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< www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Cameroon >

Mackenzie, J. Lachlan

2002 Cameroonian Pidgin English: a grammatical sketch. <http://cursus.let.vu.nl/engels/Kamtok.htm>

East African English (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania): morphology and syntax

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1. Introduction

An outline of grammatical features of East African English (EAF_E) is even more difficult to produce than that of its phonology, because deviations in grammar occur in much lower frequencies. One reason for this lower frequency is perhaps that grammatical deviations are more stigmatised. Thus, an independent EAF_E grammar is even less distinguishable than an independent phonology or lexicon.

East African tendencies in morphology and syntax can often also be found in other parts of Africa and even beyond, in so-called New Englishes (cf. Hickey 2003), and even in some First Language (L1) varieties in Britain, America or Australia. Partly at least, English varieties all seem to develop in similar directions in some respects, as for instance in terms of simplification and regularisation. Frequency, consistency, systematicity and the developmental, regional and social distribution over various spoken and written text types are a matter for further research as well as the discovery of implicational hierarchies in frequency and acceptability.

2. Morphology

In this section the grammatical description of EAF_E will therefore be presented in broad categories of word class type, independent of any specific syntax or interpretation according to language learning theories. This sometimes leads to overlaps of explanations with underlying semantic structures, such as the 'count – non-count' distinction, which has repercussions for plural formation as well as the use of articles, although with different frequencies. The pluralisation *advices*, for instance, seems to be less frequent than *an advice*. What are called grammatical features do not occur consistently each time a construction is used and are very often related to sub-rules of more general rules, which are not affected.

2.1. Verb phrase

As far as the verb phrase is concerned, the following tendencies have been noted.

Inflectional endings are not always added to the verb, but the general, regular or unmarked forms are used instead:

This applies to the regular endings of the 3rd sg. present tense and of the past tense as well as to irregular verb forms. Since such deviations from the (British) norm are stigmatised, educated East Africans only use them in special cases. This may happen when they are supported by the pronunciation (e.g. alveolar fricatives/plosives for marking past and plural, respectively, are added to alveolar fricatives/plosives). The phenomenon can also be seen when verb forms like *ran* and *run* are not clearly distinguished, especially when it seems redundant (e.g. after time adverbials). Some cases, like (1) for example, seem a simple expansion of the British norm, where a unit can be seen as a whole or as several pieces:

- (1) *K.shs. 33,500/- was (StE were) raised during our pre-wedding.*
(ICE-EA: S1BCE05K)

Complex tenses tend to be avoided:

This tendency occurs particularly with the past perfect and conditionals (*It would have been much better if this was done*) and is also common in less formal native-speaker usage today. It affects mainly the sequence of tenses taught in school grammar, particularly in the case of subordinate clauses in past contexts and when certain types of modality (especially irrealis) are expressed. Past tense forms are rarely used to express modality as in Standard English (StE) *I had better* or *If I went*; this is considered pedantic and typically British. Constructions with *will* are used instead.

Extended forms (BE + VERB + *-ing* construction) are used frequently and do not necessarily imply StE (progressive) meanings:

This affects the distinction between the non-stative and the stative use of verbs. It applies particularly to some verbs that are used with *-ing* forms only in marked, specific meanings. The prime example is *have*, which is used with the semantics of 'temporariness' but also 'habitual', as in (2).

- (2) *Some of us may think that women always are having a lot of things to do.* (ICE-EA: S1BINT13T)
- (3) *It is really very toxic to the user because it produces a lot of smoke heavy smoke and it is smelling.* (ICE-EA: S1BINT13T)

Patterns and particles of phrasal/prepositional verbs vary:

Phrasal and prepositional verbs are particularly important in English word formation. Adding particles or prepositions after the English verb is a style-specific alternative to prefixation, especially with Germanic stems, for example *go about* 'begin', *go ahead* 'proceed', *go back* 'return', *go down* 'decrease', *go on* 'continue' and *go up* 'increase'). This alternative and special phrasal/prepositional usage is unknown in African languages. Especially for phrasal verbs, the corresponding preposition is not easily accessible for non-native speakers, since the meanings are figurative.

Selection criteria may be extensions from semantically similar phrasal verbs or from etymologically related nouns in English, like *talk about* > *discuss about* or *discussion about* > *discuss about*. Whether a phrase should be considered tautologous is not easy to decide. In the end, the difference between British English (BrE) and EAfE is often a matter of frequency: *discuss about*, for example, occurs relatively three times as often on web pages in the Kenyan domain (.ke) as on the corresponding UK pages (co.uk).

In formal descriptive categories, of course, prepositions may be omitted (the well-known *I will pick you* [StE up] *at eight*, *crop* [StE up], *provide* [with]), substituted (e.g. *attach with* [StE to], *concentrate with* [StE on], *congratulate for* [StE on], *participate with* [StE in], *result into/to* [StE in]), or added, which seems to be the most frequent case (e.g. *advocate for*, *attend to*, *mention about*, *join with*). Particles are omitted when they appear "obvious", as in *protest* (StE *against*).

