

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Noun phrase complement in Nigerian English

Mayowa Akinlotan¹

¹ Vrije Universiteit Brussels/University of Texas at Austin.

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the structure of *of*-complement noun phrase in Nigerian English, comparing findings with those of British and Ghanaian varieties. *Of*-complement is high in frequency and is a typical complement that has structural tendencies for recursiveness and complexity. A review of literature explicating the structural simplification hypothesis (Gorlach, 1998) suggests that the structure of *of*-complement (or any other type) has received very little attention. Perhaps such scanty works show the different arguments surrounding its syntactic and theoretical status in different grammatical descriptions. Unlike many previous NP frameworks, Huddleston & Pullum (2002, 2004) argued that complements are not only a syntactic element within the NP structure, but also that they are of equal obligatory syntactic status as a head noun within an NP. This framework, unlike many others, therefore conceptualizes the complement slot as an important part in the scheme of things for an NP structure *viz-a-viz* its complexity. Thus, a serious examination of NP complexity would consider the cooperation (relationship) between a complement and the other syntactic elements constituting the NP structure. This is one of many issues that the present study sheds light on. On the basis of variables representing syntactic function and text type, together with corpus analyses of NPs extracted from the Nigerian component of International Corpus of English (ICE), the structural behavior of *of*-complement in the lights of other internal elements constituting an NP structure, is clearly shown. It is found that a complement is less likely to co-occur with other all internal elements (20%). Also, it is shown that an *of*-complement is likely to co-occur with prenominal elements (30%). Furthermore, the paper shows that a structural type of *of*-complement representing *h*-complement (i.e. an NP structure consisting of a head noun + a complement, see Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, 2004, and Akinlotan & Housen, 2017) is more likely to occur (26%) as an independent NP structure than to co-occur with postnominal elements (24%). The structural simplification hypothesis is manifested in our corpus data, as it is found out that a complement is more likely to be simple-structured (54%) than complex-structured (46%). On the predictive strength of syntactic function and text type (Biber et al., 1999; Schilk & Schuab, 2016; Akinlotan, 2017), the study finds syntactic function a better predictor than text type.

KEYWORDS: noun phrase complement; syntactic cooperation; complexity; Nigerian English noun phrase; new Englishes.

Corresponding Author:

MAYOWA AKINLOTAN
<mayowa.akinlotan@vub.be>



This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original publication is properly cited.
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Complemento de sintagma nominal no Inglês Nigeriano

RESUMO

O presente estudo investiga a estrutura de sintagmas nominais com complemento *of-* do inglês nigeriano, comparando os achados sobre as variedades britânica e ganense. O complemento *of-* é alto em frequência e é um complemento típico que tem tendências estruturais para recursividade e complexidade. Uma revisão da literatura explicando a hipótese da simplificação estrutural (Gorlach, 1998) sugere que a estrutura do complemento (ou qualquer outro tipo) recebeu pouca atenção. Talvez esses escassos trabalhos mostrem os diferentes argumentos que cercam seu status sintático e teórico em diferentes descrições gramaticais. Ao contrário de muitas estruturas de Sintagmas Nominais (SN) anteriores, Huddleston & Pullum (2002, 2004) argumentam que os complementos não são apenas um elemento sintático dentro da estrutura do SN, mas também que eles são de status sintático obrigatório como um substantivo principal dentro de um SN. Esta estrutura conceitua o encaixe do complemento como uma parte importante no esquema para uma estrutura SN, vis-à-vis sua complexidade. Assim, um exame sério da complexidade do SN consideraria a cooperação (relação) entre um complemento e os outros elementos sintáticos que constituem a estrutura do SN. Esta é uma das muitas questões que o presente estudo esclarece. Com base nas variáveis que representam a função sintática e o tipo de texto, juntamente com a análise de corpus de SNs extraídos do componente nigeriano do International Corpus of English (ICE), o comportamento estrutural do complemento à luz de outros elementos internos que constituem uma estrutura SN é demonstrado. Verifica-se que é menos provável que um complemento co-ocorra com outros elementos internos (20%). Além disso, mostra-se que um complemento é susceptível de co-ocorrer com elementos pré-nominais (30%). Outrossim, o artigo mostra que um tipo estrutural de complemento representando o complemento *h* (isto é, uma estrutura SN que consiste em um substantivo principal + um complemento, veja Huddleston & Pullum 2002, 2004 e Akinlotan & Housen, 2017) é mais provável de ocorrer (26%) como uma estrutura de SN, do que co-ocorrer com elementos pós-nominais (24%). A hipótese da simplificação estrutural manifesta-se em nossos dados de corpus, pois descobre-se que um complemento tem maior probabilidade de ser estruturado de forma simples (54%) do que complexa (46%). Sobre a força preditiva da função sintática e tipo de texto (Biber et al., 1999; Schilk & Schuab, 2016; Akinlotan, 2017), o estudo define a função sintática como um melhor preditor do que o tipo de texto.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: complemento de sintagma nominal; cooperação sintática; complexidade; sintagma nominal do Inglês Nigeriano; novos ingleses.

1 INTRODUCTION

Studies on new varieties of English, especially those explicating the structural simplification hypothesis (Gorlach, 1998; Brunner, 2014; Akinlotan, 2017; Akinlotan & Housen, 2017), have provided very little corpus evidence on the nature of the structure and meaning of complements within NP structure. In other words, explicating the structural simplification hypothesis with corpus evidence from the structure of noun phrase complementation has received very little attention in the studies of new varieties of English in general, and in Nigerian variety of English in particular. Of course, datasets and information on this syntactic element has always been put forward from different inner and outer circle varieties as part of a body of work investigating the structural complexity/simplicity of NP. However, many of the NP frameworks employed in these previous studies failed to identify, account and describe the complement as an independent structural element within the NP structure. Such lack of studies focusing on this syntactic unit as an independent part of the NP structure might actually reflect the controversial syntactic status of the complement as an independent syntactic slot; a syntactic slot which many different grammatical descriptions account for as either a postmodifier or a semantic part of the headnoun. Unlike many NP frameworks, Huddleston & Pullum (2002, 2004) argued that complements (of any structural type, including *of*-complement, *that*-complement, *wh*-complement, etc.) are not only an independent syntactic element within the NP structure, but also that they are of equal obligatory syntactic status just as the head noun, making it an important variable in the scheme of things for the NP complexity. For example, in certain semantic scenarios the

completion of the meaning of the head noun is dependent on the presence of a complement, hence the complement is as important as the head noun. Therefore, a comprehensive description of the NP structure necessitates a detailed description of the complement as an independent syntactic unit, which the present study engages with by focusing on a structural type of complement, which is *of-complement*.

In the present study, three issues, two of which relate to the structural description of *of-complement* in Nigerian English, namely (1) cooperation (or syntactic relationship between complement and other internal elements within the NP structure) and (2) complexity (how complex or simple structured are the *of-complement* in the variety understudied, such that the structural simplification hypothesis in new varieties of English can either be corroborated or refuted on the basis of evidence from this syntactic unit), are investigated, using corpus quantitative method. The third issue discussed in the paper relates to the extent to which variables representing syntactic function, register, and syntactic weight¹ predict scenarios where we might find simple or complex *of-complement*. Other instances of NP complements such as *that-complement* (e.g. *The idea that Nigeria is a force marriage* is still held by many) is not studied in the present paper, for a reason of space and that a forthcoming study is dedicated to this. Also, *of-complement* is a common structural type with a high frequency. Given that complements essentially cooperate with head noun (for example, in (1) the complement 'of linguistics' cooperates (align in meaning) with the head noun 'the students'), which then motivates an occurrence or non-occurrence of other internal elements such as determiner (D), premodifier (M), postmodifier (M), and peripheral dependent (PD)). In (1), the complements '...of linguistics' and '...of the famous linguistics Professor', which occupy different syntactic positions and are of varying degree of complexity, contribute to the overall NP complexity.

