe (2005), Ngefacs (2008) and Atechi (2010). Therefore, in relation to the present study, it will not be surprising to find a lot of deviant use of English prepositions in the Cameroonian context. Second, Kachru (ibid) creates awareness on the specific features of the English language in Cameroon. Due to the acculturation and indigenization that characterize the English language in the Outer Circle countries, the language develops contextual features which differentiate it from SBE features. In line with this study, then, specific predictable features that characterize the use of prepositions in Cameroon are brought into the limelight. This adds to other linguistic features of Cameroon English which can be found in Mbangwana (1992), Simo Bobda (1994, 1997), Kouega (2005), Nkemleke (2005, 2006), Sala (2009) and Epoge (2012, 2014), just to name but these. In a nutshell, Kachru's model reinforces the notion of Cameroon English as it justifies and creates awareness on the deviant use of English prepositions.

1.2 Review of Relevant Literature

Research is a cumulative activity which requires that a review of literature should be done in order to situate a given work within the universal knowledge pool and to show how different or dissimilar it is to what other researchers have said. This section is, therefore, important because it helps to identify the niche this piece of work occupies in the existing wealth of knowledge in the field of sociolinguistics. Mindful of the above-mentioned facts, the section will examine the English language situation in the world, the notion of Cameroon English, Cameroon English syntax, prepositions in Cameroon English, the notion of SBE prepositions, the imbroglio of SBE prepositions and previous correlational studies. Finally, the contribution of the work will be underscored.

1.2.1 The English Language Situation in the World

Nowadays, the concept of Standard English has become very fluid and ambiguous, given that the concept is now defined from a context-specific perspective. This is due to the fact that the English language, which was at one point limited to a few countries known at the time as native English countries, has crossed many national and continental boundaries to become the native language of many speakers of English around the world (see Kachru, 1985). According to Kachru and Smith (2008), the English language achieved the status of an international language, soon after World War Two, leaving behind other competitive languages such as Spanish, French, Russian and Japanese. This global spread of English to non-native contexts has been followed by significant appropriation and acculturation of the language. This has given way to serious debates on which English should be considered standard. While scholars such as Quirk, Chivillet and Gimson hold that English as a world language should remain a monolith, others such as Kachru (1992, 1995, and 1997) are of the opinion that the notion of standard English should be defined from a context-specific perspective.

From the above-mentioned perspectives, two important observations can be made. First, it is evident that there now exist other varieties of English in non-native contexts (e.g. CamE) which have developed robust deviant features. Second, it is made clear that speakers in such non-native contexts increasingly tend to look up to the deviant features as the standard. The deviant forms, thereby, keep gaining popularity and recognition. In this case it is not strange to be mocked while approximating certain SBE features. It is worthy of note, however, that in Cameroon, SBE is still upheld by the government as the target language to be taught in the classroom, despite the presence of CamE.

1.2.2 The Notion of Cameroon English

Cameroon English is described by Simo Bobda (1994) as follows:

English which stands in contrast to the following varieties; first, Cameroon Pidgin English; secondly, the English of the uneducated; thirdly, English of a tiny portion of the elite that due to sustained exposure to the native English have developed a near native accent; fourthly, the accent of a Francophone Cameroonian whose variety can be regarded as a performance variety.

The above quotation grants us a clear-cut description of what CamE is and is not. It is understood that it deviates markedly from SBE and other local linguistic codes in Cameroon and embodies distinct features. This conforms to Kachru's claim that English has been appropriated, acculturated and indigenized in different contexts. In a similar perspective, Epoge (2014) posits that

Being a multilingual country (Cameroon) wherein 286 indigenous languages co-exist with two official languages (French and English), and a number of lingua francas (Pidgin English, Fulfulde, Mongo Ewondo, etc.), it is evident that linguistic borrowing, interference, code-mixing, loan translation and other manifestations of language contact phenomena are abundant in the English spoken in the country.

Epoge's view above, first of all, evokes why the English spoken in Cameroon is bound to differ from SBE. This is impounded in the fact that 286 indigenous languages co-exist alongside the two official languages. In such a situation, the English language is condemned to alternations. His view also brings into the limelight the idea that the English language spoken in one area will likely differ from that spoken in another area because each context has its specific internal factors that influence the language, giving it a certain contextual uniqueness. To fortify the afore-mentioned claim, multiple previous studies such as Mbangwana (1992), Nkemleke (2006) and Sala (2009) report that the speech of Cameroonians is different from what obtains elsewhere in terms of syntax.

1.2.3 Cameroon English Syntax

Previous findings have reported that Cameroon English embodies predictable syntactic peculiarities.

Nkemleke (2006), for instance, probes into the structural configuration and some syntactic features that characterize students' essays in a formal academic situation in Cameroon. The corpus comprised 104 essays written by two batches of students in the department of English of ENS Yaounde. His findings reveal that the structure of most essays examined does not follow the strict logical sequence that is characteristic of a typical English essay. Most of the essays were flouted by predictable peculiarities such as lengthy introductory elements, as seen in the following example: "As concerns housing and accommodation, the average student goes for a moderate and comfortable room he can afford with his limited means".

He also observes the splitting of complex verb phrases which involve the modal "will" e.g. "I will in the introduction define experience and then show that...". We understand, therefore, that the English spoken in Cameroon has certain peculiarities.

For his part, analysing the syntactic variations in CamE with a focus on the use of the "that-clause", Sala (2009) argues that, unlike in SBE, some verbs like "abuse", "refuse", "phone" and "insult" do select that-complement clauses in CamE, as illustrated below.

- He **refused** that he is not coming.
- The man **phoned** to say that he will come over.

The content of such verbs, Sala (ibid) observes, tend to be used as other verbs like “say” which have no content in themselves but whose content is expressed in the “that-clause”. Consequently, he opines that some constructions tend to violate the parameters of the English language relating to the theta criterion. They violate idiosyncratic properties of some verbs and assign them properties which initially, they do not possess. Sala (ibid) talks of a re-categorization of such verbs with an influence from other languages which co-exist with English like Pidgin English. This finding goes a long way to show the extent to which CamE is endowed with unique deviant features.

Equally, Sala (ibid), investigating the composition of echo questions in CamE as opposed to what holds in SBE, finds out that echo questions in the Cameroonian context have a unique form. He points out that an additional “that” is applied at the beginning of the echo questions in the Cameroonian context. Some echo questions of his informants are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Echo questions in CamE

Sentence	Echo question in CamE
1. I am going home.	- That you are going where?
2. Thomas is going home.	- That who is going home?

Sala (ibid) further spells out that such a model of echo questions is quite different from what obtains in SBE. In SBE, he notes, forming echo questions does not call for any re-ordering of constituents in the sentence but are realized by a process whereby wh-words resume the base position of constituents in questions (e.g. Thomas ate beans= Thomas ate what?). Otherwise, other transformations may include supra-segmental adjustments or a secondary phonetic issue in which a drawn rising tone is placed on the last word. We therefore understand clearly that CamE has developed predictable robust features with regards to the formation of echo questions.

In addition, Mbangwana (1992), examining some aspects of morphology and syntax in CamE, identifies a number of typical deviations in the speech of Cameroonians such as the stereotypical use of tag questions. For instance, learners employ the question tag “isn’t it?” inappropriately in diverse contexts like “We are expecting visitors, isn’t it?” instead of SBE “We are expecting visitors, aren’t we?”. Mindful of the fact that SBE has various types of tag questions meant for different sentence constructions, the afore-mentioned deviance cannot be undermined. It is further proof of the actual existence of a variety of English in Cameroon.

In a nutshell, CamE has developed predictable deviant syntactic forms with regard to essay writing, that-clauses, tag questions and echo questions.

1.2.4 Prepositions in Cameroon English

There actually exist certain predictable linguistic features of Cameroon English as far as the use of prepositions is concerned (see Epoge, 2014). In a bid to ascertain the linguistic peculiarity of CamE, Epoge (ibid) investigates the prepositional use of students from four state universities in Cameroon. His 85 informants were given a multiple choice comprehension task, a gap test task and a correction of individual sentence task involving a verb that requires or does not require a preposition after it. His findings reveal that prepositional use in CamE is flouted by a number of distinct features.

First, he reveals that learners substitute the preposition ‘in’ that agrees with the verbs ‘result’, ‘succeed’ and ‘speak’ for other prepositions, as seen in the examples below.

- The Syrian president’s refusal to step down **resulted to** the bloodiest civil war in their history.
- The campaign has certainly **succeeded to** raise public awareness of the issue.
- Why do you **speak with** such a loud voice?

Second, he reveals that learners employ varied prepositions after a verb in null preposition constructions. For example, some respondents add the preposition “at” after the verbs which do not require any preposition in SBE (“mock”, “heed” and “boo”) as illustrated below.