The substituted particles are often consistent with the prefix morpheme (e.g. *deprive from* instead of *deprive of*) or closely related in meaning (e.g. *out* and *off*, as in *switch out* [StE off] *the light*, *put off* [StE out] *the fire*). The additional particles are often logically possible, but considered redundant with the verb according to StE norms. They are, however, used after the corresponding noun (e.g. *emphasise on* < *emphasis_N on*; similarly, *demand for*, *request for*, *stress on*). Besides analogy, interference from African languages is possible, since their prepositional system is relatively simple and thus polysemous. For instance, one basic locative proposition in Kiswahili, *mwituni*, can be translated as *at*, *to*, *in/inside*, *by/near/next to* and *from the forest*.

Verb complementation (especially infinitives and gerunds) varies freely:

As verb complementation is usually a matter of individual lexemes rather than rules, this feature would have to be listed or taught with the individual verb lexemes. This also determines how stigmatised the expression is. Again, speakers of EAfE often try to solve apparent irregularities by applying semantic criteria, thus *allow him go* is analogous to *let him go* and *made him to do* parallel to

forced him to do. These are equivalent structures, but they do not correspond to British norms. Sometimes two similar constructions are confused (as *decide to* + infinitive and *decide on* + *-ing*). The subtle distinctions between infinitive and gerund constructions (e.g. between *tried to walk* and *tried walking*) tend to be neglected and the choice seems random, as can be seen in (4) and (5):

- (4) *Would you mind to tell us uh a brief background about ICAC and uh what uh are you going to discuss in Arusha.* (ICE-EA: S1B041T)
- (5) *He has indicated to want to stop to deliver what he has.* (ICE-EA: S1B031T)

2.2. Noun phrase

The construction of noun phrases in EAfE is the same as in StE, although a few simplifying tendencies have been observed.

Nonn phrases are not always marked for number and case (by inflectional endings):

Although English nominal inflections are simple compared to Bantu languages, which have complex nominal classes marked by prefixes, the systems cannot be compared. Further simplification of the English system is therefore possible in EAfE. This applies to certain plural endings (especially when they are redundant after numerals) as well as to genitives (especially when they are redundant in noun modifications that can be interpreted as compounds). It also applies to relative pronouns, where the inflected forms *whom* and *whose* are occasionally avoided in favour of invariable *which* constructions:

- (6) *Adult education which its main purpose is to help adults to learn how to read and write faces many problems.*

The use of *-s* plural markers is overgeneralised:

This tendency is quite common in New Englishes and in most cases semantically motivated: although they can also be seen as a collective unit, several individual pieces can be distinguished, for example with *luggages*, *furnitures*, *firewoods* or *grasses*. Sometimes this tendency conflates more or less subtle semantic differentiations in StE, such as between *food* – *foods*, *people* – *peoples*, sometimes it merely regularises (historical) morphological StE irregularities, as in *fishes*.

East African usage basically ignores the grammatical distinction of count vs. non-count nouns, which does not always correspond to the semantic one. In StE, plural *-s* is not added to nouns that are considered abstract or collective/

mass and thus non-count, as for example *discontent* or *informations*. But even in StE, some of the non-countables may occur in the plural in special meanings (*works*) or in stressed contexts (*experiences*). Thus, differences are often a question of interpretation and frequency.

- (7) *These advices are coming because they've already studied all of us.*
(ICE-EA: S1BINT12T)

Articles and other determiners tend to be omitted:

This tendency may partly be an overgeneralization of British usage (*I am going to church/school/*post office*). Often, subrules of StE grammar are neglected, e.g. the rule that a definite article is used when nouns are postmodified by *of*-genitives or defining relative clauses, as in (8). The basic function of the definite article is of course to refer back to something mentioned earlier in the discourse. Thus, *the others* is clearly cataphoric and specific and different from *others* referring generally to "other people", but such distinctions are not always maintained in New Englishes.

- (8) *Standing hay, though of poor quality, offers animals nutrients required for Ø maintenance of their body condition.* (ICE-EA: W2B033K)
- (9) *There is Ø need for development of small, hand-driven machines.*
(ICE-EA: W2B033K)

In contrast to the system in StE, some linguists (e.g. Platt, Ho and Weber 1984: 52–59) even see a completely different system of articles in New Englishes. They argue that StE uses the definite/indefinite system (known vs not known) as the basic distinction, while the New Englishes prefer to use the specific vs non-specific (particular vs not particular) system, as in the StE determiner pair *a certain* – *any*. In this system, non-specific reference is expressed by the absence of an article (as in *Give me beer*, which gives the typical impression of EAfE "rude style") and specific by the use of the article *the*. The tendency of omitting determiners also expands to indefinite, possessive and demonstrative pronouns.

2.3. Pronouns

Pronouns may be redundant, especially in pronoun appositions:

A pronoun apposition occurs after the noun it refers to, that is, it does not have the usual anaphoric function of linking sentences but that of "repeating" a noun (phrase) in the same sentence. This usage is a particular discourse strategy in which the theme of a sentence is fronted with the pronoun as a placeholder for

the noun phrase which was extracted by the fronting process. In StE, pronoun apposition is perfectly accepted when the previous noun phrase is introduced by *as for* NP or *as far as* NP *is concerned*, as illustrated in (10) and (11). When speakers seem to hesitate or have lost their thread, copying a pronoun may help the listener to process the message.