- (1) [The students of linguistics] were saddened by [the controversial departure of the famous linguistics Professor]

In the NP 'the controversial departure of the famous linguistics Professor' the complement '... of the famous linguistics Professor' is more complex (i.e. heavier; having more syntactic weight than the other) than '... of linguistics', which might be motivated by the different syntactic functions they perform, and the prenominal position being occupied by a premodifier in the former.

This implies that the use of a complement in different structural constructions such as; determiner (their) + premodifier (serious) + headnoun (lack) + complement (of food); headnoun (student) + complement (of linguistics), headnoun (students) + complement (of linguistics) + peripheral dependent (in year one), and; determiner (the) + premodifier (late) + headnoun (departure) + complement (of the flight) + peripheral dependent (in London) allows us to better predict its occurrence *viz-a-viz* non-occurrence, and its co-occurrence with other internal elements. Also, the complexity of complement is measured and predicted on the basis of variables representing

¹ In the present paper, complexity and syntactic weight will be frequently interchanged such that little distinction is made between these two concepts in the course of the analysis.

text type and syntactic functions which have been selected on the basis of their relevance in the literature (Biber et al., 1999; Schilk & Schuab, 2016; Akinlotan, 2017; Akinlotan & Housen, 2017). Previous works have shown text type and syntactic function as important variables with which structural variation/complexity (in this case, the weight/heaviness of the structure of of-complement) can be well predicted, which is the other focus of the present study. In addition, the predictive strength of these two variables will also be examined, showing whether text type is stronger than syntactic function in predicting complement structural type (simple versus complex type) and complement cooperation (co-occurring or not).

On the basis of corpus evidence drawn from the Nigerian component of International Corpus of English (ICE), the present study comprehensively examines the three issues identified, showing that of-complements in our variety, which is representative of outer circle varieties, are less likely to co-occur with other internal structural elements (20%) in the NP structure, and that of-complement is more likely to co-occur with prenominal (30%) than it is likely to occur with other internal elements. In terms of structural distribution, the study shows that complement is more likely to co-occur with head noun (headnoun + complement, e.g. 'men of war') than to co-occur with postnominal. In terms of structural simplification hypothesis, the study shows that of-complement is more likely to be simple-structured (54%) than complex-structured (46%). Regarding which predictor emerges a better predictor, the study finds out that syntactic function provides much clearer context and better prediction of the issues being studied than text type does. Such finding further corroborates Akinlotan (2017), and Akinlotan & Housen (2017), but refutes Biber et al. (1999)'s long standing claim that register is a better predictor of structural variation. More specifically, the expectation, which is derived from findings in the literature, that literary text will associate with simpler structure than complex structure is not borne out. In the last part of the study, some of these findings, which show the state of things in the structure of NP in Nigerian variety are thus compared to similar scenarios in British and Ghanaian varieties of English, showing how Nigerian variety compares with them. Such comparisons will allow specific speculation and general assumptions about inner and outer circle varieties to develop.

2 COMPLEMENT AND VARIABLES

The structure of noun phrase, including its internal elements, and weight have been repeatedly shown to be influenced by many factors ranging from text type, syntactic function, syntactic weight, variety, proficiency of the language user, information structure, presence/absence of a certain internal element, etc. (Schilk & Schuab, 2016, Biber et al., 1998; Akinlotan & Housen, 2017). In the following paragraphs descriptions of these variables are undertaken, showing their relevance, their previous influences as found in the literature, and their expected influences in the present study. On the basis of results in the literature (Aarts, 1971; Schilk & Schuab, 2016; Akinlotan, 2017, Akinlotan & Housen, 2017), text type, variety, and syntactic functions have been shown as strong predictors motivating different structural patterns. In the following

section, the effects of the predictors/variables on the structural complexity of complement will also be reported. The following sections discuss previous studies which show the relevance of text type and syntactic functions as predictors.

2.1 Syntactic function

Many studies such as Aarts (1971), Meunier (2000), Schilk & Schaub (2016), Akinlotan & Housen (2017) have shown that syntactic functions can provide important and in-depth explanations on NP structural patterns, including how complexification/simplification develops in the NP structures in new varieties of English. Without clear description, these studies have implicitly mentioned the contribution of complements to the overall NP complexity/simplicity. With data from eight different varieties of English representing Singaporean, Canadian, Jamaican, Schilk & Schaub (2016) show that subject NPs are more likely to be simple-structured than non-subject NPs, which are more likely to be relatively complex-structured. Also, Akinlotan & Housen (2017) provide evidence from the various internal structures of the NP in Nigerian variety of English, showing how different internal parts of the NP are positively associated with different syntactic functions. These two studies show that the structure of every component in the NP structure is related to the syntactic function which the NP structure performs within a clause structure. It must be stated that while Schilk & Schaub (2016) investigate NPs functioning as subject and non-subject positions within a clause structure, Akinlotan & Housen (2017) examine NPs functioning in seven different syntactic positions including (1) subject, (2) subject complement, (3) prepositional complement, (4) object complement, (5) indirect object, (6) direct object, and (7) apposition.

In other words, the syntactic function a noun phrase performs within a clause structure influences the presence/absence of certain internal elements on one hand, and on the other hand, its internal structure being simple or complex. For example, Akinlotan (2017) shows how presence and/or absence of a definite article in the NP structure in Nigerian variety of English is related to the syntactic function that the actual overall NP performs within a clause structure. Such insights suggest that the structure of a complement is also related to the syntactic position of the ensuing NP. If Schilk & Schaub (year) and Akinlotan & Housen (2017) found that NPs at the subject position are usually structured simpler to NPs at other syntactic positions, then the present study might thus expect a simple-structured complement to have strong relationship with subject NPs and vice versa. More arguments about the relationship between syntactic function and structural constituents of NP are provided by Gisborne (2003) and Hudson-Ettle and Nilsson (2002). In their data, Hudson-Ettle and Nilsson found that the structure of premodifier (simple versus complex premodifier) is related to whether the NP realizing the constituent premodifier is positioned at the subject or non-subject positions.

In the light of the predictive strength of syntactic function, the present study thus expects simple complement to relate with subject NPs, while complex complement will relate with NPs at other syntactic positions. In this case, an NP functioning as an argument in a clause structure will be expected

to have a complement that is simple-structure, and complex-structured complement to associate with NPs in non-subject positions such as direct object, preposition complement, indirect object, apposition, etc. The paper will also expect that certain structural types such as prenominal cooperation (i.e. complement co-occurring with prenominal elements such as a determiner, a premodifier in such structure as determiner + premodifier + complement), and bare cooperation (i.e. a complement not co-occurring with any of prenominal or postnominal elements in such structure as headnoun + complement) will strongly relate with subject NPs, while postnominal cooperation (i.e. complement co-occurring with postnominal elements like a postmodifier and/or a peripheral dependent in such structure as complement + postnominals) and full cooperation (i.e. complement co-occurring with any member of the prenominal and postnominal elements in such structure as prenominals + complement + postnominals) will correlate with non-subject NPs.