- They were **mocking at** him because he kept falling off his bike.
- The audience has started **booing at** the musician loudly.
- The airline has been criticized for failing to **heed to** advice about lack of safety routines.

In line therefore with Epoge (ibid), it can be comfortably argued that Cameroon English has developed certain predictable features when it comes to the use of English prepositions.

Certain factors could be attributed to the prominence of specific features in the English spoken in Cameroon. Takam (2013) highlights that in as much as the interference of the L1 could account for some of these specificities, there equally exist non-interference sources. In examining how Cameroonian speakers use prepositions to express direction and location, Takam (ibid) notes that non-interference sources of a good number of Cameroonian English specificities such as the colonial factor, logicalization, analogy and tacit national norm seem to be some of the autonomous routes unconsciously used by Cameroon English speakers to

yield a variety of English that markedly differs from SBE. The bottom line, however, is the fact that Cameroonian speakers of English generally use English prepositions in a way different from what obtains in SBE.

1.2.5 The Notion of SBE Prepositions

A plethora of statements have been made in describing and defining English prepositions. In most general terms, prepositions indicate various relationships between words and phrases in a sentence (see Quirk and Greenbaum, 2000; and Lawal, 2004). The relationships include those of time, points, positions, directions, and various degrees of mental or emotional attitudes (Lawal, 2004). In addition, Epoge (2014) defines prepositions as words which denote the relationship between elements regarding the basic relationship of locality (e.g. “on”, “over” and “under”), temporality (e.g. “before”, “after”, and “during”), casualty (because “of”) and modality (e.g. “like”). Agoi (2003) also describes a preposition as a word or group of words used with a noun or noun equivalents to show the link between that noun which it governs and another word. For their part, Crystal (2000) and Metcalfe and Astle (2004) describe a preposition as a word which expresses the relationship of one word with another, usually (but not always) as a noun, a pronoun or a participle. Similarly, Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) ascertain that a preposition expresses a relation between two entities, one being represented by the prepositional complement of the various types of relational meaning; for example, time and place.

With regards to form, SBE prepositions fall under distinct categories. Agoi (2003) groups prepositions under two broad categories: simple and compound. On the one hand, a simple preposition is a single word serving as a preposition; for instance, “in”, “out”, “of”, “up”, “to”, “with”, etc. On the other hand, a compound preposition is a preposition made up of two or more words; for example, “into”, “abroad”, “amidst”, “around”, etc. Furthermore, Agoi (ibid) highlights the phrasal type of preposition, otherwise called prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase is a group of words that begins with a preposition and ends with a noun, pronoun or noun phrases. Although prepositions have specific forms as outlined above, ESL learners face a serious problem in using them appropriately.

Prepositions have also been reported to play multi-faceted roles in a sentence. Agoi (ibid) points out that a prepositional phrase can play the role of an adjective, adverb, complement of a verb or complement of an adjective. He moves on to underscore that prepositional adverbs function as prepositions and as adverbs. In a related development, Quirk

and Greenbaum (2000) note that prepositions or prepositional phrases may function as adjunct, disjunct, conjunct and post modifier in a noun phrase. Examples are presented in the table below.

Table 2: Role of prepositions and prepositional phrases

Preposition/ Prepositional phrase	Role	Example
1. “in Bamenda”	- Adjunct	-Susan went to school in Bamenda .
2. “in my opinion”	- Disjunct	- In my opinion , learning is fun.
3. “after”	- Conjunct	- After John ate, he went to bed.
4. “on the table”	- Post-modifier in a noun phrase	- the book on the table .

A number of views have also been shared as concerns the position of prepositions in a sentence. For instance, Perrin (2002) and Agoi (ibid) argue that a preposition could be placed either at the beginning or at the end of a sentence. For their part, Swan and Walter (2002) agree that in passive structures, verb and preposition groups stay together, as seen below.

- She was **operated on** yesterday morning.
- The war **resulted in** the loss of lives.

They also point out that prepositions come after infinitives in certain structures, as illustrated below.

- She is interesting to work **with**.
- He is difficult to talk **to**.

Rowe and Webb (2000) point out further that in relative clauses, and with interrogative pronouns and adverbs, whether independent or conjunctive, the preposition is often placed last. Examples are shown below.

- Whom do you take me **for**?

- Here is the boy whom I spoke **of**, etc.

In terms of the stress pattern, each type of preposition is stressed distinctly. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (2000), monosyllabic simple prepositions are normally unstressed while polysyllabic prepositions, whether simple or complex, are normally stressed. They add that in complex prepositions, the stress falls on the word (adverb, noun, etc.) preceding the final preposition e.g. **a'long** with.

Despite so much that has been said concerning prepositions, Lawal (2004) still upholds that there are not many rules governing their use and ESL and EFL learners are bound to find enormous difficulties in using them appropriately.

1.2.6 The Imbroglia of SBE Prepositions

Some previous studies have probed into and underscored the complexity of SBE prepositions. They indicate that prepositions pose a serious problem to learners of English, irrespective of their level of education, due to their complex and ambiguous nature.

Despite their indispensability and frequent occurrence in the English language, prepositions remain a problematic category to learners (Djuidje, 2012). This view is shared by Parrot (2000), who says that “Among the grammatical categories to acquire, learners often see prepositions as a major problem”. At this point, it is understood that SBE prepositions pose a real threat to ESL learners’ quest to attain native-like proficiency. In a similar development, Azeez (2005) reveals that the misuse of prepositions is a major concern in students’ use of English in Nigerian schools. He further notes that the use of preposition after adjective is the most commonly misused preposition, followed by the misuse of preposition after verb. His informants were also found to frequently misuse prepositions at the end of sentences. This difficulty is resonated by Takahashi (1969), who ascertains that “Apart from the correct use of articles, the greatest problem facing the students of ESL is no doubt the correct use of English prepositions”. Kenmogne (2002) also investigates on the misuse of some English prepositions by French speaking learners of English from *Lycée Classique de Bafoussam* (Lyclabaf) and Government Bilingual High School Bamenda (GBHS Bamenda). He finds out that most of the students have a general notion of prepositions, but some of them cannot easily distinguish between prepositions of time and place. He also reveals that some of the errors were traceable to overgeneralization. Mindful of the above-mentioned findings, it can be argued justifiably that despite their indispensability in the English language, prepositions present a considerable challenge to children and adults in the course of language learning.

Previous studies have equally reported that learners, regardless their level of education and origin succumb to errors when using SBE prepositions. In this regard, Yankson (2000), investigating the speech of native and non-native speakers of English, notes that both the native English speaker and the educated African speaker of English can tolerate the ESL learners' prepositional errors. He goes on to point out that even native speakers sometimes have problems with certain prepositional structures. In the same vein, Tenjoh-Okwen (1974) and Simo Bobda (1978), investigating the proficiency of students of different levels, note that among errors made by learners in the University of Yaounde I, errors in the use of prepositions were the most frequent ones, irrespective of the learner's level. To this effect, Tenjoh-Okwen (ibid) thinks that English prepositions are perhaps the most complicated linguistic elements to be acquired by French-speaking learners of English.

From the above-mentioned findings, a number of salient observations can be made. First, prepositions present a tough challenge to learners' drive to attain native-like competence in English. Second, the difficulty in using prepositions is apparently a global concern as it is felt in many different countries. Third, in some cases, a speaker's origin or level of education is not a determinant factor in his ability to use prepositions as even native speakers fall prey at times. All in all, prepositions are a real cankerworm in the process of learning English.

Multiple reasons have been advanced as to why learners face an uphill task in mastering SBE prepositions. Some researchers suggest that this problem may be due to the fact that there is no clear rule by which a preposition is appropriate, and also the fact that different languages and dialects may have different conventions with respect to using prepositions (see Djuidje, 2012). Leikin (2002) follows suit to stipulate that the status of prepositions is ambiguous. In terms of syntactic theory, he claims, the class of prepositions is treated as a "lexical category" especially when there is a character of spatial and temporal relationships. In this case, prepositions may be treated as content words that carry a definite semantic load. Leikin (ibid), therefore, concludes that there are semantically rich prepositions (lexical prepositions) and syntactic prepositions (functional prepositions). Furthermore, Littlefield (2006) highlights two reasons why prepositions are a problematic category. The first is the definition central to the category itself and the second is central to defining the syntactic nature of the category. Besides, the preposition is not translated from one language to another, and thus omitted in certain cases. Littlefield (ibid) points out that those learning English may have difficulties distinguishing between the prepositions "on", "in" and "at", as other languages may use one or two prepositions for the equivalent of three in English. Parrot

(2000) also highlights two reasons why the word class is problematic to learners. First, he says that there are so many prepositions in English (many more than in a lot of other languages) and learners often have to make choices and distinctions that are not necessary in their L1. Second, he claims many choices of prepositions have little or nothing to do with meaning, and therefore it is particularly difficult to remember. From the afore-mentioned opinions, it is understood that ESL learners find SBE prepositions very complex.