- (10) *As for the calcium in bone, it plays two important roles.* (ICE-EA: W2B030K)
- (11) *As for me and my house, we declared war on poverty.* (ICE-EA: W2F002K)

EAFÉ seems to be more liberal as far as these rules are concerned, at least in speech. Pronoun copying occurs especially in oral English after long and complex subjects, because of prepositional constructions as in (12), infinitives or relative clauses, as in (13):

- (12) *So human being in the first time of his existence he found that he was </subjected> to the work.* (ICE-EA: S1B004T)
- (13) *there is our glue which we are getting them near.* (ICE-EA: S1B047I)

Redundant pronouns can be found within relatives when personal pronouns take up the head of a relative construction, as in (6) above, and when possessive pronouns premodify the head of a relative construction (i.e. the possessive pronoun and the relative clause subject refer to the same person, as in *my book that I read*).

Pronouns are not always distinguished by gender:

The three possibilities of third person singular pronouns, *he*, *she* and *it* in subject roles and *his*, *her* and *its* in possessive roles, are often used indiscriminately, especially when their pronunciation is only distinguished by one consonant, as in the case of *he* and *she*. This can be accounted for as simplification or as interference from African mother tongues that do not have sex distinctions in pronouns (e.g. languages that have only one class for animate or human beings in general).

Prepositions are underdifferentiated:

English prepositions are among the most polysemous and most idiomatic. Because of its lack of inflectional morphology, prepositions are particularly important in English. StE is peculiar in that the use of prepositions is often fixed and either dependent on the preceding verb, noun, adjective or adverb or the following noun. The choice of the idiomatic preposition may follow semantic, morphological or even traditional Latin rules. The matching of prepositions

to verbs, nouns, adjectives or adverbs is therefore neither easy nor logical to a second-language user.

Generally, the most frequent English prepositions *of* and *in* (at the expense of the more special *into*) occur significantly more frequently in EAFÉ than in BrE (cf. Mwangi 2003). This may be explained as a "safety strategy". More specific simple prepositions (like *off* or *across*) are used less often. This is sometimes seen as underdifferentiation in EAFÉ, e.g. disregarding the distinction between restricted position and extended position.

Thus, a phrase like *at Nairobi* is used regularly in Kenya, even when it does not suggest a point in a global perspective, but an extended place for which *in Nairobi* is clearly preferred in StE. Since the prepositional systems in English are much more complex than in African languages, standard prepositions tend to be chosen (e.g. *in* for *into*) and analogy plays an important role. Rare prepositions (like *underneath*, spatial *past*, or *down*) are used even less in EAFÉ. Another case of simplification is the neglected distinction between locative *beside* and contrastive *besides*.

Similarly, frequent complex prepositions (like *because of*, *according to* and *due to*) occur more often, less frequent and more complex ones (like *in front of*, *in favour of*, *by means of*, *in the light of*) less often in spoken EAFÉ.

- (14) *What is the main reason of (StE for) the decrease of production.* (ICE-EA: S1B041T)
- (15) *...many people are just coming in (to) the country.* (ICE-EA: S1A018T)

2.4. Adjectives

Adjective forms tend to be used as adverbs. The unmarked adverbial form is correct in very few cases in StE (*hard*, *first*, *high* in certain contexts or sayings like *take it easy*, etc.; but not in *Do it proper*). Unmarked adverbials occur not only in African but also in some American and British English varieties.

2.5. Question tags

Question tags tend to occur in invariant form. Tag questions are vital in discourse, but unusually complex in StE morphology. Their form depends on the main clause verb, the gender of the subject and its affirmative or negative character. They tend to be generalised in African varieties of English as in others, e.g. Welsh English. This means that the tag is neither adapted to the verb form nor to the subject of the main clause. *Is* and *it* occur with all verbs and subjects

and are repeated consistently to make sure the listeners are still listening. Example (16) is an extreme case of a coherent speech excerpt with three (out of five) non-standard *isn't it* cases in half a minute.

Often the tag is used indiscriminately in the negative form, after affirmative as well as after negative clauses; thus subtle StE distinctions in speaker assumption between positive and negated tags (*is it?* and *isn't it?* with raising and falling intonation, respectively) disappear. Occasionally, non-verbal particles with the same functions are added. *Not so* in (17) has an equivalent in many African languages, e.g. *sivyo* in Kiswahili, but there is also the common *init* in non-standard urban mother-tongue English.

(16) *We have </haa> and then or this time, isn't it? ,cause it's an existential quantifier or isn't it? the other side we get it – and then or. There we are, isn't it? We come again all right uh uh right. That's our statement, isn't it. Okay. And take note that in that statement now we have two different quantifiers, isn't it? universal and existential.* (ICE-EA: S2B057K)

(17) *The price in the display is a very good idea because ... Not so? uh okay?* (ICE-EA:S1B010K)

2.6 Responses to *yes/no* questions

Negative *yes/no* questions are confirmed by responding to the form of the question and not to the absolute “inner logic”. Those who are used to the StE system of answering direct questions *Yes, it is* or *No, it isn't* may receive a “confusing” mixture of *Yes, he isn't* or *No, he is*. This can be particularly confusing when the tags are omitted and only the particles *no* or *yes* are used. This occasional habit derives from a different frame of reference: EAfE speakers perceive that the negatively stated question queries the accuracy of the statement and thus assert (‘Yes, what you say is true’) or deny the basic statement (‘No, what you say is wrong’). In StE, the particle is chosen in accordance with the answer and in EAfE in accordance with the question. The tag, however, is the same.

