

# A CORPUS-DRIVEN STUDY OF THE GENITIVE IN CAMEROON ENGLISH AND NIGERIAN ENGLISH

*Presented by :*

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# TAKE NOTE

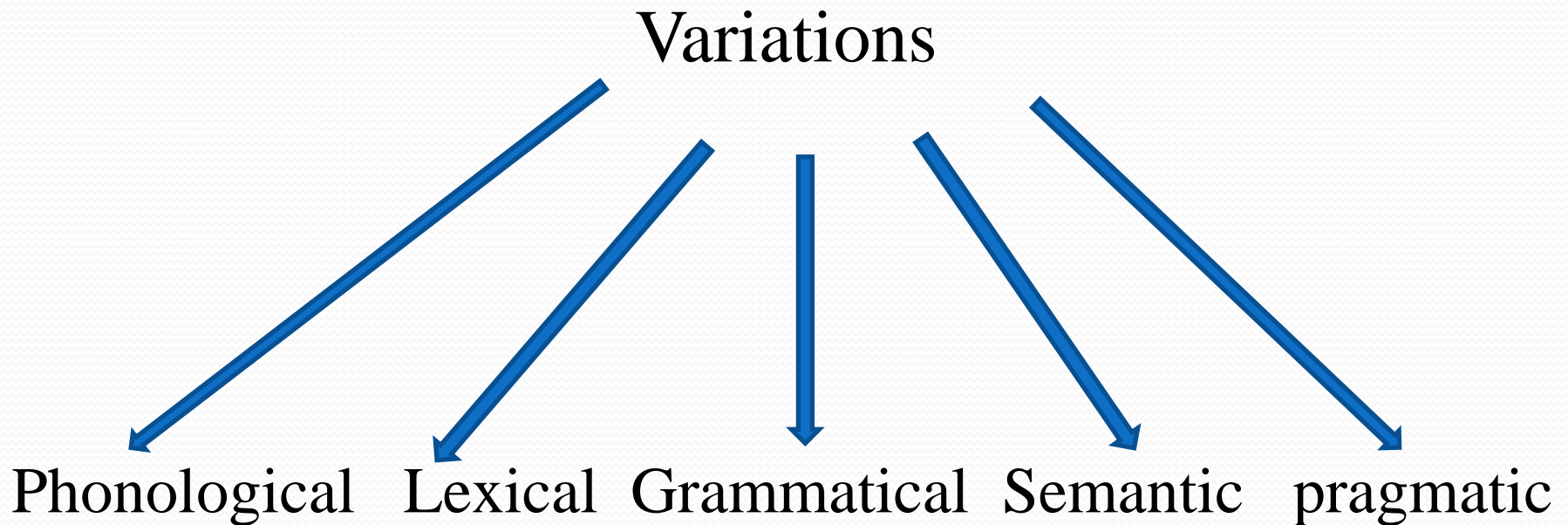
- Presentation made at the *International Symposium on Academic Writing across Disciplines and Mentorship for Junior Scientists* held in Yaoundé from July 20 to July 22, 2015.
- This presentation is part of an ongoing Ph.D. research work

# Outline

- 1. English in the world
- 2. Case
- 3. Research questions
- 4. Methodology
  - Data extraction
  - Analysis of data
- 5. Some salient observations
- 6. Difficulties currently faced
- 7. References

# English in the World

- Spread of the English language around the world  
    → New Englishes      → variations



# English in the World (cont'd)

Crystal (2003:147): “Any domain of linguistic structure and use could be the basis of variety differentiation, but the focus in comparing the traditional standards of British and American English has been almost entirely associated with vocabulary and phonology. There has been little acknowledgement of grammatical variation in those reference works which incorporate an international perspective”

Crystal (ibid: 149) : “But even in the available literature, with its bias towards writing, there are more signs of grammatical differentiation than the general statements suggest.”

# English in the World (cont'd)

- “Non-standard English morphology and syntax have only lately received the attention they deserve, spurred by the advent of data sources specifically designed to strengthen research on morphosyntactic variation in English.”  
(Szmrecsanyi and Kortmann, 2009: 1643)

# Case

- “Case is a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads.” Blake (Blake, 1994: 1)
- It can equally affect other word categories like pronouns, determiners and adjectives

Examples:

- 1) *Yours* can be the best. (English)
- 2) Der Wagen *meines* Vaters. (German)
- 3) Der Wagen *meines* *alten* Vaters. (German)

# Case (cont'd)

- The genitive is “One of the FORMS taken by a WORD, usually a NOUN or a PRONOUN, in LANGUAGES which express GRAMMATICAL relationships by means of INFLECTIONS.” Crystal (1986: 136)
  - Nominal form: *'s genitive* and *of genitive*
  - Pronominal form: *my, mine, their, theirs, your, yours...*
- ...it “typically expresses a possessive relationship (e.g. *the boy's book*), or some other similar ‘close’ connection (e.g. *a summer's day*)”. Crystal (1986: 136)



# Research Questions

1. How is the genitive materialised in CamE and NigE?
2. What peculiarities do they exhibit?
3. What are the modalities conveyed by genitive constructions in these varieties?
4. How are the attested forms in these Englishes distributed?
5. What linguistic factors trigger genitive choice?
6. Which new features of the genitive in CamE and NigE can be assimilated into English as an International Language?
7. To what extent can the genitive be a threshold to distinguish between non-native Englishes?