1.2.7 Related Empirical Studies

Over the years, the correlation between linguistic variables and sociolinguistic variables has inspired many research endeavours. Numerous investigations have been carried out on the correlation between language and ethnicity, language and gender, language and level of education, language and age, language and profession, and language and perception.

A good number of statements have been made on the correlation between language and ethnicity. Jibril (1974) as quoted in Epede (2010), investigating the speech of Americans, finds out that the speech of black Americans is quite distinctive from that of their white counterparts. For instance, the Black English Vernacular shows a loss of intervocalic /r/ so much that words like “Paris” and “pass”, “parrot” and “pat” are homophonous. Furthermore, Jibril (1992) reveals that the three main tribes in Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) have distinctive phonological features. He reports that these differences stem from the fact that the three tribes have different linguistic systems which exert a significant influence on speakers’ performance in English language. We clearly see from the above-mentioned findings that there is a meaningful correlation between language and ethnicity.

Another correlation that has inspired sociolinguistic research is that between language and gender. Saeed (2015), for example, investigates the prepositional use of Pakistani male and female ESL learners. Following the analysis of her data, she finds out that female students commit more errors in the use of prepositions as compared to their male counterparts. The male students committed a total of 110 errors while the female students committed 116 errors. In another light, Takam (2008) investigates whether Cameroonian women tend to speak a more refined language than men. His findings reveal that women’s language is more polite, more refined, more cooperative and more face-saving than men’s. The above findings call to mind the views of previous studies like Fasold (1990), which holds that female speakers use language differently from male speakers.

The correlation between language and level of education has also been the subject of previous investigations. Ngefacs (1997), for example, investigates the correlation between

speech production and level of education. After assigning Form One and Upper Sixth students to the SBE pronunciation of words like “colonel”, “mayor” and “country”, he reveals that there is a remarkable correlation between pronunciation and level of education. For instance, only 6.66% of Form One students rendered the correct pronunciation of “colonel”, as opposed to 26.66% of Upper Sixth students who pronounced it correctly. Furthermore, Ngefac (2008b) investigates the correlation between two major types of deviations from mainstream CamE and level of education. Ngefac (ibid) remarks that the general tendency of backward stress leads highly educated informants to stress lexical items on the initial syllables; thereby, rendering such hypercorrect forms as 'spaghetti, 'hotel and 'investigate. Kouam (2015) also correlates SBE stress and level of education. He targeted Form 5, Level 1 and Masters 1 classes. After analysing the scores registered by the various factions of informants, Kouam (ibid) reveals that there is no significant correlation between level of education and the degree of approximation of SBE stress patterns of words. In a similar vein, Epede (2010) sets out to investigate the correlation between some phonological features and level of education of Akɔse speaking learners of English. Among other variables, Epede (ibid) assessed the rendition of /s/ and /z/, and /f/ and /v/ across three proficiency levels (the elementary, the intermediate and the advanced). Her findings reveal that there is no significant correlation between level of education and the patterns of use of English fricatives and affricates as far as Akɔse learners are concerned. Chialoh (2010), for her part, examines the correlation between some phonological features of Kom English and level of education. The informants comprising primary, secondary and university students were subjected to the pronunciation of selected English words containing sounds like /p/ and /r/. Contrary to some other studies like Kouam (2015), Chialoh noticed a significant correlation between phonological features and level of education as far as Kom speakers of English are concerned. We, therefore, understand that in certain contexts, a speaker’s level of education is likely influence his or her speech (as in Ngefac, ibid and Chialoh, ibid), but in other contexts the reverse is true (as in Kouam, ibid and Epede, ibid).

Similarly, the correlation between English speech and profession has been probed into. Ngefac (2008a) carries out this investigation in Cameroon. His informants cut across three professions: teachers, medical doctors and journalists. Interestingly, his findings reveal that the SBE forms of many linguistic items involving segments and stress were completely lacking in the speech of the informants, irrespective of their occupations. As a matter of fact, none of his informants was able to articulate the SBE stress pattern of words like **in'surance**, **il'logical**, **pre'paratory** and **'explanatory**. Equally, no informant was able to provide the RP

rendition of the segments transcribed in the following words: cupb[ə]d and vill[I]ge. Their renditions rather respected CamE norms. In effect, Ngefac (ibid) proves that there is no correlation between English speech and profession in Cameroon. This view is reinforced by Kouam (2015), who carries out a similar investigation between professional status and SBE stress. As concerns professional status, Kouam (ibid) targets teachers and people from other walks of life. In approximating the SBE stress patterns of selected words, the teachers scored a success rate of 23%, as opposed to 22% obtained by their counterparts from other disciplines. Kouam (ibid) concludes there is no remarkable relationship between speech and profession. From the above-mentioned findings, it is clearly seen that there is no meaningful correlation between language and profession.

The correlation between language and perception has also been checked by past studies. Ruangjaroon (2014) correlates the perception and the production of SBE prepositions among ESL learners in Thailand. In this light, she finds out that L2 Thailand acquirers were able to judge grammatical and ungrammatical sentences correctly. However, there is actually no significant correlation between perception and production.

As seen in the afore-mentioned correlational studies, some linguistic variables are influenced by social variables while others are not. Therefore, the existence or non-existence of a meaningful correlation between a linguistic and a sociolinguistic variable is said to be dependent on the geographical context and the variables tested.

1.3 Contribution of this Work

This work differs from previous ones in two major ways. First, it studies speakers' ability to use the SBE prepositions from a sociolinguistic perspective, instead of simply focusing on the difficulties learners face, as is the case in some previous related works (e.g. Tenjoh-Okwen, 1974; Simo Bobda, 1978 and Djuidje, 2012). In other words, this work, unlike previous studies, investigates the correlation between a sociolinguistic variable, namely, level of education, and ESL learners' proficiency in using SBE prepositions. Second, unlike most previous studies that focus on phonological variables (Ngefac 2008a and Kouam 2015), this study is concerned with grammatical variables and the relationship they share with level of education.

The work, therefore, contributes to existing in many ways. First, it investigates the correlation between syntactic variables and a sociolinguistic variable. It should be noted that most previous studies on correlation have been concerned with phonological variables and very few of these studies have been concerned with the way grammatical variables correlate

with sociolinguistic factors. Second, the work is carried out in a New English context, unlike most previous works on correlation that are carried in the Western world. Third, it is a further contribution to the existence of indigenised English or a New English. It should be pointed out that most previous studies on this New English have been carried out mostly on the area of phonology and syntax has received very little scholarly attention. This work will, therefore, serve as a step towards the codification of the syntax of the variety.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and describes the methodology used in this study. The focus is on the physical location of the study, the informants, the methods of data collection and data analysis, and the difficulties encountered in the course of data collection.

2.1 Physical Location of the Study

It is worthwhile defining the physical location of the investigation. It was carried out in Yaounde, the Centre Regional headquarter of Cameroon. The choice of Yaounde was influenced by the researcher's presence in the town. Here, two educational institutions were earmarked: the University of Yaounde I and Government Bilingual High School Etoug-Ebe. The preference of these two institutions was motivated by the desire of having a wider scope of educational levels on which to carry out analysis. Basically, the study is set in two schools in Yaounde.

2.2 The Informants

This study targeted ESL learners of the secondary and university levels in the English sub-system of education in Cameroon. Students of the Anglophone section of GBHS Etoug-Ebe, and students of the Department of English of the University of Yaounde I fall in this realm. In the case of GBHS Etoug-Ebe, Form 4 and Lower Sixth Arts were chosen for two reasons. First, students of these classes have acquired considerable knowledge of the English language. Second, the two-year gap that exists between the two classes proves important to our correlation as a considerable difference in proficiency level is expected to exist between both parties. Level 2 students of the Department of English (ENG 2) were also earmarked for the investigation because they are expected, in principle, to have a far more advanced knowledge of English grammar compared to their peers of the secondary and high school, given that they learn the language at all its levels. Every student in each of the classes took a gap-filling test. Thereafter, 30 scripts were selected randomly from each class as illustrated in the distribution table below.

Table 3: Distribution of sample population of the study

School	Class	Number of Informants
GBHS Etoug-Ebe	Form 4	30
GBHS Etoug-Ebe	Lower Sixth Arts	30
University of Yaounde I	ENG 2	30
Total number of informants		90

The above distribution table shows the distribution of informants according to the various institutions. The selection of informants was carried out randomly so as to render the data free of bias.