(18) Q: *These problems are uh not biological?*
A: *Yes, they're not biological factor.* (ICE-EA: S1B047K)

3. Word order

In general, word order in EAfE is much more flexible and can be used to express emphasis and focus more readily than in StE (in this respect it can be seen as being closer to colloquial spoken English).

The basic interrogative word order is maintained in indirect speech and questions:

Indirect speech using the word order of direct speech could be interpreted as correct in spoken English where one cannot distinguish between the direct and indirect versions – if it is marked by a different intonation and a break marking a question mark. That may be the reason why this feature occurs also in non-standard native-speaker English.

(19) *I would like to know as to where and when **are you going** to have your celebrations and who will be the guest of honour.* (ICE-EA: S1BINT13T)

(20) *Are there any other activities you're going to show in this week or **you'll be only informing** the public about the two international conferences in Arusha.* (ICE-EA: S1B04IT)

Maintaining the *question word – verb – subject* word order seems to contradict another tendency, i.e. to retain the most normal *subject – verb – object* order wherever possible, but it must be interpreted as a simplification or regularisation of the formation rules for all types of questions, direct and indirect.

The strict English word order rules for adverb positions are weakened: Some adverbs tend to come as an afterthought, often without a break at the end of the clause or sentence, as for example *unfortunately* in (21). Others can be found at the very beginning, as *already* in (22).

(21) *... thinking that he would not understand **unfortunately**.* (ICE-EA: W1A016T)

(22) ***Already** appeals have been sent out to individuals, foundations, and other organisations to help contribute.* (ICE-EA: W2B009K)

4. Discourse

4.1. Information processing and presentation

More than in other areas of grammar, emphasis is difficult to judge right or wrong vis-à-vis StE norms, and is considered inappropriate only in few cases since the presentation of information remains flexible to a large extent. Often, however, the question whether an unusual construction implies special emphasis or contrast is difficult to decide.

In contrast to other New Englishes, emphatic pronouns and simple repetitions do not seem to imply emphasis. But related processes occur for instance when the stressed reflexive pronoun is placed in front and repeated as a personal pronoun afterwards, as in (23).

- (23) *Uh myself uh I am I started working at Muhimbili in nineteen eighty-seven.* (ICE-EA: S1B046T)

Topicalisation through fronting and corresponding intonation is rare in StE, but common in many English varieties (e.g. Irish English). StE has developed special forms like cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions instead, which are again too complex for second-language speakers.

Similarly, in StE *never* refers to a longer period or adds special emphasis, but occasionally it may simply be used to avoid a complex *to-do* construction required before *not*, as in (24):

- (24) *Most Kenyans never hesitate to give generously to help build hospitals, schools, dispensaries...* (ICE-EA: W2E018K)

Generally, the presentation of information varies considerably and the perception whether something is marked in discourse or the natural flow varies accordingly, since the optimal choice of a phrase may depend on many factors.

4.2. Culture-specific discourse

In African societies that maintain more links with oral tradition than European ones, it is not surprising that some discourse features are culture-specific in the sense that they are customarily used and not really marked for the insider, but are clearly unusual for the European outsider. Many such culture-specific discourse features are linked to traditional African social values involving the extended family, the ethnic group, their environment and their habits.

East Africans tend to greet each other elaborately. If visitors wish to make a good impression they should follow the standard patterns of asking *How is the family, the health, the journey/safari* or so on (straightforward translations from

the Kiswahili *Habari ya watoto, ... ya afia, ... ya safari*, etc), before launching into a direct request. This is considered polite and more appropriate than toning down direct questions with *I'm terribly sorry to bother you* or *Would you mind telling me*, which are considered affected in ordinary conversation and are not used by East Africans. Furthermore, some code-mixing is possible with handy little words like *sawa* for 'okay' or *asante* (or intensified *asante sana*) for 'thank you', or exclamations like *kumbe* and *kweli* for surprise.

Another East African politeness strategy is to express one's sympathy with some misfortune or unlucky event – e.g. when someone is obviously tired or ill, by inserting *pole* (or intensified *pole sana*) at the beginning, middle or end of a conversation (not to be confused with *pole pole*, which means 'slowly'). This is often translated as *I am sorry*. However, the expression is untranslatable when someone stumbles, because it often implies some fault on the part of the speaker in StE, which is clearly not intended in EAF.

Other cultural practices have indirect consequences on English word-meanings. Thus the day and the time starts at 6 o'clock in East Africa and in the Swahili counting of hours. Thus *6 o'clock* is actually in Western terms '12 noon' and not '6 p.m.', which would be *12 in the evening* if it is taken over directly from African languages.

Finally, even non-verbal communication patterns contribute to the East African flavour of a conversation, such as frequent nodding supported by a long and reassuring *eehee* shows the speaker that the listener is still following him attentively.