# Methodology

- Sources of data:
  - 1) The Corpus of Cameroon English
  - 2) The ICE-Nigeria
- The AntConc Software
- Data Extraction
- Analysis of data

# Details on CCE

- **Number of Texts and Words per Text Category in the CCE (Nkemleke, 2005: 47)**

Text categories	N° of texts	N° of words
A Official Press (OP)	183	250,000
B Students' Essay (SE)	116	130,760
C Miscellaneous (MI)	32	122,569
D Novels and Short Stories (NS)	21	104,458
E Private Press (PP)	50	81,860
F Government Memoranda (GM)	14	74,692
G Private Letters (PL)	222	69,347
H Tourism (TR)	8	30,188
I Religion (RE)	14	15,839
J Official Letters (OL)	44	10,632
K Advertisement (AD)	10	4,547
11 Total	714	1,000,451

# Details on CCE, (Cont'd)

- **Current state of corpus (Nkemleke, 2008)**

<b>Text categories</b>	<b>N° of texts</b>	<b>N° of words</b>
<b>A: Official Press</b>	257	126,539
<b>B: Private Press</b>	42	49,098
<b>C: Novels &amp; Short Stories</b>	21	77,096
<b>D: Religion</b>	19	96,380
<b>E: Tourism</b>	5	26,881
<b>F: Official letters</b>	77	12,285
<b>G: Private letters</b>	250	79,386
<b>H: Students' Essays</b>	83	137,399
<b>I: Government Memos</b>	16	71,368
<b>J: Advertisement</b>	10	4,875
<b>K: Miscellaneous</b>	22	139,247
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>820,554</b>

# Details on CCE, Cont'd

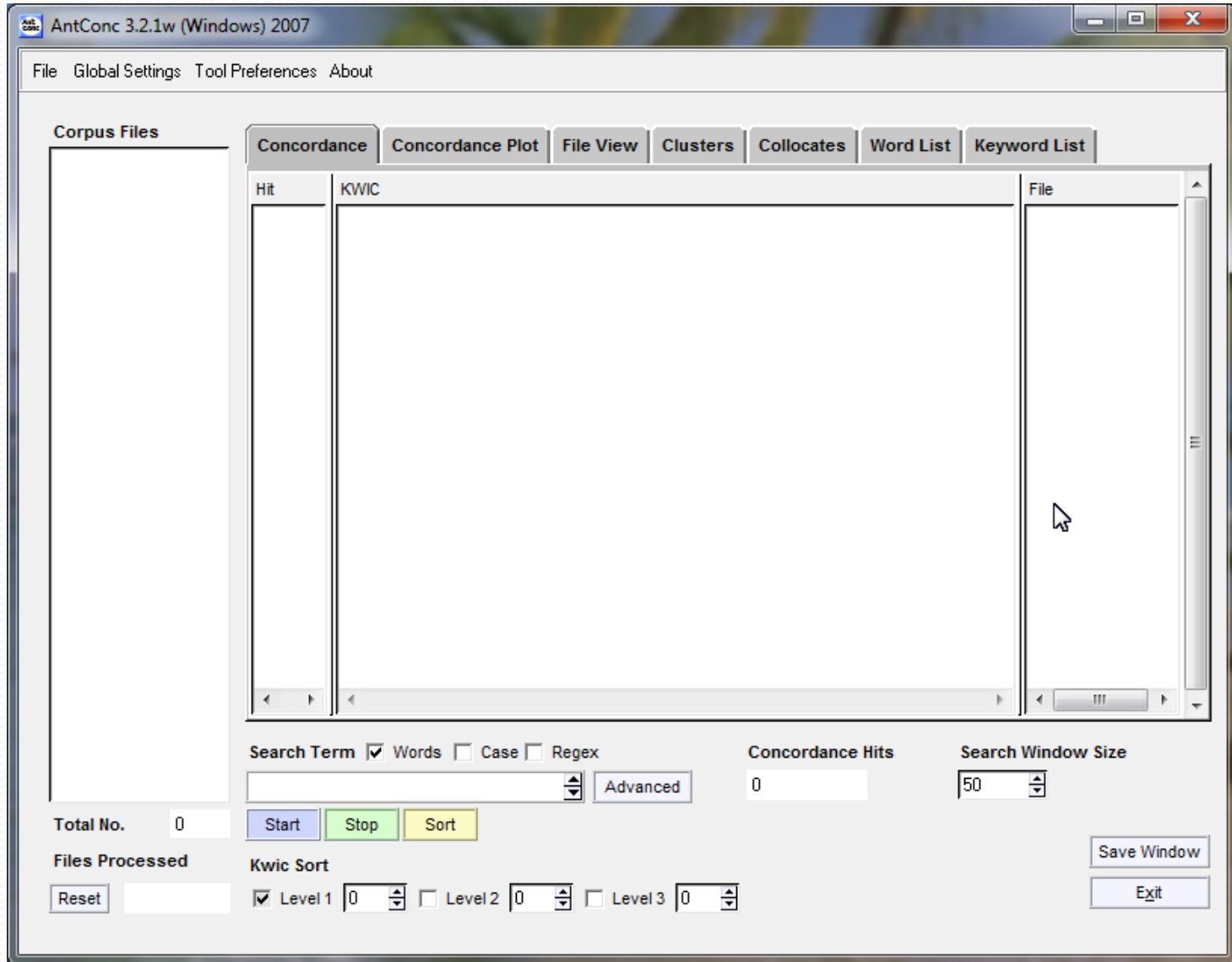
Text categories		N° of texts		N° of words	
		At creation	Edited	At creation	Edited
<b>A</b>	<b>Official Press (OP)</b>	183	257	250,000	126,539
<b>B</b>	<b>Private Press (PP)</b>	50	42	81,860	49,098
<b>C</b>	<b>Novels &amp; Short Stories (NS)</b>	21	21	104,458	77,096
<b>D</b>	<b>Religion (RE)</b>	14	19	15,839	96,380
<b>E</b>	<b>Tourism (TR)</b>	8	5	30,188	26,881
<b>F</b>	<b>Official letters (OL)</b>	44	77	10,632	12,285
<b>G</b>	<b>Private letters (PL)</b>	222	250	69,347	79,386
<b>H</b>	<b>Students' Essays (SE)</b>	116	83	130,760	137,399
<b>I</b>	<b>Government Memos (GM)</b>	14	16	74,692	71,368
<b>J</b>	<b>Advertisement (AD)</b>	10	10	4, 547	4,875
<b>K</b>	<b>Miscellaneous (MI)</b>	32	22	122,569	139,247
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>1,000,451</b>	<b>820,554</b>
		<b>714</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>894,892</b>	<b>820,554</b>