2.3 Method of Data Collection

To collect the data for this study, a gap-filling test was administered to the respondents. Students of each of the classes were given 40 minutes to answer the questions individually. For each of the 20 questions of the test, alternatives were provided in brackets from which respondents simply had to pick the right preposition and fill in each gap. This data collection instrument eased the process of data collection by making it less time-consuming and keeping the respondents in the subject.

The gap-filling test was equally well-constituted to get the required information. Considering that the focus of this study is English prepositions, selected prepositions which pose a serious problem to Cameroonians, as observed, were tested in 20 sentences. The essence was to find out if the respondents were conscious of the presence of the correct prepositions in specific instances and the non-presence of prepositions in other instances.

2.4 Difficulties Encountered

In the course of data collection, some difficulties were faced. These difficulties were encountered at the level of acquiring access into the school and classes, and at the level of administering the test.

At the level of having access into the school, the researcher was subject to very stringent security checks due to the prevailing security concerns in the country. In effect, the researcher had to clearly state the aims of his presence in the school. It was even a more herculean task getting access into the different classrooms to administer the test. The researcher had to wait on the class masters of the classes in question for long hours to obtain the necessary pass.

At the level of administering the test, there was a difficulty faced in assembling the students to take the test as some of them preferred to spend their free hour in doing other things. Equally, some words in the test could not be easily interpreted by some of the respondents. The researcher, to solve the problem, had to take time to carefully explain the difficult words to the understanding of the students.

2.5 Method of Data Analysis

The analysis of the available data was carried out based on a comparative method. First, the scripts of the selected respondents of each of the classes were corrected in conformity to SBE norms regarding the use of prepositions. Second, a comparative study involving the different classes, Form 4, Lower Sixth and Level 2, was carried out to find out how each class performed in relation to the other classes. This was done by comparing the average score of each class. The average score of each class (X) was calculated as shown below.

$$\frac{\textit{Sum total of scores in class X}}{\textit{Total number of respondents in class X}}$$

Figure 1: Formula for calculating average score per class.

In addition to the above, the frequency of each incorrect response of the informants was checked. In this case, if a certain response had a very high frequency, then it was said to constitute the features of what is termed as Cameroon English (CamE). This was done by calculating the percentage of the frequency of each incorrect preposition (X), as illustrated below.

$$\frac{\textit{Frequency of incorrect preposition(X) in a specific question}}{\textit{Total number of informants (90)}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Figure 2: Formula for calculating percentage of the frequency of each incorrect preposition

2.6 Method of Presentation of Results

The statistical method was used in summarizing and describing the data collected and analysed. The results are recapitulated in tables, and then represented on pie charts and a bar chart for the sake of clarity.

2.7 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to describe the physical setting of the study, the informants who provided the data for the study, the method of data collection, and the methods of analysis and presentation of results.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

3.0 Introduction

This part of the study is dedicated to the analysis of the data and the discussion of the major findings in line with the research questions of the study. In effect, it checks how well students recognize and use SBE prepositions, the correlation between their level of education and their use of SBE prepositions and the predictable peculiarities of their use of prepositions.

3.1 Students' Ability to Recognize and Use SBE Prepositions

In checking how well the students use SBE prepositions, it was important, first of all, to analyse the results of the individual classes before embarking on an overall appraisal. As shall be seen in the later part of this chapter, the individual class results serve in two dimensions. First, they serve in investigating the correlation between performance in using prepositions and level of education. Second, they serve in finding out the predictable peculiarities of the students' prepositional use.

3.1.1 Performance of Form Four Students in Using SBE Prepositions

The performance of Form Four Students was analysed at different levels. The test scores were examined, the mean score calculated, the class performance per question examined, and the common errors analysed.

3.1.1.1 Test Scores in Form 4

The test was scored on 20, with 1 mark allocated to each question. The range and frequency of the scores were recorded and analysed, as can be seen in the table below. The average (mean) score of the class was also calculated.

Table 4: Test scores in Form 4

Scores on 20	Frequency
2	0
3	2
4	5
5	3
6	5
7	8
8	6
9	2
10 +	0
Mean score (m) in Form Four = 6.2	

The class performance is illustrated in the pie chart below.

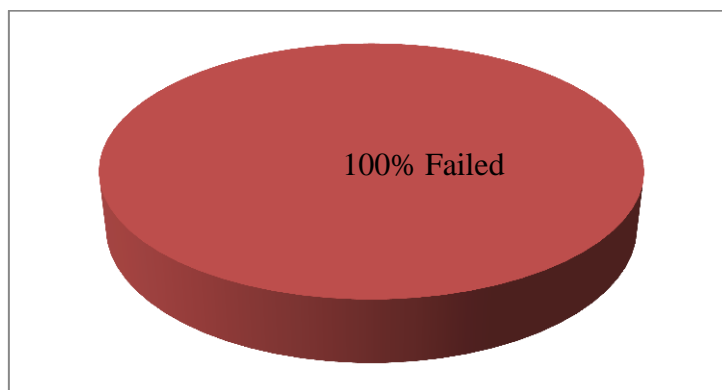


Figure 3: Performance of Form 4

From the above table, we readily observe that the scores in Form 4 range from as low as 2 to 9/20, which is still below average. In effect, no student in Form 4 scored a pass mark in the test as illustrated by the pie chart. The average score of the class is 6.2/20.

3.1.1.2 Form 4 Performance per Question

The class performance in each of the 20 questions in the test was also examined in order to reveal the prepositions that Form 4 students are acquainted with, and those that pose a serious threat to them. The class performance per question is summarized in the table below.

Table 5: Performance per question (Form 4)

Correct preposition in context	Frequency of correct response in F4	Percentage of success per preposition
1. What time will President Biya leave for Paris?	29	97%
2. John's profile corresponds to the post advertised.	18	60%
3. Their job consists in organizing youth activities.	6	20%
4. Simon's colleagues congratulated him on his new appointment.	9	30%
5. People who were advocating socialism are now ashamed of themselves. ("advocating" does not take any preposition)	11	37%
6. We booed the greedy politician. ("booed" requires no preposition)	2	7%
7. Yesterday, I bought a nice gown all embroidered by hand.	18	60%
8. She supported me in the hope that I would marry her.	1	3%
9. MTN accepted the contract because it was to their advantage.	16	53%
10. The trader spoke in such a loud voice.	5	17%
11. The poem comprises five stanzas. ("comprises" takes no	00	00%

preposition)		
12. Do you agree <u>to</u> my plan?	00	00%
13. The quarrel resulted <u>in</u> a fight.	1	3%
14. Workers are tired of demanding a pay increase. (“demanding” takes no preposition)	13	43%
15. Please remind me <u>about</u> my keys before I leave the house.	7	23%
16. Women are good <u>at</u> learning languages.	6	20%
17. Emmanuel lives <u>at</u> the outskirts of Yaounde.	13	43%
18. The baby is growing so fast. (“growing” requires no preposition)	11	37%
19. The suspect is accused <u>of</u> theft.	18	60%
20. My grandparents have gone <u>into</u> retirement.	00	00%

From Table 5 above, it is evident that Form 4 students register a negative percentage in 15 out of the 20 questions tested and register a positive percentage in just 5 of the questions. In this light, up to 97% of them use the preposition for correctly in the context “What time did President Biya leave for Paris?”. This preposition proves least challenging to them given that they score a 97% success in using it. They also scored a pass in Q2 (“John’s profile corresponds to the post advertised”), Q7 (“Yesterday, I bought a nice gown all embroidered by hand”), Q9 (“MTN accepted the contract because it was to their advantage”) and Q19 (“The suspect is accused of theft”). On the other hand, none of them was able to decipher the right prepositions in Q12 (“Do you agree to my plan?”) and Q20 (“My grandparents have gone into retirement”). In addition, none of the students is aware that the verb “to comprise” does not take any preposition in certain contexts; for instance, in Q11 (“The poem comprises

five stanzas”). In the same vein, only 7% of the students are conscious that the verb to boo (in Q6) does not take a preposition, and barely 3% of them use the correct preposition “in” in the contexts of Q8 (“She supported me in the hope that I would marry her”) and Q13 (“The quarrel resulted in a fight”). Other questions that register a fail in the class are: Q3(“Their job consists in organizing youth activities”), Q4 (“Simon’s colleagues congratulated him on his new appointment”), Q5 (“People who were advocating socialism are now ashamed of themselves”), Q10 (“The trader spoke in such a loud voice”), Q14 (“Workers are tired of demanding a pay increase”), Q15 (“Please remind me about my keys before I leave the house”), Q16 (“Women are good at learning languages”), Q17(“Emmanuel lives at the outskirts of Yaounde”), and Q18 (“The baby is growing so fast”). From the individual question performance, it can thus be confirmed that Form 4 students find more difficulty than ease in using SBE prepositions.