5. Lexis

The lexicon of EAF (cf. also Schmied forthcoming) comprises the core lexicon of StE and specific East Africanisms, which would not be interpreted easily or equally by the non-initiated user, for example readers/listeners not familiar with English usage in East Africa. Despite some cultural, especially sociopolitical, differences between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, the use of (Kiswahili) loans, the semantic extension of StE lexemes and the idiomatic flexibility are common features.

5.1. Loanwords from African languages

In this short section, it will suffice to cover three specific and interesting aspects: the range of the Africanisms, the areas of life in which Africanisms occur and the origin of Africanisms: from external sources, i.e. from other African

languages, or from internal material, i.e. through English word formation processes.

The first issue deals with the question of how far Africanisms are used and understood in the English-speaking world. Lexical East Africanisms consist of several layers: old Africanisms that developed during colonial days and remained in use in East Africa (not only in international films, like *daktari*), post-independence Africanisms (mainly in politics, like *ujamaa*) and recent Africanisms (like *mitumba* for 'used/second-hand clothes', but sometimes transferred to 'second-hand' in general, as in *mitumba cars* or even *mitumba mentality*).

Very old borrowings, such as *askari*, *baobab*, *bwana* or *safari*, mainly in the environmental field, have already been incorporated into general English and are thus codified in general large dictionaries of World English, the *Oxford English Dictionary* with its supplements, for instance. Their range transcends African English by far, and some have even been integrated into other European languages. They are, however, restricted to African contexts and thus have a more specific meaning in general English than in the particular regional English. A well-known example is the Kiswahili word *safari*. In East Africa it denotes any 'journey' (*journey* is hardly ever used, possibly because of pronunciation difficulties). For European tourists it always refers to a small 'expedition' to see and shoot game (in colonial days with a gun, nowadays usually with a camera), normally in national parks. Interestingly enough, *safari* in StE can also refer to the group of people setting out on such a safari, a semantic expansion which is not possible in Kiswahili. Very few Africanisms have such a secure existence in general English, most of them being marginal and only used to render meanings in an African context.

This becomes understandable when one examines the areas of life or domains in which most East Africanisms occur. Schmied (1991: 80–81) shows a few examples mainly from Kiswahili, grouped in the major domains of Africanisms. As can be expected, the African environment is inadequately reflected in the StE lexicon and is supplemented by African names for characteristic landscapes, plants or animals. African loans cluster around "African domains" just as English loans cluster around "European domains". It is interesting to see that the semantic expansion of StE lexemes may create problems of distinction as in the case of *potatoes*, where Africans often have to specify *Irish/European potatoes* or *sweet potatoes*. In general, the preferred staple food dish is hardly ever translated: Kenya's and Tanzania's *ugali* is Uganda's *posho* (from the colonial English *portion*, which was allocated to workers), the traditional maize dish (a little like *polenta* in Italy).

The field of food is probably culture-specific everywhere, but in many African countries there is a marked contrast between European and African food

(and eating habits) because Europeans in East Africa have tended not to adopt African food, in contrast to the British in India. Some dishes are also marked by ethnicity or region, like *githeri* for a Gikuyu bean dish or *vitumbua* for a coastal rice-cake. Some are of course clearly imported from Asia like *bajia* (an Indian potato dish) and *chai* (usually black tea).

Interestingly, many African words for kin relations in the intimate family and beyond are retained, especially when used as a form of address (like *Babu* for 'grandfather'). Where African clothing is still worn it is, of course, referred to by African names. Other African customs, which have to be rendered in African words, are concerned with traditional customs or pastimes, like *lobola* 'bride-price', or with rules of politeness (see section 5.3.2.).

An important domain of Africanisms today is politics. African languages have often played a major role in mobilising the masses, even before *uhuru* 'independence' was reached, and before *harambee* 'pulling together' and *nyayo* (ex-President Moi's following in the 'footsteps' of Kenyatta) were national slogans in Kenya and *Ujamaa* 'familyhood' and *Kujigetemea* 'self-reliance' in Tanzania. It is clear that most of these terms have to be seen in their socio-political context, otherwise they may conjure up the wrong connotations. Many politicians wish to demonstrate their local roots by including African vocabulary in their speeches even when using English.

A more comprehensive dictionary entry would have to add typical collocations and sample sentences (in some cases only a picture may explain matters to the non-initiated). Thus a dictionary entry for the famous East Africanism *matatu* (including inflectious and denotative and connotative meanings, etymology and collocates) could be as follows:

matatu pl ~s N 'collective taxi' in EAfr., especially Kenya
 usu. licensed for fixed routes of public transport, but flexible, they leave when 'full';
 infamous for reckless driving and overcrowding;
 etym. <Swahili "three", orig. 3 shillings fare;
 collocates: N driver, tout, operator, passenger; LOC. park, stand, stage, stop;
 PREP in, on board a ~; VERB enter, board

These examples also illustrate that many lexemes cannot be translated in a single term or even a few words satisfactorily (cf. *pole* in section 4.2.). This is why many explanations start with *a type of*, indicating a hypernym or a term with a similar function or form from a different culture (like *polenta* above).

Of course, isolated words have to be seen in their context, and phrases and collocates may occur like *bahati mbaya* ('bad luck'). Then the borderline between

code-mixing and loan words can be blurred when for instance the Kiswahili locative or directive particle *-ni* is added to a word, as when an *officer* is *porini* (i.e. 'in the bush', 'up-country', 'away from the capital or administrative headquarters').