# Details on ICE-Nigeria

**Table: Word count of text categories (Gut, 2014: 4)**

Text type (ICE text category label)	ICE Nigeria file name	Words
Academic writing humanities (W2A)	AHum_01 – 11	20,014
Academic writing natural sciences (W2A)	ANsc_01 -11	20,017
Academic writing social sciences (W2A)	ASsc_01 -11	20,008
Academic writing technical (W2A)	ATec_01 - 11	20,006
Administrative/instructive writing (W2D)	adm_01 - 30	19,992
Business letters (W1B)	bl_01 – 93	30,142
Editorials (W2E)	ed_01 – 28	20,013
Exams (W1A)	ex_01 - 54	20,211
Novels (W2F)	nov_01 - 20	40,031
Popular writing humanities (W2B)	PHum_01 – 20	20,016
Popular writing natural sciences (W2B)	PNsc_01 - 19	20,037
Popular writing social sciences (W2B)	PSsc_01 – 15	20,022
Popular writing technology (W2B)	PTec_01 - 33	20,069
Press reportage (W2C)	Pr_01 – 69	40,073
Instructive writing/skills and hobbies (W2D)	SkHo_01 - 25	20,007
Social letters (W1B)	sl_01 - 48	30,141
Students essays (W1A)	ess_01 - 12	19,997
<b>Words total written part</b>		<b>400,796</b>

# AntConc 3.2.1w



# Data Extraction

N°	Search word/string	CCE		ICE-Nigeria	
		With tags	No tags	With tags	No tags
1.	s	2 864	2 786	1 638	1 638
2.	s'	175	175	105	105
3.	of	28 694	28 656	14 648	14 645
4.	my	1 494	1 491	955	955
5.	mine	63	63	07	07
6.	your	1 724	1 721	1 233	1 233
7.	yours	104	104	74	74
8.	your's	01	01	08	08
9.	his	3 687	3 678	1 370	1 370
10.	her	1 447	1 442	641	641
11.	hers	03	03	03	03
12.	her's	01	01	01	01
13.	its	1 085	1 083	614	614
14.	it's	115	115	74	74
15.	our	1 181	1 178	769	769
16.	ours	16	16	09	09
17.	their	2 549	2 546	1 386	1 386
18.	theirs	15	14	10	10