3.1.1.3 Common Errors of Form 4 Students

Having examined the performance of the students at different levels, it was necessary to find out the common errors they make in using English prepositions. This was obtained by calculating the percentage of students that make use of a specific erroneous preposition which has the highest frequency in each question that recorded a fail percentage. These common deviant forms are important in that they reveal the general specificities of the use of prepositions by Cameroonians, in general. This could go a long way to support the view of Epoge (2014), who notes that Cameroonians use prepositions in a characteristic manner. The most common errors of Form Four students are summarized in the table below.

Table 6: Deviant forms of Form Four students

Common deviant form	Frequency of students who make error (<i>f</i>)	Percentage of students who make error (%)
-consists of organizing (Q3)	22	73%
-congratulate him for (Q4)	18	60%
-advocating about (Q5)	14	46%
-booed at (Q6)	26	86%

- <u>with</u> the hope (Q8)	25	83%
-spoke <u>with</u> (Q10)	22	73%
-comprises <u>of</u> (Q11)	29	97%
-agree <u>with</u> (Q12)	19	63%
-result <u>into</u> (Q13)	17	57%
-demanding <u>for</u> (Q14)	15	50%
-remind me <u>of</u> (Q15)	21	70%
-good <u>in</u> learning (Q16)	14	47%
- <u>in</u> the outskirts (Q17)	12	40%
-growing <u>up</u> (Q18)	19	63%
-gone <u>on</u> retirement (Q20)	22	73%

The above table indicates a good proportion of the errors or deviant forms of the F4 students are quite predictable. We realize that the incorrect use of the preposition “of ” after “comprise” in Q11 (i.e. “comprise of”) characterizes the speech of 97% of the students. Also, 86% of the students erroneously deploy the preposition at after the verb “boo” in Q6 (i.e. “boo at”), which does not take any preposition in SBE. In the same light, 63% also attach the preposition up to the verb “growing” (i.e. “growing up”), which does not require one in SBE (Q18). In Q3, 73% replace SBE “in” with “of” to yield “consists of” instead of SBE “consists in”. Another predictable situation is the replacement of the preposition in with the preposition “with” in Q10 (“The trader spoke in such a loud voice”, SBE) by 73% of the class. Also, in Q20 which records a 0% success, 73% of the informants use the preposition on in the place of

“into” (“My grandparents have gone into retirement”, SBE). Equally, 83% of the informants opt for “with the hope” instead of SBE “in the hope” in Q8. The above-mentioned statistics are proof of the fact that a considerable proportion of the F4 students’ deviant forms is predictable.

In a nutshell, F4 students are reported to find difficulties in approximating SBE prepositions. This is proven by the dismal success rate of 0%, the low class average of 6.1 and the class failure registered in 15 out of the 20 questions tested. It is also worthy to mention that high frequency of specific deviant forms is proof that the students’ errors are robust and predictable.

3.1.2 Performance of Lower Sixth Students in Using SBE Prepositions

The data collected in Lower Sixth was also analysed at different levels. The test scores were examined, the mean score calculated, the class performance per question obtained, and the students’ common errors revealed.

3.1.2.1 Test Scores of Lower Sixth Students

The range and frequency of the scores of the LS students were recorded and analysed, and the mean obtained as can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 7: Test scores in Lower Sixth

Scores	Frequency of Scores (<i>f</i>)
3	3
4	3
5	8
6	6
7	8
8	1
9	0
10	1
11+	0
Mean score (<i>m</i>) in Lower Sixth= 5.7	

The general class performance is clearly illustrated in the pie chart below.

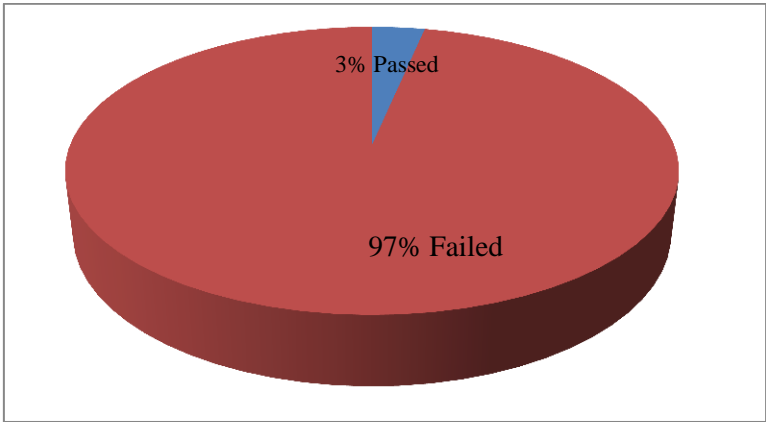


Figure 4: Performance of Lower Sixth

From the above table, it can be observed that the scores in LS range from 3 to 10. It is worthy of note, equally, that 1 student in LS scored a pass mark (10/20), rendering a success rate of 3% as shown in the pie chart. In addition, the mean score in LS stands at 5.7. In a nutshell, we discover that LS students also face an uphill task in using SBE prepositions.

3.1.2.2 Lower Sixth Performance per Question

The class performance in each of the 20 questions in the test was also examined in order to reveal the prepositions that LS students are acquainted with, and those that are problematic to them. The class performance per question is summarized in the table below.

Table 8: LS class performance per question

Correct Preposition in Context	Frequency of Correct Response per Preposition	Percentage of Success per Preposition
1. leave for	24	80%
2. corresponds to	8	27%
3. consists in	3	10%

4. congratulated him <u>on</u>	3	10%
5. advocating (no preposition)	9	30%
6. booed (no preposition)	0	0%
7. embroidered <u>by</u>	19	63%
8. <u>in</u> the hope	5	17%
9. <u>to</u> their advantage	15	50%
10. <u>in</u> such a loud voice	15	50%
11. comprises (no preposition)	0	0%
12. agree <u>to</u>	0	0%
13. resulted <u>in</u>	3	10%
14. demanding (no preposition)	3	10%
15. remind me <u>about</u>	11	37%
16. good <u>at</u>	7	23%
17. <u>at</u> the outskirts	22	73%
18. growing (no preposition)	7	23%
19. accused <u>of</u>	19	63%
20. <u>into</u> retirement	0	0%

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From the above table, the difficulty LS students face in using prepositions is highlighted. We observe that the class records a pass percentage in only 6 out of the 20 questions; that is, in Q1 (“leave for”), Q7 (embroidered by), Q9 (“to their advantage”), Q10 (“in such a loud voice”), Q17 (“at the outskirts”), and Q19 (“accused of”). The best score of the class, 80%, is registered in the use of the preposition “for” in Q1 (“leave for”). It is of interest to note that no LS student is aware that the verbs “booed” and “comprises” in Q6 and Q11, respectively, do not require a preposition in SBE. The whole class is also unaware of the correct preposition to be used in Q20 (“into retirement”). In addition, the class records just 10% success in Q3 (“consists in”), Q4 (“congratulated him on”), Q13 (“resulted in”) and Q14 (“demanding”- null preposition). The class also fails in Q2 (“corresponds to”), Q5 (advocating- null preposition), Q8 (“in the hope”), Q15 (“remind me about”), Q16 (“good at”) and Q18 (“growing”- null preposition). It is clearly proven, therefore, that LS students also face significant difficulties in using SBE prepositions.

3.1.2.3 Common Errors of Lower Sixth Students

After analysing the productions of LS students, it was also of interest to examine their common errors. This was obtained by calculating the percentage of students that make use of a specific erroneous preposition which has the highest frequency in each question that recorded a fail percentage. These common errors are important in that they reveal the general specificities of the use of prepositions by the students, and Cameroonians at large. The most common errors of LS students are summarized in the table below.

Table 9: Common errors in Lower Sixth

Common error	Frequency of error (<i>f</i>)	Percentage of students who make error (%)
-corresponds <u>with</u> (Q2)	24	80%
-consists <u>of</u> (Q3)	25	83%
-congratulated him <u>for</u> (Q4)	27	90%
-advocating <u>for</u> (Q5)	15	50%

-booed at (Q6)	29	97%
- with the hope (Q8)	25	83%
-comprises of (Q11)	30	100%
-agree with (Q12)	24	80%
-resulted to (Q13)	18	60%
-demanding for (Q14)	25	83%
-remind me of (Q15)	19	63%
-good in (Q16)	15	50%
-growing up (Q18)	27	90%
- on retirement (Q20)	28	93%

As shown in the table above, some of the deviant forms of the LS students are highly predictable. For instance, an outstanding 100% of Lower Sixth students incorrectly use the preposition “of” after the verb “comprise”, which does not take any preposition in SBE (Q11). In the same vein, a remarkable 97% of the students add the preposition “at” after the verb “boo”, which does not also require any preposition in SBE. In addition, 90% of the informants deploy an irrelevant “up” after the verb “growing”, which does not also take any preposition in SBE. It is also observed that 90% of the informants erroneously replace the preposition “on” with “for” in the SBE construction “congratulated him on”. In Q20 which registered a 0% success rate in Lower Sixth, 93% of the respondents use the incorrect preposition “on” in replacement of “into”, the correct one (“My grandparents have gone into retirement”, SBE). In addition, 80% of the LS students say “corresponds with” instead of SBE “corresponds to”

in Q2. In a similar development, 83% use consists “of” in replacement of SBE “consists in” in Q3. Again, 83% of them replace the SBE preposition “in” with “with” in Q8; thereby, rendering the deviant form “with the hope” instead of the correct form “in the hope”. Equally, 80% say “agree with” instead of SBE “agree to” in Q12 and 60% say “resulted to” in place of SBE “resulted in” (Q13). Furthermore, 83% of the LS students add the preposition “for” to the verb “demanding” (i.e. “demanding for”), which does not take a preposition in SBE (Q14). The bottom-line here is that LS students’ deviant prepositional specificities are quite predictable.