2.2 Text type

Text type (register or genre) is a well-established variable which has been repeatedly found showing significant influence on not only the internal structure of the NP structure but also on wider issues and contexts of structural variation across the established and new varieties of English. The strong influence of register on structural construction has been made clear in genitive alternation (e.g. Rosenbach 2002 and Akinlotan 2016) in dative alternation (e.g. Bresnan et al., 2007), and in particle placemen (e.g. Gries, 2003), just to mention a few. More relatedly, Akinlotan (2017), Akinlotan & Housen (2017), Schilk & Schaub (2016), Wahid (2013), and Biber et al. (1999) have shown a varying degree of effects of text type on the internal structure of noun phrase. Biber et al. (1999) found a strong correlation between literary text and simple-structured noun phrase structure on one hand, and non-literary texts and complex-structured noun phrase structure on the other hand. Schilk & Schaub (2016) also found similar effect on the internal structure of NPs across new varieties of English. According to Schilk & Schaub (2016), academic text is more likely to realise complex-structured NPs than non-academic texts such as interaction and social letter text types. Furthermore, Akinlotan & Housen (2017) found that postmodifier rarely occurs in interactional, literary, and student texts, and that subject NPs in these texts are more likely to be simple-structured. Although Akinlotan & Housen (2017) found strong effect of text type on the NP structural pattern, the effect of syntactic function is found to be stronger than that of the text type. Such stronger predictive strength means that syntactic function provides more explanations than text type does about the choices between simple and complex NPs viz-a-viz their internal structural pattern.

Following aforementioned findings, the present study thus expects a relationship between complex-structured complement and certain text types such as academic, non-literary and interactional. Furthermore, the paper expects that academic text will relate to full and postnominal complements. In this case, it is expected that full complement (that is, complement co-occurring simultaneously with units from both prenominal and postnominal) and postnominal complement (that is, complement co-

occurring with postnominal properties) will occur more in academic text than they will occur in other text types. These expectations are drawn from previous findings in which complex-structured constructions are more likely to occur in academic text than in other non-academic texts. Furthermore, it is expected that literary, student, and interactional texts will relate with simple-structured constructions such as prenominal or bare complement. Note that prenominal and bare complements are simpler to postnominal complement and full complement in that prenominals are likely to be simpler than postnominal, whereas bare complement consists of no other component. Such expectations are not only derived from previous findings in Schilk & Schuab (2016), and Akinlotan & Housen (2017) but also because academic text usually requires more complex structure to package its high-volume information, while literary, student and interactional texts usually require simple/conversational style language.

3. DATA SELECTION AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSES

Using AntConc (Anthony, 2014), together with manual intervention (reading through the text and correcting wrongly tag POS, for instance), NPs were extracted from all the nine (9) textual categories in the written section of the Nigerian component of the International Corpus of English (Wunder et al., 2010). The nine (9) textual categories in the Nigerian component from where NPs are extracted are carefully recategorized. The recategorization of these text types is important because of overlapping labelling (for instance, student essays are included in academic humanities, and are as well categorised as an independent category). So in order for clarity and coherence, in addition to explicating the focus of the present paper **Table 1** shows the reconceptualisation of these nine (9) text types into five (5) genres/register. This reconceptualisation follows from a similar reconceptualisation in Akinlotan & Housen (2017). Having extracted the NPs, each NP is then classified according to the five (5) text types used in this study, and as presented in **Table 1**. In order to compare findings from Nigerian variety to other similar varieties, NPs are also extracted from the BYU (Glowbe) corpora, which consists of contemporary texts ranging from press/media texts to academic discourse.

Table 1. A reconceptualisation procedure of 10 text types into 5 genres

Text type used in this study	Text types in nigerian-ice	
Student	Exams	Student essays
Media	Editorial	Press Reportage
Academic	Academic	Popular Humanities
Administrative	Business letter	Administrative letters
Interactional	Social letters	Skills & hobbies

The extracted NPs used in the present study are NPs replaceable in their respective syntactic positions by a noun or a pronoun. For instance, the following NPs 'some men of war' and 'the anger of the poor' can be replaced with pronouns 'they' and 'it' respectively. Also included are co-joined NPs (Biber et al., 1999 and see more information on this type of NP in Akinlotan

& Housen 2017), which refer to two NPs joined with conjunction such as *chairmen and secretaries* in *the recently appointed chairmen and secretaries*. In such co-joined NPs, the two NPs are split into two constructions and each taken as an independent construction, such as (1) 'the recently appointed chairmen' and (2) 'the recently appointed secretaries'. As undertaken in Akinlotan & Housen (2017), nominalised adjectives (Biber et al., 1999), such as *the poor*, and *the elderly*, are also extracted. After extraction, the dataset is then cleaned manually, discarding those cases that do not fit for the purpose of the present study. Given that not all the cases of 'of-complement' complete the idea/meaning in the headnoun, then only those instances which are semantically obligatory (instances which are required to complete the meaning of the headnoun) are retained for analysis.

From an initial return of 10,489 hits, a total of 3362 NPs that realise complement (e.g. *former attorney general of Lagos* and *a departure from the norm*) are cleaned and annotated. Every NP is annotated for their structural combinations. In other words, every present component in the NP structure is accounted for (for example, D for determiner of any kind, M for premodifier of any length, PM for any postmodifier of any length, and PD for any length of peripherals dependents). This structural distribution follows from Huddleston & Pullum (2002, 2004)'s NP framework, which develops from functional description of grammatical categories and construction. According to the framework, an NP may have a minimum of one (H-alone NP; that is, head noun alone) or two (H+C alone NP; that is, a combination of headnoun and complement) structural nodes and a maximum of six constituents, namely (D) determiner, (PM) premodifier, (H) headnoun, (C) for complement, (postM) postmodifier, and finally, (PD) peripheral dependent. According to the framework, bracketed elements/constituents such as determiner, premodifier, postmodifier, and peripheral dependent are optional, while H and C (i.e. headnoun and complement) are core elements. This implies that the use of any of-phrase (e.g. *the former attorney general of Lagos*) will not necessarily be described as a complement, except it completes the meaning of the headnoun. According to the framework, given that not all head nouns will require complement, it is thus important to note that complement might not necessarily appear alongside every headnoun in the structure of an NP. (For more theoretical description of the NP framework, see Huddleston & Pullum, 2002, Akinlotan, 2017, and Akinlotan & Housen, 2017). In addition to text type, every NP is further analysed for their syntactic function. So for every NP extracted, their syntactic functions within the clause structure are annotated for. **Table 2** shows NPs and examples of syntactic functions.

Table 2. Syntactic positions and corresponding NPs within the clause structure

Syntactic Position	NPs within the clause structure
1. Subject	<i>The change slogan of APC</i> has failed to motivate the people.
2. Subject complement	PDP governance is <i>a thing of the past</i>
3. Apposition	The vice president, <i>a man of honour</i> , was handpicked for the post.
4. Direct object	Our legislators spend <i>huge sums of money</i> yearly
5. Indirect object	Police are invited to inform <i>the King of Owu</i> how some of his council members have misbehaved
6. Object complement	The professor called them <i>a group of no value</i>
7. Preposition complement	The pastor talked about the woman with <i>the issue of blood</i>

In what follows, the structural distributions of the annotated and analysed datasets are presented. The distribution is provided and analysed on the basis of variables representing syntactic functions and text type. Using SPSS package, statistic tests including chi square and Cramer's V are performed on every distribution such that the independent effect of each variable on each structural distribution becomes clear. In order to compare findings in Nigerian variety to British and Ghanaian varieties, a total of 1351 NPs (807 and 544 for British and Ghanaian varieties respectively) are extracted from the BYU corpora (GLOWBE subcorpora), following the same procedure described above. The choice of Brigham Young Corpus is clear. For instance, unlike ICE, BYU corpora contains the more recent and contemporary texts than those of ICE. Secondly, the incoherent textual categorization in ICE is not present in BYU corpus. In the next section, the results that emerge from all of these annotations and analyses are presented, together with their test statistic results.

4. RESULTS

The independent behaviour of the variables representing text type and syntactic function are presented here. The structural pattern distributions are further analysed by performing chi square test of independence on them, showing what kind of relationship exists between the structural choices and variables motivating them. The results from Ghanaian and British varieties are presented first, giving a prior piece of information on their patterns. In 4.2 and 4.3 results for complement structural cooperation and complement complexity are presented respectively.