5.2. Semantic change of StE lexemes

Even if the words used in African English retain the traditional English form, their meanings may be quite different. Although word usage may depend on the specific linguistic and extralinguistic context and although individual words may show many different deviations, some tendencies may be summarised in a categorisation based on the StE correspondence of meaning and form.

This correspondence may be changed in the particular East African environment or context, for instance when a particular meaning is expressed more than once in the same context (redundancy), when in the fixed correspondence between form and meaning the former is changed, usually on the morphological level, (idiomaticity), when words extend (shift or occasionally restrict) their meanings in some contexts (reference expansion), when they are confused or when the context of an English lexeme is different, either in terms of collocations or in terms of connotations usually associated with a certain lexeme.

The level of semantic redundancy tends to be higher:

Examples of redundancy can be found on many levels. The repetition of semantic elements may occur in connection with word formation. For example, the suffix *-able* expresses the same as the modal auxiliary *can*, so the two do not co-occur, thus *something is traceable to* or *something can be traced to*. Redundancy can also be found with modifying elements like adjectives or adverbs. For example, one defining element of a *ballot* in StE is that it is held secretly, thus a *secret ballot* is considered a tautology. Similarly, *perhaps* is redundant in the context of the modal *may*.

Sometimes a (Latin) prefix corresponds to a Germanic particle, and when both are used (as in *return back home*) this is considered tautological in StE. Other meaning elements may be reinforced because they seem to have lost part of their meaning, as the feature [+DURATION] immanent in *during* (less so in *in*), which is emphasised a second time by *the course of*. Other subtle cases of redundancy would be *include* in connection with *and so on*, which both convey the idea of an incomplete list, and *reason* in connection with *because* (as in *the reason why he came is because*). However, such cases can also be found in British or American style guides or rules of rhetoric.

Idiomatic expressions are used in a slightly different morphological form:

Idiomatic expressions usually have a very fixed form as the idiomatic meaning consists of more than that of the single word elements involved. Thus, variation in form is not common in StE, for instance, in terms of pluralisation (as in *just pulling your legs*). Sometimes idiomatic expressions are mixed with similar ones (*with regards to* for instance combines *with regard to* and *as regards*). There is also a tendency to make idioms more transparent and/or use more common synonyms, as in *silence means* (StE gives) *consent*.

English word forms are used in other reference contexts (usually expanded):

In African English, word forms occur in slightly different contexts than in British Standard English (BrStE), thus usually expanding their referential meaning. The most striking examples of this are kinship terms. Even the most casual visitor to Africa notices that Africans seem to have very many brothers and sisters or even fathers; this can not only be attributed to the birth rate and the extended family structure. Kinship terms are expanded as reference and address terms, because they go far beyond the British core meanings related to the biological features of consanguinity, generation and sex, and are related to the social features of seniority (age), solidarity, affection and role-relations. Thus, all the mother's co-wives or sisters may be addressed as *mother*, many elderly men as *father* and people from the same village without direct blood relations as *brothers and sisters*. As it is very important to show respect to older people in general, even older sisters may be ascribed the higher status of *auntie*. This is supported by different kinship categorisations in African languages, where seniority is most important.

Another culture-based term that even the casual tourist notices is *hoteli*, which in Kiswahili refers to a restaurant, so if a stranger or foreigner asks for a *hotel* they may be shown a place to eat. This change of meaning of English loans in African languages including African English is of course the reverse side of the loans from African languages mentioned (in section 5.1. above).

The use of the English discourse particle *sorry* was mentioned in section 4.2. Many visitors to Africa have noticed that their African friends seem to apologise frequently. When Africans say *sorry*, however, they merely use the appropriate African form of expressing solidarity or sympathy, because it is customary to express sympathy when someone has an unfortunate experience. Thus, the word which expresses apology in StE, *sorry*, has expanded its meaning to sympathy in African English, because a gap in the vocabulary seems to have been felt by African users. Other semantic incongruencies can be detected when the usage of expressions of gratitude (*thank you*) and politeness (*please*), in replies corresponding to American *You are welcome*, are examined carefully.

English word forms are confused with similar ones:

In lexical fields, word meanings overlap so that expansions of one lexeme affect the others in the same field. Common "confusables" clash, for instance, the cases when *to book* is used like StE *to hire*, *to forget* like *to lose*, *to refuse* like *to deny*, *to convince* like *to persuade*, *to see* like *to look*, *to reach* like *to arrive*, *arm* like *hand*, *guest* like *stranger*, *strange* like *foreign* and so on. In most of these cases, either the meanings have been expanded or more specific features (selection restrictions) have been dropped. *To escort*, for instance, originally implies a special guard or act of courtesy, but by Africans it may be used in the more general sense of *to accompany*, without the narrower restrictions.

Occasionally, meanings are restricted, as in *move with* in the sense of 'go out with friends or a boy-/girlfriend'. Sometimes the semantic overlap between items accounts for the "confusion". For example, *exchange information* has certainly a close relationship with *compare*, but when British students *exchange notes* this implies that sheets of paper are swapped and not merely that *notes are compared*, as with African students. Again, some problem cases can also be found in StE style guides. *Clarify* usually means 'an effort by somebody who holds information and is in a position to make things clearer'. Thus *I should clarify that point from the principal* refers to an authority from whom one can seek clearance or permission.