In a whole, it is proven that LS students find serious challenges in approximating SBE prepositions. This is illustrated by the low success rate of 3%, the class average of 5.7 and the general class failure registered in 14 out of the 20 questions tested. It is also worthy to mention that the significant recurrence of specific deviant forms is proof that the students’ errors are robust and predictable.

3.1.3 Performance of ENG 2 Students in Using SBE Prepositions

The performance of the ENG 2 students was equally analysed. The test scores were examined, the mean score calculated, the class performance per question examined, and the common errors analysed.

3.1.3.1 Test Scores in ENG 2

The test was scored on 20, with 1 mark allocated to each question. The range and frequency of the scores were recorded, as can be seen in the table below. The average (mean) score of the class was also obtained.

Table 10: Test scores of ENG2 students

Scores (on 20)	Frequency of score (<i>f</i>)
3	2
4	1
5	7
6	5
7	7
8	4
9	2

10	2
Mean score (<i>m</i>) in Level 2= 6.5	

The general class performance of ENG2 is illustrated in the pie chart below.

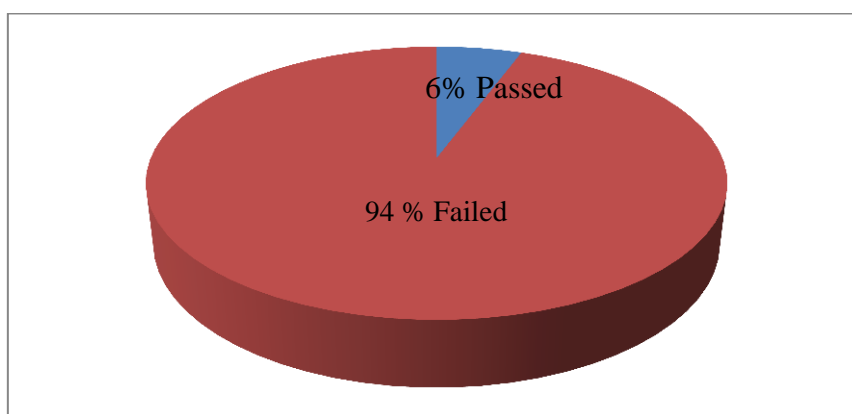


Figure 5: Performance of ENG2

From the above table, we clearly observe that the test scores of Level 2 students in the Department of English range from 3 to 10. It is also shown in the pie chart that ENG2 registers 2 successful students (6%) in the test. The mean score of ENG2 stands at 6.5. By and large, the scores and the class average of ENG2 are very low and disappointing, mindful of the fact that the students come from the Department of English, where they have been learning the English language inside-out at a very advanced level for more than a year.

3.1.3.2 ENG2 Performance per Question

The class performance in each of the 20 questions in the test was also examined in order to bring out the prepositions that ENG2 students are acquainted with, and those that are problematic to them. The class performance per question is summarized on the table below.

Table 11: Performance per question in ENG 2

Correct Preposition in Context	Frequency of Correct Response per Preposition	Percentage of Success per Preposition
1. leave <u>for</u>	27	90%

2. corresponds to	23	77%
3. consists in	7	23%
4. congratulated him on	7	23%
5. advocating (no preposition)	0	0%
6. booed (no preposition)	2	7%
7. embroidered by	18	60%
8. in the hope	6	20%
9. to their advantage	24	80%
10. in such a loud voice	19	63%
11. comprises (no preposition)	7	23%
12. agree to	0	0%
13. resulted in	7	23%
14. demanding (no preposition)	3	10%
15. remind me about	9	30%
16. good at	5	17%
17. at the outskirts	19	63%
18. growing (no preposition)	4	13%

19. accused <u>of</u>	27	90%
20. <u>into</u> retirement	0	0%

From the table above, we readily see that ENG2 informants score a class success in only 7 out of the 20 questions. Similar to the other two classes, a majority of ENG2 students (90%) correctly deploy the preposition “for” in the context of “leave for” (Q1). A good number of them (77%) also make correct use of the preposition “to” in “corresponds to” (Q2). In the same light, a majority of the students (90%) find no difficulty in deciphering the right preposition (“of”) in the context “accused of “(Q19). One major surprise, however, is that none of the students is aware of the right preposition (“into”) in the case of “gone into retirement” (Q20). Equally, none of them applies the preposition “to” after the verb “agree” to yield SBE “agree to” (Q12). In addition, none of the informants are conscious that the verb to advocate does not take a preposition in SBE (Q5). Another dismal performance is observed in Q6 where only 7% of the students are aware that the verb “to boo” does not take a preposition in SBE. The same is said in Q18 where only 13% of the respondents are aware that “to grow” does not require a preposition in SBE. At this juncture, it can strongly be argued that ENG2 students are grossly troubled by SBE prepositions, even though they are taught SBE at all its levels of analysis.

3.1.3.3 Common Deviant Forms of ENG2 Students

Following the presentation and analysis of the data collected in ENG2, the common errors of the students were examined. This was obtained by calculating the percentage of students that make use of a specific erroneous preposition which has the highest frequency in each question that recorded a fail percentage. These common errors are important in that they reveal the general specificities of the use of prepositions by the students in particular, and Cameroonians in general. The most common errors of ENG2 students are summarized in the table below.

Table 12: Common deviant forms in ENG2

Common Deviant form	Frequency	Percentage
-consists of (Q3)	25	83%
-congratulated him for (Q4)	24	80%
-advocating for (Q5)	28	93%
-booed at (Q6)	29	97%
- with the hope (Q8)	21	70%
-comprises of (Q11)	24	80%
-agree with (Q12)	29	97%
-resulted to (Q13)	15	59%
-demanding for (Q14)	28	93%
-remind me of (Q15)	24	80%
-good in (Q16)	21	70%
-growing up (Q18)	28	93%
-gone on retirement (Q20)	28	93%

From the table above, it is glaring that a huge majority of ENG2 students (97%) erroneously replace the preposition “to” with the preposition “with” after the verb “agree” (Q12). Another

remarkable observation is that 97% of the informants attach the preposition “at” to the verb “to boo”, which does not take a preposition in SBE. In a similar light, 93% of the informants add the preposition “for” to “advocate”, which equally requires no preposition in SBE. The same applies to the verbs to “demand” in Q14 and “to grow” in Q18. It is also clear that 83% of the students use the erroneous construction “consists of” in replacement of SBE “consists in”. It is also interesting to note that in Q20 which registered a 0% success rate, 93% of the informants deploy the preposition “on” in the place of “into” (“gone into retirement”, SBE). Furthermore, 83% of the informants say “consists of” instead of SBE “consists in” in Q3. Again, 80% of the students replace the SBE preposition “on” with an incorrect one (“for”) in the context “congratulated him on” (Q4). The same percentage of students also add the preposition “of” to the verb “consists” which does not take a preposition in SBE. A total of 70% of the students also go in for the incorrect construction “with the hope” instead of SBE “in the hope” (Q8) while 80% make use of “remind me of” (Q15) in the place of SBE “remind me about”. In Q16, 70% of the informants use the incorrect preposition (“in”) in the place of “at” in the construction “good at”. These revelations are quite stunning considering that these students study SBE integrally at the university.

By and large, it is proven that LS students find enormous hurdles in using SBE prepositions. This is illustrated by the class’ low success rate of 6%, the class average of 6.5 and the general class failure registered in 13 out of the 20 questions tested. It is also worthy to mention that the significant recurrence of specific deviant forms is proof that the students’ errors are robust and predictable.