4.1 Complement structural cooperation in Ghanaian and British varieties

In the **Table 3** below, the complement structural distributions are presented. Note that prenominal complement refers to complement co-occurring with prenominal item, while postnominal complement refers to complement co-occurring with postnominal item. Also, bare complement refers to complement only co-occurring with head noun in such structure as headnoun + complement, while full complement refers to a full NP/construction involving all the elements prenominal + headnoun + complement + postnominal.

Table 3. Ghanaian variety

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Bare		Full		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Media	96	39	63	25	52	21	38	15	249	100
Academic	109	37	64	22	67	23	55	19	295	100
Total	205	38	127	23	119	22	93	17	544	100
Syntactic Function	Prenominal		Postnominal		Bare		Full		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Subject	91	35	71	28	51	20	45	17	258	100
Non-subject	114	40	56	20	68	24	48	17	286	100
Total	205	38	127	23	119	22	93	17	544	100

The distributions in these varieties show similarities in how choices are decided and patterned. For instance, the structure, complement + prenominal is more likely to be used than any other combinations. In other words, the most used construction in both varieties is the structure involving a complement and a prenominal item (i.e. complement + prenominal). As can be seen, postnominal+ complement is less likely to occur in British variety, irrespective of syntactic function and/or text type. While the likelihood of postnominal + complement construction occurring in Ghanaian is 23%, the chance of this construction occurring in British variety is very low (6%). Furthermore, it can be seen that full construction, which is the most complex type, is more likely to occur in British variety (26%) than in Ghanaian variety of English (17%). Such difference confirms the notion that the established varieties are likely to be more complex than the new varieties (Schilk & Schuab, 2016).

4.2 Complement structural cooperation and its predictors

In the following **Tables 4** and **5**, the distributions of complement co-occurrence in relation to text type from Nigerian variety are presented. The distribution shows which text type is likely to find different structures of complement on the basis of presence and absence of other internal elements such as prenominal and postnominal. The distribution is then compared to patterns found in Ghanaian and British varieties. Given that a complex noun phrase in Nigerian English implies a combination of head noun + complement + postmodifier (see Akinlotan & Housen, 2017), then a realisation of complement can then be predictable on the basis of its structural cooperation patterns. As can be seen in **Table 4**, following the predictive strength of the variable representing text type, specific statements/explanations about different realisations/construction of NP complement can be drawn out.

Table 4. British variety

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Bare		Full		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Media	109	33	29	9	99	30	95	29	332	100
Academic	229	48	21	4	112	24	113	24	475	100
Total	338	42	50	6	211	26	208	26	807	100
Syntactic Function	Prenominal		Postnominal		Bare		Full		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Subject	137	44	11	4	99	32	67	21	314	100
Non-subject	201	41	39	8	112	23	141	29	493	100
Total	338	42	50	6	211	26	208	26	807	100

Table 5. Complement cooperation by text type

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Bare		Full		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Student	131	24	101	19	207	38	106	19	545	100
Academic	219	33	211	32	91	14	142	21	663	100
Media	114	20	201	35	101	18	151	27	567	100
Interactional	251	46	101	18	106	19	89	16	547	100
Administrative	182	35	91	17	158	30	91	17	522	100
Literary	127	25	103	20	206	40	82	16	518	100
Total	1024	30	808	24	869	26	661	20	3362	100

As can be seen in **Table 4**, there is a positive relationship between complement combinatory pattern and text type. Hence, there is some association between text types and complement, together with the different combinatory patterns found. A chi square test of independence performed on the distribution patterns shows that there is a significant relationship between text type and complement structural patterning $\{\chi^2(15) = 313.427, p < .0000\}$; such that media text is the most likely text (27%) to realise complement in a full NP. On the other hand, literary text (40%) is the most likely type to realise complement in isolation of other internal structural elements such that items from the prenominals and postnominals are excluded. Academic (32%) and media (35%) texts behave the same way by following the pattern; complement + postnominal. Meanwhile, the pattern (complement + prenominal) is found also as a preferred construction (33% versus 20%). While academic text type is the most likely text to realise complement combined with determiner and/or premodifier, media text is the most likely text type to realise complement combined with postmodifier and/or peripheral dependents. A closer look at the distribution shows that academic and media text types appear to behave more similar than other text types do. These findings partly corroborated Biber et al. (1999)'s assertion that register/text type can indeed be a strong indicator of variation.

The patterns found in Nigerian variety are similar to the patterns found in the structural distributions representing Ghanaian and British varieties, where the structural combination, complement + prenominal, is the most likely construction to be used. Such dissimilarity further reinstates Kachru (1985)'s circle of Englishes. However, the least used construction in British variety is the structure, complement + postnominal, while the least used construction in Ghanaian and Nigerian varieties is the full construction (that is, the most complex structure consisting of prenominal + complement + postnominal). This pattern suggests that Ghanaian and Nigerian varieties are similar in structure and are likely to be structured simpler than British variety will structure. Again, the similarity in Nigerian and Ghanaian varieties show that outer circle varieties, according to Kachru (1985), and Schnieder (2007) do indeed share structural features and developmental stages. More specifically, media and academic text types in British variety behave differently from that of Nigerian variety, which perhaps might be a reflection of interference (Akinlotan, 2016). Furthermore, as can be seen, Nigerian media text is more likely to use postnominal (35%) than British media text (9%) is likely to do.

Table 5a. Complement cooperation by syntactic functions

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Bare		Full		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Subject	182	29	142	23	149	24	151	24	624	100
Subject complement	198	35	126	22	121	22	117	21	562	100
Preposition Complement	179	33	132	24	115	21	123	22	549	100
Direct object	169	35	107	22	112	23	91	19	479	100
Apposition	108	27	102	26	119	30	71	18	400	100
Object Complement	97	23	108	25	152	36	69	16	426	100
Indirect object	91	28	91	28	101	31	39	12	322	100
Total	1024	30	808	24	869	26	661	20	3362	100

As can be seen in **Table 5**, there is a positive relationship between complement combinatory pattern and syntactic functions of the NPs in which the complement appears. A chi square test of independence performed on the distribution shows that there is a significant relationship between where the NP is positioned within a clause structure and how a complement combined with other internal structural elements of the noun phrase $\{\chi^2(18) = 79.155. p < .0000\}$. This finding corroborates findings in Aarts (1971), Brunner (2014), Schilk and Schuab (2016), Akinlotan (2017), and Akinlotan and Housen (2017), where the strong influence of syntactic function and structural variation especially the internal structure of the NP has been shown. As **Table 5** presents, it can be seen that subject NPs (24%) are more likely than non-subject NPs to realise complement in a full NP (this is a structural case/type in which complement appears with all other internal structural elements such as the determiner, premodifier, head noun, complement, postmodifier and peripheral dependents). Of all the non-subject NPs, the least likelihood position with which a complement can appear in a full NP is the indirect object NP (12%). Nevertheless, it must be stated that subject NPs do associate with complement occurring in bare (24%) and postnominal (23%) NPs. Object complement NPs (36%) are the most likely NP types to realise such a structure as headnoun + complement structures.

As can be seen, NPs occurring at the object complement position within clausal structure are unlikely to realise NPs cooperating with prenominal and postnominals, which, consequentially lead to simpler NPs compare to other NPs co-occurring with prenominal or postnominal elements. This finding resounds Akinlotan and Housen (2017), showing how simplification arises within the NP structure in Nigerian variety of English, and perhaps in new varieties of English as well. A similar pattern is observed in complement appearing with prenominal; rather than subject NPs (29%), NPs that function as subject complement (35%) and direct object (35%) are more likely to realise complement type of NP with prenominal.