# Data Extraction (cont'd)

19.	that my	30	30	11	11
20.	that your	36	36	19	19
21.	that her	14	14	07	07
22.	that his	60	60	23	23
23.	that its	17	17	06	06
24.	that our	31	31	13	13
25.	that ours	01	01	00	00
26.	that their	45	45	25	25
27.	this my	06	06	01	01
28.	this your	01	01	00	00
29.	this her	02	02	00	00
30.	this our	05	05	00	00
31.	this their	00	00	01	01
32.	those my	02	02	00	00
33.	those your	02	02	00	00
34.	those our	02	02	00	00
35.	what about	36	36	09	09
36.	Whose	234	234	68	68
37.	of which	86	86	40	40
38.	own	512	512	199	199
39.	<b>TOTAL</b>	46 340	46 195	23 967	23 964

# Raw vs Thinned Data

N°	Search word/string	CCE		ICE-Nigeria	
		Raw	Thinned	Raw	Thinned
1.	s	2 786	2 384	1 638	1 281
2.	s'	175	160	105	86
3.	of	28 656		14 645	
4.	my	1 491	1 491	955	955
5.	mine	63	44	07	06
6.	your	1 721	1 720	1 233	1 225
7.	yours	104	104	74	74
8.	your's	01	01	08	08
9.	his	3 678	3 678	1 370	1 370
10.	her	1 442	869	641	463
11.	hers	03	03	03	03
12.	her's	01	01	01	01
13.	its	1 083	1 083	614	614
14.	it's	115	16	74	13
15.	our	1 178	1 178	769	769
16.	ours	16	15	09	08
17.	their	2 546	2 546	1 386	1 386
18.	theirs	14	14	10	10
19.	that my	30	02	11	00
20.	that your	36	03	19	01
21.	that her	14	00	07	00

# Raw vs Thinned Data (cont'd)

22.	that his	60	00	23	01
23.	that its	17	01	06	00
24.	that our	31	00	13	00
25.	that ours	01	00	00	00
26.	that their	45	01	25	01
27.	this my	06	06	01	01
28.	this your	01	01	00	00
29.	this her	02	02	00	00
30.	this our	05	05	00	00
31.	this their	00	00	01	01
32.	those my	02	02	00	00
33.	those your	02	02	00	00
34.	those our	02	02	00	00
35.	what about	36	36	09	09
36.	whose	234	234	68	68
37.	of which	86	86	40	40
38.	own	512	501	199	196
39.	<b>TOTAL</b>	46 195	16 191+28 656	23 964	8 504+14 645

# Analysis of Data

1. Qualitative: types of genitive and meanings
  - Pronominal genitive (my, mine, your, yours, your's, her, hers, her's...)
  - Nominal genitive (*'s genitive, of genitive*)
  - Collocations (e.g. what about + your)
  - Possession, kinship, disposal,...
2. Quantitative: frequency count

# Some Salient Observations

1) *'s genitive* with figures in NigE is almost always amalgamated with the figure (*FigureS* structure), unlike in CamE where the structure *Figure'S* is in high competition with the *FigureS* structure (21 vs 36)

examples

- *They are 16 on their 30th birthdays; under-20s when they are over 30. They help themselves to drugs instead of* (ICE-Nigeria, ed\_22.txt)
- *so as to write memos and letters well. The oil crisis of the 1970s also contributed to this development as there was a mass flow of* (ICE-Nigeria, ex\_23.txt)
- *But the long drought since the early 1970's has considerably affected the non-industrial supply of meat for, many* (CCE, op001.txt)
- *ssures directed at Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states by Iran. The 1970s were also characterized by the persistence of ideology as an element* (CCE, op014.txt)

# Some Salient Observations (cont'd)

2) The genitive *It's* is proportionately more frequent in ICE-Nigeria than in CCE:

ICE-Nigeria = 13 tokens out of 400 381 words (0.0032%)

CCE = 16 tokens out 820 554 words (0.0019%)

3) *your's*

ICE-Nigeria: 08 > CCE: 01

NB: All found in the closing statement of letters

e.g.: *m during the summer holiday because we really missed you. Thanks **Your's** Affectionate friend, (The Don .)* (ICE-Nigeria, ex\_21.txt )

4) What about + genitive pronoun:

CCE: *what about + your* (11=100%)

ICE-Nigeria: *what about + your* (2=100%)

# Current Difficulties Faced

1. Dealing with the size of the data (CCE 46 000, ICE-Nigeria 23 000 tokens)
  - How to carry out semantic analysis on this huge chunk of data?
2. How to match text categories?
3. What theory to use?
4. How to elicit unmarked 's *genitive* forms like
  - *Miss Prizm takes the parish priest allusion literally when he says Cecily particularly hangs on his lips. (CCE, se005.txt)?*

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Thank you for listening