To therefore answer the question on how well ESL students use SBE prepositions, it can be said that they generally have a poor mastery of the notion. This is proven by the dismal performance of the various classes. First, it is seen above that all the three classes score fail averages; that is, 6.1/20 in F4, 5.7/20 in LS and 6.5/20 in ENG2. In addition, all the classes record a fail in a majority of the questions. F4 failed in 15 questions, L6 failed in 14, while ENG2 failed in 13. Furthermore, all the classes scored a 100% failure in Q12 (“Do you agree to my plan”) and Q20 (“My grandparents have gone into retirement”). The difficulty EFL students face in using SBE prepositions is made even more evident by the fact that ENG2 students, who are taught the language profoundly, also record similar dismal scores as the other junior levels. It is worthy to note that these are students who are barely one and a half year away from obtaining a Bachelor’s Degree in English language. The gross amount of impeachment they also face simply captures the extent to which ESL learners, in general, face

difficulties in approximating SBE prepositions. This finding falls in line with those of previous studies such as Parrot (2000), Azeez (2005) and Djuidje (2012) which all attest that SBE prepositions are a potential imbroglio to EFL learners.

3.2 Correlation between Students' Level of Education and their Use of SBE Prepositions

After an explicit presentation, examination and analysis of data collected in all three classes, a comparative analysis was carried out to see actually whether there is a significant correlation between level of education and use of SBE prepositions. In this light, the mean scores of the three levels were compared to find out if ENG2 students use SBE prepositions better than Lower Sixth, and if Lower Sixth students have a better mastery than Form 4 students. Form 4 scored 6.1/20, Lower Sixth scored 5.7/20, and ENG2 scored 6.5/20. The mean score of each class is presented in the histogram below.

(Mean scores)

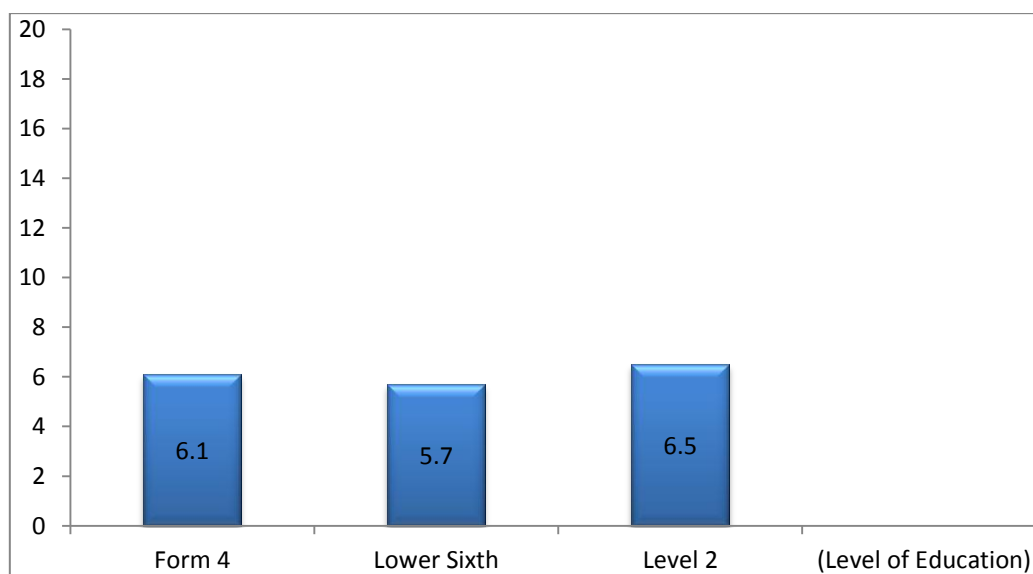


Figure 6: Class averages

From the histogram above, it is quite evident that level of education has no significant bearing on the competence of using SBE prepositions. This is revealed by the fact that the class average of Lower Sixth, 5.7/20, is lower than that of Form Four, 6.1/20. In as much as ENG2, the highest level of the three, performed best, there is however no marked difference between their performance and those of the other two levels. In effect, there is no guarantee that one gets better in using SBE prepositions as he or she climbs up the education ladder. To

answer the major preoccupation of this study, therefore, there is no significant correlation between use of SBE prepositions and level of education.

3.3 Some Common Difficulties Faced by the Students in Using SBE Prepositions

After identifying and examining the errors all three classes made, it was observed that all the classes face similar challenges. This observation further strengthens the finding that level of education has little or no impact on competence in using SBE prepositions. The most common difficulties faced by all three classes are summarized in the table below.

Table 13: Most common difficulties faced by all the three levels

Correct Forms	% Success in Form 4	% Success in Lower Sixth	% Success in Level 2
-agree <u>to</u>	0%	0%	0%
- <u>into</u> retirement	0%	0%	0%
-booed	7%	0%	7%
-consists <u>in</u>	20%	10%	23%
-congratulated <u>on</u>	30%	10%	23%
- <u>in</u> the hope	3%	17%	20%
-resulted <u>in</u>	3%	10%	23%
-good <u>at</u>	20%	23%	17%

From Table 13 above, we observe that no informant in all three levels is conscious of the right preposition in sentences in Q12 (“Do you agree to my plan?”) and Q20 (“My grandparents have gone into retirement”). Furthermore, all three levels faced great difficulty in providing the right answer to Q6 (“We booed the greedy politician”). While only 7% of

Form 4 and Level 2 students are aware that the verb “to boo” does not require a preposition, no Lower Sixth student is aware of the invalidity of a preposition in that context. Here again, we discover that competence in using SBE prepositions is not dependent on level of education. Even though level of education seemingly determines the use of “in the hope” and “resulted in” (above), it is however not the case with the use of “booed” and “congratulated on”; wherein, Form 4 students are better than students of the other two classes. This solidifies the claim that there is no resounding correlation between level of education and use of SBE prepositions.

3.4 Predictable Prepositional Peculiarities of the Students

In line with previous studies reporting on the specificities of Cameroon English at different linguistic levels (see Kouega, 2005; and Nkemleke, 2005; 2006) and particularly in line with Epoge (2014), who notes that Cameroon English has developed certain features when it comes to the use of English prepositions, it was important to check the degree of similarity in the informants’ productions. The percentage of the most frequent errors of all three classes, combined, were calculated and summarized in the table below.

Table 14: Specificities of informants’ prepositional use

Deviant Specificity	General Frequency	General Percentage
-booed <u>at</u>	84	93%
-comprises <u>of</u>	83	92%
-gone <u>on</u> retirement	78	87%
-growing <u>up</u>	74	82%
-agree <u>with</u>	72	80%
-consists <u>of</u>	72	80%
- <u>with</u> the hope	71	79%

-congratulate for	69	77%
-demanding for	68	76%
-remind me of	64	71%

From the above table, we clearly see the errors that characterize the productions of the informants, with “bood at” being the most prominent. The above recurrent errors could be noted as the specificities of the students’ prepositional use. This, therefore, implies that meaningful predictions could be made as to how Cameroonians, in general, use prepositions.

3.5 The Nature of the Students’ Deviant Forms

The nature of the students’ most common deviant forms was also examined and described with regard to the EA framework.

Table 15: Students’ errors

Description of Error	Frequency
Additive	309
Substitutive	426

The proportion of each category of error is clearly presented on the pie chart below.

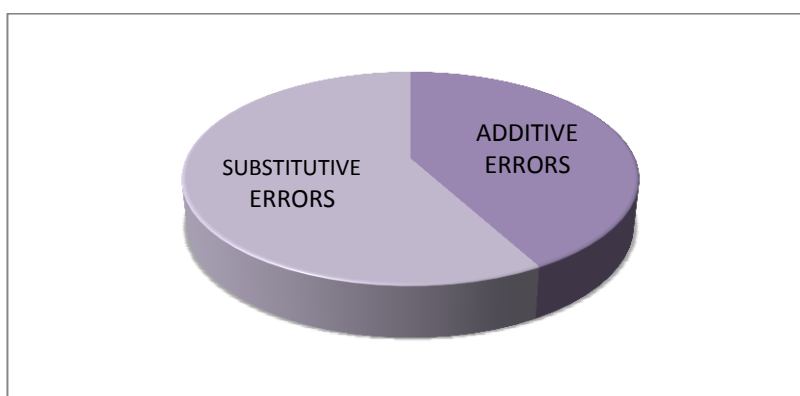


Figure 7: Informants’ errors

From the table and pie chart above, it is clearly revealed that the students commit additive and substitutive errors with regard to using SBE prepositions. Substitutive errors rank higher with a frequency of 426 while additive errors have a frequency of 309. For instance, they add prepositions in contexts where they are not required as seen in the table below.

Table 16: Addition of prepositions

SBE	Learners' deviant forms
1. We booed the greedy politician.	-We booed at the greedy politician.
2. The baby is growing so fast.	-The baby is growing up so fast.
3. The poem comprises five stanzas.	-The poem comprises of five stanzas.
4. The workers are tired of demanding a pay increase.	-The workers are tired of demanding for a pay increase.