English word forms are used in other contexts: collocations and connotations: Collocations occur when certain words go together particularly well or frequently and are associated with each other because they co-occur with unusual frequency. They may be less fixed than idioms, because their particular meaning occurs not only in the idiomatic context; but collocates still "expect" each other to some extent. If similar words are used, the combination is less fixed or differs from what is expected in the context, as in *smooth* (StE *plain*) *sailing*. Often fairly general terms are used instead of more specific collocates: *an election is done* (StE *conducted/held*) or *to commit an action* (StE *crime*). It is not always the case that collocations are stronger, or lexemes used more specifically, in BrStE, because African English has developed its own specific forms, as in *I (dropped, got out/down, alighted) from the car near the hospital*.

Most of the connotations of English lexemes in an African context can lead to intercultural problems in discourse. It seems too obvious to mention that *rich* may conjure up very different ideas in a rural African context, but this may also apply to *travelling* and *holiday*, even *Sunday* and *game*, where associative African values and preferences may differ considerably from European traditions.

5.3. Idiomaticity

It has been mentioned that second-language English is usually less idiomatic than first-language English, which may make communication more difficult for Africans listening to European English speakers than the other way round. But EAfE has developed some idiomatic meanings, which may not be obvious at first sight. Thus, if an unsuspecting traveller needed *to make a short call* he might be shown the way to a toilet (or place used for that purpose). Of course, extreme cases are rare and the few exceptions prove the rule.

However, as has been mentioned above, contexts and style choices constituting idiomaticity form a complex interplay and this special flavour can only be studied in larger sections of authentic texts. This is why a few examples of typical verb usage in the spoken part of the Corpus of EAfE may suffice:

- (25) *I am a matatu driver operating route No. 44.* (ICE-EA: S1B065K)
- (26) *It is the City Inspectorate who assigns the City Askari.* (ICE-EA: S1B066K)
- (27) *But he never saw anybody himself; nor anybody alighting from the police m/v go to the house.* (S1BCE07K)

Whether EAfE is really more explicit (*according to me* 'in my view'), more flexible (*to drag someone through the mud* 'to drag someone through the mire') and more illustrative (as in *big with child*), can only be decided on the basis of large-scale comparative surveys or informant interviews and elicitation tests (cf. Skandera 2003).

6. Research issues

6.1. Research data

The problem of insufficient research data has been mentioned in various parts of this article. Although the internet, with East African newspapers and even radio broadcasts (cf. the accompanying CD), has made new data more accessible to the European arm-chair researcher, fieldwork is still essential, partly to evaluate and scrutinise the data available and partly to complement them with other text-types, situations and speakers. Data from the media tend to mirror public oral and written production and clearly have an urban and elitist bias.

The only broad and stratified collection of EAfE is the East African part of the *International Corpus of English* (ICE-EA, freely available complete with handbook from the internet). It was collected between 1990 and 1996 and is

compatible with the other ICE-copora, an effort to record true English usage in its first and second-language varieties (principally each with 1 million words in 500 text types, half written and half spoken). The computerised collection from Kenya and Tanzania allows comparisons with the first-language varieties of Britain and Australia, but also with the second-language varieties of India and the Philippines, for instance.

Thus general processes of second-language development can be distinguished from specifically East African features. The size of the corpus (about 1.5 million words with only about half a million words of spoken English) makes it a convenient source for analyses of grammar and frequent lexemes, especially as far as stylistic or text-type-specific differences are concerned. It is, however, not really sufficient for lexical and collocational research, where a much larger corpus is necessary.

For such quantitative comparisons and sample retrievals the *www* with the domains *.ug*, *.ke* and *.tz* can be used. Such a procedure using modern web browsers provides examples of rare cases much more easily now. However, the texts have to be evaluated critically, that is, the question has to be considered whether they can really be seen as "educated EAF". By using the *www*, country-specific patterns can be distinguished. For example, Kiswahili address forms like *ndugu* or *mzee* have higher hits in Tanzania than in Kenya, *duka* and *fundi* are less frequent in Uganda, but *sodas* occurs in all three East African countries in contrast to South African *minerals*.

Finally, again a plea to look at the data carefully: *soda* as well as *minerals* of course also belong to general English, but in other contexts – baking and mining, for instance. Even *mitumba* occurs on *.uk* web sites as well, but usually with an explicit explanation in the form of premodifiers or appositions (*the second-hand mitumba* or *mitumba, second-hand clothes*). In South Africa, it is often used with explicit reference to East Africa.