As can be seen in the distributions above, the nature of complement co-occurrence in subject NPs in Nigerian variety of English is similar to those found in Ghanaian and British varieties. The prenominal + complement structure is the most preferred construction in subject NPs in Nigerian (29%), Ghanaian (35%), and British (44%) varieties. Such similarity shows and reaffirms the importance of Schneider (2007)'s evolutionary perspective on new varieties of English. At the same time, it can be seen that this construction is more likely to occur in British variety than in Nigerian variety (44% versus 29%). On the other hand, subject NPs in Nigerian (23%) and Ghanaian (28%) varieties are more likely than those subject NPs in British variety to realise complement co-occurring with postnominal. Furthermore, subject NPs consisting of complement without prenominal or/and postnominal (i.e. bare complement structural type) are more likely to occur in British variety than in Ghanaian (20%) and Nigerian (24%) varieties. In order to compare the distributions of non-subject NPs in Nigerian variety, the distributions in direct object, indirect object, and subject complement are collapsed into one syntactic function (i.e non-subject NPs). This regrouping returns the following distributions in the table **following**.

Table 4b. Distribution of non-subject NPs and complement construction in Nigerian variety

	Prenominal		Postnominal		Bare		Full	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Non-subject	842	31	666	24	720	26	510	19

As can be seen, prenominal + complement structure in non-subject NPs is less likely to occur in Nigerian variety (31%) than it is in Ghanaian (40%) and British (31%) varieties. On the other hand, complement + postnominal structure is more likely to occur in Nigerian variety (24%) than it is likely to occur in Ghanaian (20%) and British (8%) varieties. These differences provide insight not only into the usage of complement, but also into the overall NP structure in the established and new varieties. The most complex structure, in which complement co-occurs with prenominal and postnominal at the same time in non-subject NPs, is found less likely to be used in Nigerian variety (19%) than it is in British (29%). This is another indicator of the presence of simplified structural pattern in the Nigerian NP structure (Akinlotan & Housen, 2017).

4.3 Complement combinatory pattern: text type versus syntactic function

Figure 1 shows a comparative description of the predictive strengths of syntactic functions and text type. The figures comparatively show how these two factors behave motivating where we are likely to find complement co-occurring with other internal structural elements (prenominal and postnominals).

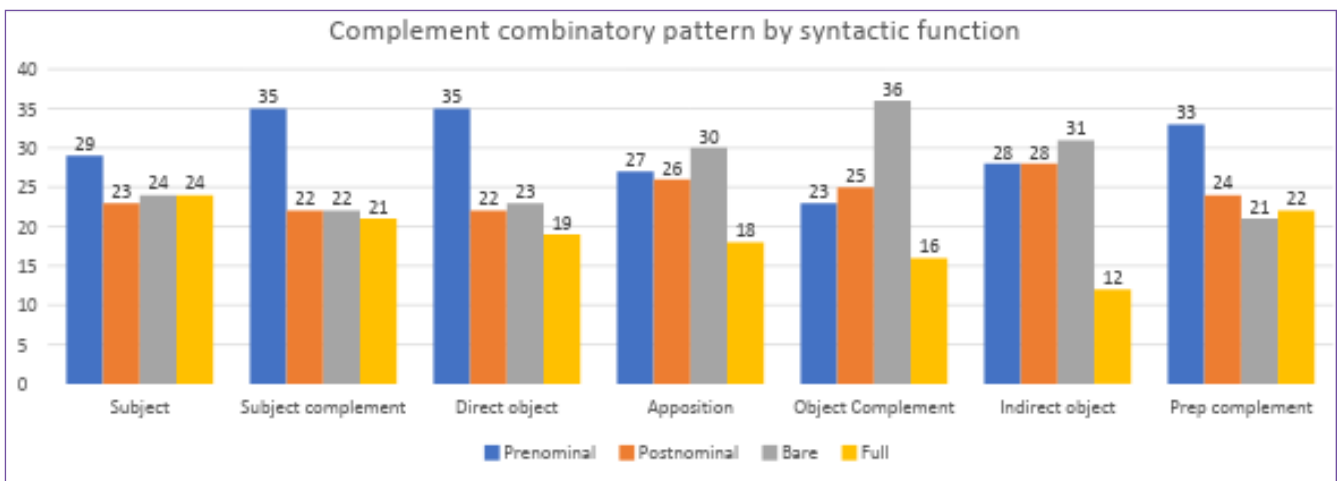


Figure 1. A two-set of figure/res showing comparative description of the predictive strengths of syntactic functions and text type (%)

Using the above figures in predicting the company of complement (that is, what element(s) is/are likely to co-occur with a complement, if there is any) on the basis of text type and syntactic function requires a closer attention. A closer look shows that text type explains where we are likely to find a complement co-occurring with other internal structure (s) better than syntactic functions do. For instance, interactional and administrative texts behave in some similar ways in that they prefer prenominal + complement

combinatory patterns to other combinations. Also, student and literary texts behave similarly in that they prefer the structure, head noun + complement, to any other combinations. Meanwhile, this sort of specific contexts is not clearly obtainable in syntactic functions, which again shows the strong competition between syntactic and register asserting influence on structural variation (Biber et al., 1999; Schilk & Schuab, 2016; and Akinlotan, 2017). By analysing the weight of complement, perhaps a clearer predictive strengths of these two variables will emerge.

5. PREDICTING COMPLEMENT WEIGHT

In the following **Tables 6** and **7** the contexts in which we are likely to find heavy/complex or light/simple are provided, relying on the predictive strengths of text type and syntactic functions of the NP in which the complement appears. Following up on **Figure 1**, I expect clarity in the predictive strengths of the variables under study. Given the various lengths of the different structures of complement found, then the raw frequencies of word-length of complement is provided. In order to have contexts in British and Ghanaian varieties for comparison, then their distributions will be presented first before the distribution from the Nigerian data.

Table 6a. Overview of complement complexity in Ghanaian variety

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	Total
Media	45	109	32	43	11	5	2	2	249
Academic	35	71	131	21	13	11	9	4	295
Total	80	180	163	64	24	16	11	6	544
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	Total
Subject	29	72	69	28	5	8	7	2	220
Non-subject	51	108	94	36	19	8	4	4	324
Total	80	180	163	64	24	16	11	6	544

Table 6b. Complement complexity alternation in Ghanaian variety

Register	Simple		Complex		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Media	154	62	95	38	249	100
Academic	106	36	189	64	295	100
Syntactic Functions						
Subject	101	46	119	54	220	100
Non-subject	159	49	165	51	324	100

Table 7a. Overview of complement complexity in British variety

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	Total
Media	119	95	41	12	31	11	12	11	332
Academic	137	111	102	48	37	18	10	12	475
Total	256	206	143	60	68	29	22	23	807
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	Total
Non-Subject	45	71	55	82	62	52	41	21	429
Subject	133	113	91	12	9	9	8	3	378
Total	178	184	146	94	71	61	49	24	807

Table 7b. Complement complexity alternation in British variety

Register	Simple		Complex		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Media	214	64	118	36	332	100
Academic	248	52	227	48	475	100
Syntactic Functions						
Subject	246	65	132	35	378	100
Non-subject	116	27	313	73	429	100

Table 8. Overview of complement's words length by text type in Nigerian variety

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	Total
Student	58	225	125	82	36	7	7	5	545
Academic	91	276	191	53	36	11	4	1	663
Media	59	240	149	60	28	12	11	8	567
Interactional	74	215	90	105	31	13	10	9	547
Administrative	89	180	110	61	39	15	15	13	522
Literary	93	208	105	76	12	9	9	6	518
Total	464	1344	770	437	182	67	56	42	3362

Table 8 shows a complete overview of the weight of complement structure by words' length, which ranges from one-word (C1) complement to eight-words (C8). In other to provide a clear understanding of the complexity of complement, the raw frequencies are conceptualized into heavy/complex and light/simple complements. In this case, C1-C2 are classified as simple complements, while C3-C8 are classified as complex complements. **Table 9** shows this binary classification.