Also, they substitute SBE prepositions for deviant ones, as seen in the examples in the table below.

Table 17: Substitution of prepositions

SBE	Learners' deviant forms
1. Simon's colleagues congratulated him on his new appointment.	-Simon's colleagues congratulated him for his new appointment.
2. My grandparents have gone into retirement.	-My grandparents have gone on retirement.
3. Do you agree to my plan?	-Do you agree with my plan?
4. Their job consists in organizing youth activities.	-Their job consists of organizing youth activities.

The examples above tell us that prepositional use in CamE is significantly guided by the processes of addition and substitution.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter was geared at analysing and interpreting the data collected in the three classes, mindful of the major objective of the study which was to investigate the correlation between competence in using prepositions and level of education. Following the analysis and interpretation of the data, it was found out that level of education has little or no influence on competence in using prepositions. In addition, certain predictable specificities of the informants' use of prepositions were revealed, which could sum up to the features of Cameroon English in general.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

4.0 Introduction

This section summarizes the findings, highlights the linguistic and pedagogic implications of the study and suggests topics for further research.

4.1 Summary of the Findings

The aim of this work was to investigate the correlation between the use of SBE prepositions and level of education in the English sub-system of education in Cameroon. Following the administration of a test, and the subsequent analysis and comparison of the results of the three classes, very interesting findings were revealed.

It was revealed that there is no correlation between the use of prepositions and level of education. In terms of the average test score in all the three classes, it was observed that Form 4, the lowest of the levels, performed better than Lower Sixth. This tells us that Form 4 students are more conversant than their Lower Sixth counterparts in using SBE prepositions. Even though ENG2 students scored the highest average, 6.5/20, it was, however, observed that there is no significant difference between their level of competence and that of the lower classes. This is seen in the tiny difference between mean score of ENG2 (6.5/20) and those of Form 4 and Lower Sixth (6.1/20 and 5.7/20, respectively). This insignificant difference in levels of competence is made even more stunning by the fact that the ENG2 students come from the Department of English, where they learn the language at all its levels. This drives us to the conclusion that there is no significant correlation between the use of prepositions and level of education in the English sub-system of education in Cameroon.

The results equally indicated that the students' prepositional use is quite predictable. For instance, a majority of informants from all the classes are prone to erroneous constructions such as "booed at" (93%), "comprises of" (92%), "gone on retirement" (87%), "growing up" (82%), "agree with" (80%) and "consists of" (80%). These prepositional idiosyncrasies constitute the language of the students in particular and Cameroonians in general. They could therefore be considered as specificities of what scholars have labelled as Cameroon English. This adds to other specificities of CamE brought out in previous studies such as Epoge (2014), Nkemleke (2005, 2006) and Kouega (2005).

In conformity to the findings of previous investigations such as Djuidje (2012), Parrot (2000), Littlefield (2006) and Leikin (2002), it was equally revealed that second language learners face enormous difficulties in using SBE prepositions. This fact can hardly be disputed, considering that out of 90 informants, only 3 scored a pass mark in the test. In effect, the word class is very problematic to second language learners, especially in a multilingual setting like Cameroon, where English, French and many indigenous languages co-exist.

4.2 Possible Causes of the Students' Inability to Use SBE Prepositions

The students' inability to master the use of SBE prepositions could be attributed to two reasons. First, there is no clear rule guiding the use of the word class. In effect, teachers are bound to encounter difficulties in teaching the word class to learners. Apart from prepositions of place that seem obvious to decipher, some are quite complex; for example, "into" in the sentence "My grandparents have gone into retirement" (Q20). Furthermore, the learners tend to prominent deviant forms for reference. CamE features are gaining prominence and what is regarded wrong in the traditional English context may sound correct in Cameroon. For instance, all the informants say "...gone on retirement" instead of SBE "...gone into retirement". In general, therefore, the complex nature of SBE prepositions and the prominence of local deviant features (CamE) account greatly for students' inability to master the SBE forms.

4.3 Sociolinguistic Implications

The findings of this study have a number of sociolinguistic implications. First, the fact that predictions can be made as concerns prepositional use by Cameroonians explains the fact that English has undergone significant twists and turns according to the contextual realities where it is spoken. As a result, that spoken in Cameroon has embraced contextual realities and developed robust specificities that keep gaining grounds. In a nutshell, English has become a global language and is subjected to indigenization, acculturation and nativization in various contexts (see Kachru, 1985). Second, the low performance rate of the informants is strong indication that Cameroonian speakers of English in general make very minimal use of SBE features regarding prepositions. This falls in line with previous studies such as Anchimbe (2005) and Ngefacs (2008), which have reported that SBE features are scarce in the speech of Cameroonians. This further highlights the prominence and popularity of CamE among speakers of English in Cameroon.

4.4 Pedagogic Implications

The insignificant correlation between the use of SBE prepositions and level of education has a number of salient implications in the teaching and learning of English in the English sub-system of education in Cameroon.

Firstly, it reveals, to some extent, that the efforts invested in the teaching of English at school are not productive enough and the system's objectives are not met. This, therefore, leaves the entire system in a conundrum, considering the fact that even the teachers who are charged with imparting the knowledge are not, in themselves, speakers of the target variety, SBE (see Angwah, 2015). In effect, the results of this study should serve as a wake-up call to the powers that be in the educational sector in Cameroon to seek better strategies in a bid to ensure the effective teaching and learning of English in the country.

Secondly, the findings pose a pertinent question as to whether SBE should remain the sole target in the classroom, given the increasing popularity of CamE features among the students. It is clearly seen that the continuous emphasis on SBE as the target in schools is yielding little or no fruit in the use of prepositions. In this light, then, better strategies need to be implemented for the system to achieve its goals.

4.5 Suggestions for Further Research

There is still so much left to be done in the field of correlation. Since this work is concerned with prepositions, other research endeavours can be carried out to investigate the correlation between level of education and other grammatical categories such as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, etc. The current study was also limited to level of education but further research can be carried out on other sociolinguistic variables such as profession, age, and region of origin. This study can also be improved upon by widening the geographic scope to other towns and regions in Cameroon.

4.6 Conclusion

This work sought to investigate if level of education has any bearing on the use of SBE prepositions in the English sub-system of education in Cameroon. The sample population was made up of 90 informants, 30 each from Form 4, Lower Sixth and Department of English Level 2. The work was inscribed within the theoretical frameworks of Correlation (Labov, 1966), Error Analysis (Corder, 1974) and World Englishes (Kachru, 1986). The findings revealed that, indeed, there is no significant correlation between the use of SBE prepositions and level of education in the English sub-system of education in Cameroon. The findings also

revealed that Cameroonian students scarcely employ SBE features when using prepositions. Interestingly enough, a majority of the informants are prone to similar errors, which can be considered as specificities of their speech in particular, and CamE in general. This means that although SBE is the target of the Cameroonian educational system, CamE reigns on powerfully. May be it is time for a change in educational policy, which could render the teaching and learning of SBE more efficient; thereby, enabling the educational system to attain its goal of rendering Cameroonians proficient in the target, SBE.

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APPENDIX

PRODUCTION TEST

School.....

Class.....

EXERCISE

Choose from the alternatives in brackets the preposition that best completes each sentence.

NB: Use *nil* where you think a preposition is not needed.

1. What time did President Biya leave.....Paris? (**to, for, on,)**)
2. John's profile corresponds.....the post advertised. (**to, with, about, nil**)
3. Their job consists.....organizing youth activities. (**in, of, by, nil**)
4. Simon's colleagues congratulated him.....his new appointment. (**for, on, about, nil**)
5. People who were advocating.....socialism are now ashamed of themselves. (**in, for, about, nil**)
6. We booed.....the greedy politician. (**at, to, on, nil**)
7. Yesterday, I bought a nice gown, all embroidered.....hand. (**by, with, from, nil**)
8. She supported methe hope that I would marry her. (**in, with, on, nil**)
9. MTN accepted the contract because it was.....their advantage. (**in, to, for, nil**)
10. The trader spoke.....such a loud voice. (**in, on, with, nil**)
11. The poem comprises.....five stanzas. (**from, of, in, nil**)
12. Do you agree.....my plan? (**on, with, to, nil**)
13. The quarrel resulted.....a fight. (**in, to, into, nil**)
14. Workers are tired of demanding.....a pay increase. (**of, for, on, nil**)
15. Please remind me.....my keys before I leave the house. (**on, of, about, nil**)
16. Women are good.....learning languages. (**in, at, for, nil**).
17. Emmanuel lives.....the outskirts of Yaounde. (**in, on, at, nil**)
18. The baby is growing.....so fast. (**on, up, over, nil**)
19. The suspect is accused.....theft. (**about, for, of, nil**)
20. My grandparents have gone.....retirement. (**for, into, on, nil**)

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR IN ADVANCE!