Table 1. EAF lexemes on the *www*

	<i>ndugu</i>	<i>mzee</i>	<i>duka</i>	<i>fundi</i>	<i>mitumba</i>	<i>matatu</i>
absolute:	220	292	431	954	25	279
relative:	0.003 %	0.004 %	0.007 %	0.015 %	0 %	0.004 %
<i>uk</i> 6,510,000 intrasite share:	10 %	13.3 %	19.6 %	43.3 %	1.1 %	12.7 %
intrasite factor:	8.8	11.68	17.24	38.16	1	11.16
intraphrase share:	0.2 %	0.1 %	0.8 %	0.9 %	0.1 %	0.1 %
intraphrase factor:	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 1. (continued) EAF lexemes on the *www*

	<i>ndugu</i>	<i>mzee</i>	<i>duka</i>	<i>fundi</i>	<i>mitumba</i>	<i>matatu</i>
absolute:	7	45	4	89	6	185
relative:	0.086 %	0.55 %	0.049 %	1.088 %	0.073 %	2.262 %
<i>ke</i> 8,180 intrasite share:	2.1 %	13.4 %	1.2 %	26.5 %	1.8 %	55.1 %
intrasite factor:	1.75	11.25	1	22.25	1.5	46.25
intraphrase share:	4 %	17.7 %	5.6 %	63.8 %	21.2 %	74.8 %
intraphrase factor:	25.32	122.65	7.39	74.25	191	527.71
absolute:	105	131	42	31	14	39
relative:	2.043 %	2.549 %	0.817 %	0.603 %	0.272 %	0.759 %
<i>tz</i> 5,140 intrasite share:	29 %	36.2 %	11.6 %	8.6 %	3.9 %	10.8 %
intrasite factor:	7.5	9.36	3	2.21	1	2.79
intraphrase share:	95.8 %	82.1 %	93.6 %	35.4 %	78.7 %	25.1 %
intraphrase factor:	604.48	568.21	123.42	41.16	709.26	177.04

6.2. Practical language issues

The most pressing problem in East Africa is related to the functions of English in education. Teaching English properly within the limited means in the socio-cultural contexts of Africa has been a burning issue for many years. Although these problems are tackled in many development projects, the scientific basis is usually limited, partly because ideological convictions tend to interfere and partly because the teaching materials are only moderately adapted to the local linguistic needs. On this basis, the study of English for academic and specific purposes, especially for science and technology, would help to make learning in English easier, especially on higher levels of education. Thus, studies in educational linguistics are the major desideratum in East Africa.

Other linguistic subdisciplines can support them: more studies on attitude and actual usage could use larger corpora to help draw the borderline between general usage and learner English, which would be useful for the testing specialists in national testing centres and the local writers of adapted teaching materials and text-books. Only much later can questions of national norm be addressed on this scientific basis.

6.3. Intercultural problems

The adoption of some English words into African usage can also give rise to connotational problems. Forms like *blackmail* or *black market* are stigmatised because the word *black* is used to characterise activities beyond what is permitted by law. The long European tradition of equating *black* with *bad* and *white* with *good* can also be seen in *black* versus *white magic*, which is difficult to compare with equivalent complex African concepts anyway. It is therefore not surprising that many language-conscious Africans object to these terms and replace them.

This is why Africanisms for *black market* occur almost as frequently all over Africa as the phenomenon itself, e.g. *magendo* in Tanzania and *kibanda* in Uganda. However, such unofficial parts of the economy tend to change expressions rapidly; thus *kitu kidogo* (literally 'something small') and *chai* ('tea') are well-known in Kenya as euphemistic expressions for a bribe and tend to be replaced already in the inner circle of users.

The connotation "African style" occurs in many areas of the informal sector or petty trade, from the infamous parking boys, who force car owners to pay them for "looking after their cars" to the *jua kali* artisans, who follow their craft in the "hot sun" and not in a shop or garage in Kenya. Similarly, the StE expressions *second-hand* or *used clothes* do not have the same connotations as *mitumba* in Kenya. These examples illustrate that it is necessary to pay attention to denotative but also to connotative meanings.

6.4. Outlook

Since their independence over forty years ago, East Africans have developed an interesting trifocal language system: English, widespread throughout Africa, is rivalled by Kiswahili in high language functions in the region (and through the Organisation of African Unity even on the continent) and by a local vernacular language having low functions. Although other African languages play a role in subnational communication and influence English pronunciation, East Africa is unique among the English-speaking areas of the world because of this dichotomy. Interestingly enough, Kiswahili does not threaten English in the area since its losses in national functions have by far been compensated by the many international functions of English that have been important for East Africans since their integration into world-wide communication networks over 100 years ago.

EAFé shares many features, especially in grammar, with other New Englishes, which also have comparable tendencies in lexical development. Thus

EAFé can be seen in a larger framework (e.g. as in ICE above). In the long tradition of African multilingualism, English has a promising future in the area. The knowledge and appreciation of national and regional features will develop and make English in East Africa interesting for casual global users and specialised researchers alike.

Exercises and study questions

1. "The tendency to overgeneralise -s plural noun markers is semantically motivated" (see 2.2). Discuss and illustrate.
2. Discuss three major syntactic similarities between an EAFé and a WAFé variety like that of Ghana or Nigeria.
3. Discuss three syntactic differences between EAFé and the variety you chose in 2.
4. Discuss the pragmatics of the interjection *sorry* in EAFé.
5. Negative *yes/no* questions are confirmed by responding to the form of the question and not to the absolute "inner logic". Discuss and compare with this analysis for EAFé the same phenomenon in BISAfE.

Selected references

Please consult the General references for titles mentioned in the text but not included in the references below. For a full bibliography see the accompanying CD-ROM.

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