Table 9. Complexity of complement by text type

	Simple Complement		Complex Complement		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Student	283	52	262	48	545	100
Academic	367	55	296	45	663	100
Media	299	53	268	47	567	100
Interactional	289	53	258	47	547	100
Administrative	269	52	253	48	522	100
Literary	301	58	217	42	518	100
Total	1808	54	1554	46	3362	100

A chi square test performed on the distribution shows that an insignificant relationship exists between the complexity of complement and text type that realises them $\{\chi^2(5) = 6.825, p < 0.234\}$. As the **Table 8** shows, there is a structural pattern in which, irrespective of text type, simple-structured complement is preferred to complex-structured complement. On the other hand, a closer look at the differences shows small margins that are not statistically significant, but one that suggests an underlying structural preference for simpler structure in the variety under study (see Akinlotan & Housen 2017 for more elaboration). For instance, literary text type shows the strongest preference for simple complement (58% versus 42%), testing out the hypothesis that literary texts usually associate with simpler complement constructions. Nevertheless, the hypothesis could not be said to have been fully borne out. For instance, student text type (52% versus 48%), which is

expected to behave the same way as literary text, behaves rather much closer to administrative (52% versus 48%) than to literary text (58% versus 42%) in its preferential pattern.

Furthermore, the pattern of choice of complement complexity is somewhat similar across the three varieties representing Nigerian, Ghanaian, and British; simple complement, rather than complex complement, is more likely to be used in Nigerian, Ghanaian, and British varieties. In this case one would expect high frequency of complex-structured complement in British variety of English. More specifically, simple complement is less likely to be found in Nigerian media text than it is to be found in British (64%) and Ghanaian (62%) varieties. This pattern is also observed in academic text, though large difference is found in Ghanaian variety (36% versus 55% and 52%). On the other hand, complex complement is more likely to be found in Ghanaian (64%) than in other varieties (Nigerian or British variety). Meanwhile, Nigerian media text is more likely to realise complex complement (47%) than it is in British variety (36%) or Ghanaian variety (38%). Such distribution thus shows that the phenomenon of structural complexity in complement (or in another term complement complexity in the varieties studied in the present paper) is better explained in terms of text type that realise them.

Table 10. Overview of complement length by syntactic functions

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	Total
Subject	98	279	119	83	26	7	8	4	624
Subject complement	87	231	121	67	29	9	9	9	562
Direct object	77	151	101	78	51	8	7	6	479
Indirect object	26	141	112	15	10	9	5	4	322
Apposition	53	147	95	63	16	11	9	6	400
Object complement	38	171	113	63	13	9	12	7	426
Prepositional complement	85	224	109	68	37	14	6	6	549
Total	464	1344	770	437	182	67	56	42	3362

As can be seen in **Table 10**, there is no structural length of nine (9) words. Also, as we have found in the overview of complement in relation to register, there appears a lack of clear structural pattern across the distributions. As with **Table 8**, a reclassification is undertaken with a view to finding out the influence of syntactic functions on complement complexity. Expectedly, a reclassification in **Table 11** shows a preferential pattern that is similar to the contexts found in text type.

Table 11. Complexity of complement by text type

	Simple Complement		Complex Complement		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Subject	377	60	247	40	624	100
Subject complement	318	57	244	43	562	100
Direct object	228	48	251	52	479	100
Indirect object	167	52	155	48	322	100
Apposition	200	50	200	50	400	100
Object complement	209	49	217	51	426	100
Prepositional complement	309	56	240	44	549	100
Total	1808	54	1554	46	3362	100

Having reclassified the distribution into a binary perspective, a chi square test of independence was performed, finding out the kind of relationship that exists between syntactic functions and complement weight. The chi square test shows that there is a strong positive relationship between syntactic functions and complement weight $\{\chi^2(6) = 28.172, p < 0.000\}$. As can be seen in **Table 10**, there is a strong relationship between syntactic functions and complexity of complement. This means that the syntactic position that an NP occupies within a clause structure can indeed impact on the complexity/weight of complement, which has already been established as a further evidence to findings in the literature (e.g. Akinlotan, 2016; Schilk & Schuab, 2016; Akinlotan, 2018). For instance, subject NPs are more likely to realise simple complement (60%) than complex complement (40%), whereas complex complement (52%) is more likely than simple complement (48%) to appear in a direct object NP. This pattern is also found in NPs at object complement positions within the clause structure. Although there is no clear trend found in the distribution of the appositive NPs, a somewhat clear structural preference is manifested by NPs at subject complement and prepositional complement positions. Simple complements (57% versus 56%) are more likely than complex complements (43% versus 44%) to appear in NPs positioned at subject complement and prepositional complement slots respectively.

5.1 Complement weight pattern

Figure 3 shows a comparative description of the predictive strengths of syntactic functions and text type motivating where we are likely to find simple or complex complement. Though there are more outcomes to predict in **Figure 2**, a comparison of **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** shows that our two variables assert different strengths of influence on the two phenomena under study.

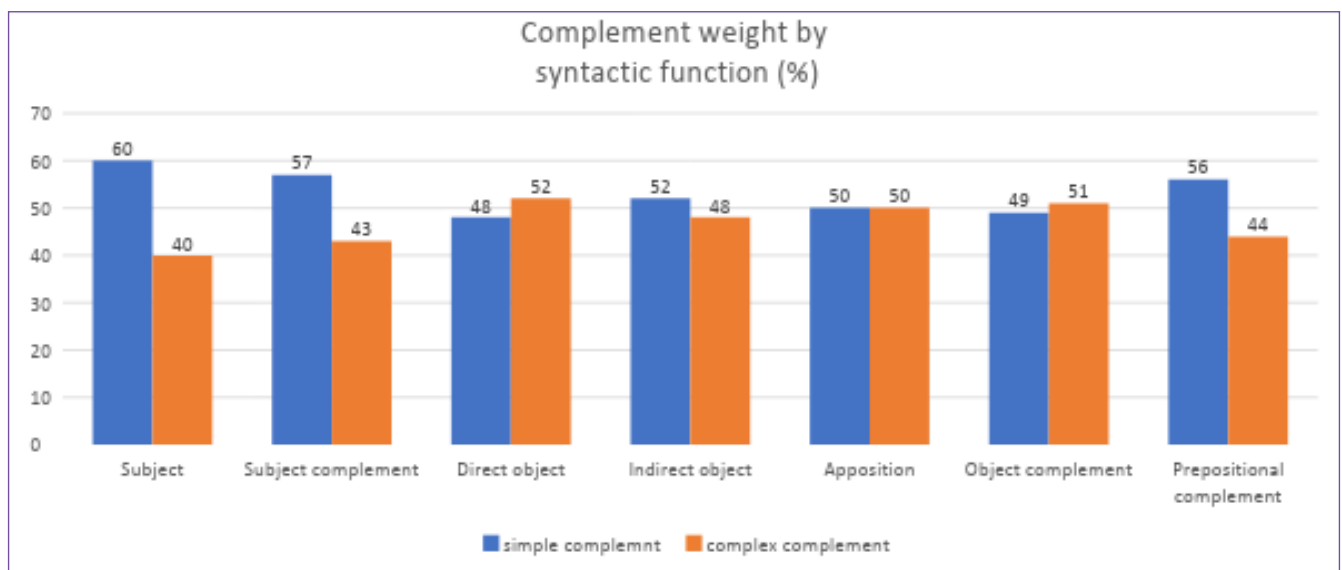


Figure 2. A comparison of the predictive strength of syntactic and text type on complement cooperation

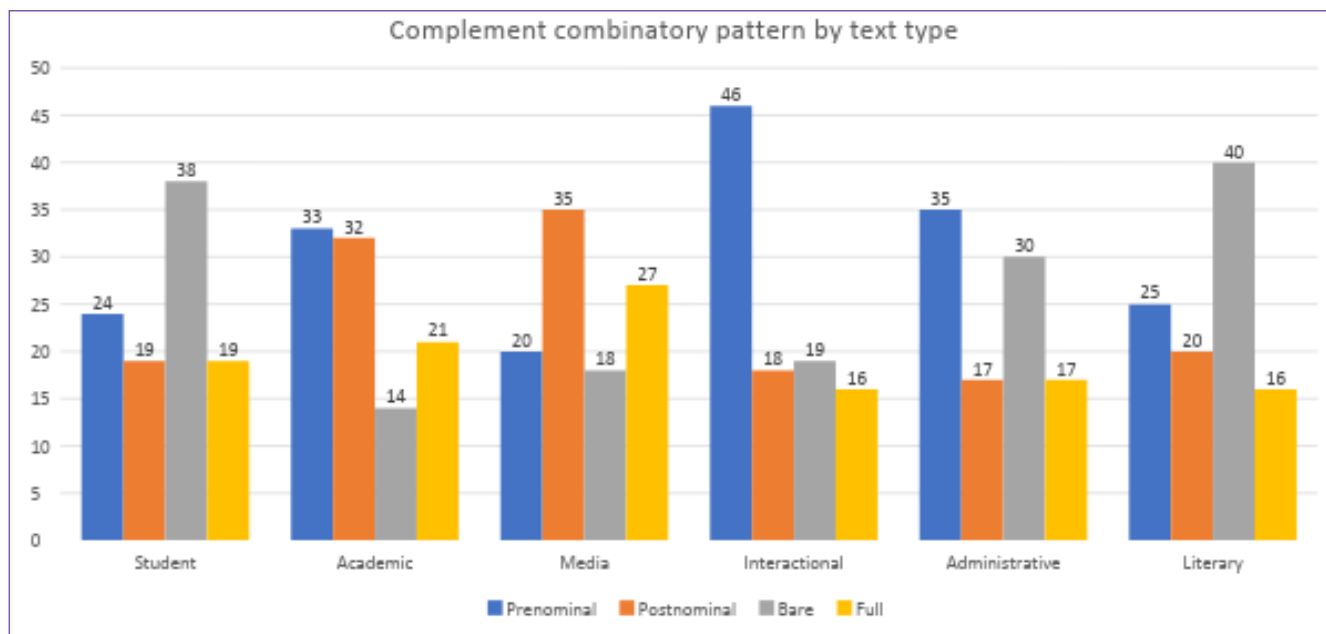


Figure 3. A comparison of the predictive strength of syntactic functions and text type on complement weight

As **Figure 3** shows, syntactic function clearly allows us to predict occurrence of simple and complex complements in different syntactic scenarios. A clear one-way structural pattern can be observed in the aforementioned figures showing influence of text type, though we can see that literary text shows greater association with simple complement than other text types do. According to text type, simple complement is more likely to be preferred to complex complement, irrespective of the text type that realises the NPs.

On the other hand, syntactic functions inform us that there are contexts where we might find simple complement, as well as contexts where we might find complex complement. Such finding further attests to the assertion of evidence of equicomplexity in Nigerian variety of English (Akinlotan 2016). In other terms, syntactic function provides some explanations on the variability of complement structure. Furthermore, we can also closely examine this predictive strength by comparing **Figure 2** to **Figure 3**, which suggests that syntactic functions of the NPs that realise the complement provide more explanation than text type does provide.

As can be seen, subject NPs in Nigerian variety are likely to realise simple complement (60%), a pattern that is also observed in British and Ghanaian varieties. This scenario further attests to findings in Akinlotan and Housen (2017), and Schilk and Schaub (2016), where subject NPs have been found to be simpler than non-subject NPs. In order to compare the distributions of non-subject NPs in Nigerian variety to similar distributions in British and Ghanaian varieties, I collapse these two sets of distributions into subject versus non-subject NPs observations. As can be seen in Table 8, non-subject NPs type include NPs in subject complement, direct and indirect object, apposition, object complement, and prepositional complement. This reconceptualization returns simple complement of 1431 tokens with 52% and

complex complement of 1307 tokens with 48%. When this set of distribution is compared to those of British and Ghanaian varieties, one can note clear difference. While non-subject NPs in Nigerian variety attracts simple complement (52%), non-subject NPs in both British (73%) and Ghanaian (51%) varieties attract complex complement. It can be seen that there is a clear preferential pattern in British variety (73% versus 27%), which is not the case in both Nigerian (52% versus 49%) and Ghanaian (49% versus 51%) varieties. This is a clear evidence supporting Kachru (1985)'s classification of Nigerian and Ghanaian as structurally similar in outer circle category and simultaneously affirming Schneider (2007)'s stage of differentiation in which many of such similar outer circle varieties belong.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study has provided answers to the questions of the extent to which complexity is present in the complement syntactic unit of the Nigerian noun phrase, and how this (especially where we might find simple/complex structured complement) can be predicted on the basis of known predictors representing text type and syntactic function. Furthermore, the present study has examined the structure of *of*-complement in Nigerian English noun phrase, showing different variable contexts where we are likely/unlikely to find complement co-occurring with other NP internal elements, and where we are likely/unlikely to find simple or complex complement on the basis of two known powerful determinants (Schilk and Schaub, Akinlotan 2017, and Akinlotan and Housen 2017). It is shown that NP complement, just like any other internal structural unit in the NP, has potential for structural complexity, which is not observed to have been maximized within the Nigerian NPs structured. In addition, the study has shown that perspective on structural complexity can be measured and understood via the NP complement structure in the new varieties of English, together with variable contexts representing text type and syntactic function.

In other words, the present study sheds light on noun phrase complement complexity and its relationship with other internal structural units, which, by extension, provides insights into the overall NP complexity as shown in Akinlotan and Housen (2017). As **Table 3** shows, a complement is less likely to appear in an NP which has the structure consisting of a determiner(s), a premodifier(s), a postmodifier(s), and (a) peripheral dependent (i.e. simultaneously having the internal elements determiner + premodifier + postmodifier + peripheral dependent) at the same time. Given, on one hand, the description of complements occurring in full NP (20%) and complements co-occurring with a postmodifier (24%) as complex NPs, and complements co-occurring with prenominal (30%) and/or a complement co-occurring without any other element (that is bare HC type which stands at 26%) as simple NPs, then we are able to argue that the presence of heavy (more) internal syntactic elements, which may be a complex premodifier, postmodifier, or a peripheral dependent, in the NP structure in Nigerian variety of English (and perhaps by extension, other similar outer circle varieties of English) is likely to influence the presence and/or absence of a complement within an NP structure. This finding clearly illustrates the relationship between syntactic

weight and information structure (Hawkins, 1992, Biber et al., 1999, Wasow et al., 2003, Callies & Szczesniak, 2008, Callies, 2009).

The implication suggests that an NP in the Nigerian variety with a complex postmodifier and/or premodifier is less likely to realise a complement, which corroborates Schilk & Schuab (2016) and Akinlotan & Housen (2017). Where such combination/construction does involve a complement, then one can expect a simple complement type. Although this finding shares Payne's (2010) assertion that the presence and/or absence of complements, which can be syntactically and semantically required within an NP structure, is largely dependent on the other internal elements within the NP structure, the extent to which complement co-occurs with other syntactic structures in our variety suggests that complements might be absent even when they are syntactically or semantically required, all because of the constrain of syntactic weight emanating from other internal syntactic structures present. Since the effect of syntactic weight has been established on structures across established and new varieties, then the extent to which syntactic weight can be identified and established as a strong determinant significantly motivating simpler structures in new varieties requires more additional corpus evidence from more varieties.

Although Payne (2010), like many other formalists, focuses on the semantic structure and relevance of *of*-complement, the present study shows that a syntactic description of *of*-complement is not only desirable but also insightful. For instance, as can be seen in **Table 8**, the structure of a *of*-complement is more likely to be simple (54%) than complex (46%), a structural pattern that resounds determiner complexity in Nigerian English NP (Akinlotan, 2016).

Looking for specific and general contexts explaining the structural variation in the use of *of*-complement within the NP structure, independent effects of variables representing text type and syntactic functions are examined, reaffirming not only their status as powerful determinants but also explicating the nature of the structure of *of*-complement in relations to other syntactic structures within the NP structure. As shown in **Tables 3 and 8**, there are some evidence showing text type and syntactic function with a varying degree of strong influences on the structure and co-occurrence of *of*-complement. The patterns found in literary text, which clearly associates with bare complement/NP shows a general tendency in which text type seems to characteristically attract simple complement structure (Biber et al., 1999; Arnold et al., 2000; Akinlotan, 2017; Akinlotan & Housen, 2017). Although academic and media texts do not clearly relate with full NPs, the extent to which they show such potential for complexity is greater than that of literary and student text types.

Nevertheless, the underlying pattern in the results reaffirm findings in Biber et al. (1999), Schilk & Schaub (2016), and Akinlotan & Housen (2017), showing that the structural simplification hypothesis (Gorlach, 1998) is not only an inherent feature of the structure of new varieties of English, but also that the simplification process can be well explicated through internal (e.g. syntactic function) and external (e.g. text type) linguistic factors. In other words, explicating the structural simplification tendencies in the structure of new varieties of English is best explored and shown when specific contexts

with which certain tendencies and patterns can be predicted/patterned are considered (Gorlach, 1998). For instance, given the differentiation nature of Nigerian English, and new varieties in general (Schneider, 2007), it is thus reasonable to expect patterns emerging from the different text types to offer significant insights into the relationship between proficiency level and the use of complex/simple structure (see Akinlotan, 2016, and Akinlotan, 2018). Such expectation would imply, for example, that strong indicator of structural complexity is largely present in academic and media text types that it is present in student and interactional text types. This further means that the finding that media text is the most likely text to realise complement in full NP (27%) correlates with Akinlotan's (2016) hypothesis that there is a relationship between proficiency and structural complexity in Nigerian English noun phrase.

In summary, the present study has shown that inner and outer circle varieties of English do have similarities and dissimilarities which, to some certain extent, distinguish them from one another. More specifically, evidence attesting to the structural simplification hypothesis in new varieties is also presented. It is shown that simple complement is preferred to complex complement in Nigerian variety, while complex complement is more likely to be used in the British variety. Similarly, it is found that Ghanaian variety shows some slight differences to British variety in the preference for complex complement. In other words, Gorlach's (1998) structural simplification hypothesis in new varieties is manifested to some degree. This finding also supports Akinlotan & Housen (2017), Schilk & Schaub (2016), and Brunner (2014). According to Schilk & Schaub (2016), one can still expect, to a certain extent, some similarities between inner and outer circle varieties. This is the case in the present study as it is observed in the way that media text behaves across the three Nigerian, Ghanaian, and British varieties understudied.

According to Kachru (1985) and Schneider (2007), there exists still some variations among outer circle varieties, and this is also the case as academic text reflects some differences in structural patterns between Nigerian and Ghanaian varieties. More specifically, while complex-structured complement is preferred in the academic text in Ghanaian variety (64%), simple-structured complement is preferred in the academic text in Nigerian variety (55%). Such pattern further asserts findings in Schilk & Schaub (2016), and Schneider (2007), while also explicating Gorlach (1998)'s assertion that even among outer circle varieties, strong structural differences are present to a certain degree in a wide variety of constructions and, that such differences are clearly observed and uncovered, given different variables considered.

REFERENCES

- Aarts, F. 1971. On the distribution of noun-phrase types in English clause-structure *Lingua*, 26, p. 281-293. DOI: [10.1016/0024-3841\(71\)90013-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0024-3841(71)90013-1)
- Anthony, L. 2014. *AntConc* (Version 3.4.3) [Computer Software]. Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University. Available from: <http://www.larenceanthony.net/>
- Akinlotan, M. & Housen, A. 2017. Noun phrase complexity in Nigerian English: Syntactic function and length outweigh genre in predicting noun phrase complexity, *English Today*, p. 1-8. DOI: [10.1017/S0266078416000626](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266078416000626)

- Akinlotan, Mayowa. 2017. Predicting Definite Article Usages in New Englishes: Variety Outweighs Genre and Syntactic Function in Nigerian English. *Anglica: An International Journal of English Studies*, 2, p. 101-121.
- Akinlotan, Mayowa. 2016. The Effects of Structure and Proficiency on Determiner Number (Dis)agreement in Nigerian Noun Phrase. *Proceedings of the CILC2016 8th International Conference on Corpus Linguistics* (p. 1-8). Ed. Antonio Moreno Ortiz & Chantal Perez-Hernandez. Malaga: Spanish Association for Corpus Linguistics. <http://easychair.org/publications/paper/>
- Akinlotan, Mayowa. 2018. The Occurrence and Structure of Postmodifier in Nigerian noun phrase. *Proceedings of the 17th Austin Texas Linguistic Society Conference*. Eds. Everdell, Micheal, et al. Austin: Texas Linguistic Society. p. 3-16.
- Biber, Douglas, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech, Susan Conrad, & Edward Finegan. 1999. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (9th ed.). Harlow: Longman.
- Biber, Douglas et al. 1998. *Corpus Linguistics: Investigating Language Structure and Use*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Bresnan, J., A. Cueni, T. Nikitina, & R. H. Baayen. 2007. Predicting the dative alternation. In: G. Bouma, I. Kramer, & J. Zwarts (Eds.). *Cognitive foundations of interpretation* (p. 69-94). Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Science.
- Callies, M. 2009. Information Highlighting in Advanced Learner English. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Callies, Marcus & Szczesniak, K. 2008. Argument realization, information status and syntactic weight – A learner corpus study of the dative alternation. In Patrick Grommes & Maik Walter (Eds.). *Fortgeschrittene Lernervarietäten. Korpuslinguistik und Zweitspracherwerbsforschung* (p. 165-187). Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Gisborne, N. 2003. Relative clauses in Hong Kong English. *World Englishes*, 19, p. 357-371. DOI: [10.1111/1467-971X.00184](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-971X.00184)
- Gorlach, M. 1998. Varieties of English world-wide: Where we stand. *Links & Letters*, 5, p. 13-36.
- Gries, S. Th. 2003. Multifactorial analysis in corpus linguistics: *A study of particle placement*. New York: Continuum Press.
- Huddleston, R. & Pullum, G. K. 2002. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hudson-Ettle, O. & T. Nilsson. 2002. Orality and noun phrase structure in registers of British and Kenya English. *ICAME Journal*, 26, p. 33-62.
- Meunier, Fanny. 2000. *A corpus linguistics approach to interlanguage grammar: noun phrase complexity in advanced learner writing*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve.
- Payne, Thomas. 2010. *Understanding English Grammar: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenbach, A. 2002. *Genitive Variation in English. Conceptual Factors in Synchronic and Diachronic Studies*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Rosenbach, A. 2005. Animacy versus weight as determinants of grammatical variation in English. In *Language*, 81(3), p. 613-644.
- Schilk, M. & Schaub, S. 2016. Noun phrase complexity across varieties of English: Focus on syntactic function and text type. *English World-Wide*, 37(1), p. 58-85.
- Wahid, Ridwan. 2013. Definite Article Usage Across Varieties of English. *World Englishes*, 32(1), p. 23-41.
- Wunder, Eva-Maria, Holger Voormann, & Ulrike Gut. 2010. The ICE Nigeria corpus project: Creating an open, rich and accurate corpus. *ICAME Journal*, 34, p. 78-88.