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Intra-continental parallels of new Englishes in climate change discourses: A corpus-based appraisal

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Abstract

The spread of the English language to new contexts is the bedrock of most studies on new Englishes. This has informed new patterns of usage quite different from what obtains in the traditional seats of the language. Over the years, studies (e.g., Kachru, 1985; Simo Bobda, 1994) have revealed significant linguistic variations across English-speaking cultures, and this has inspired such phrases as Cameroon, Nigerian, Indian and Chinese Englishes. Even with such cultural differences, the language seems to enjoy a certain level of macro convergence in environmental discourse. From a corpus-based perspective, four stance markers — hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions — in an African (Cameroon and Nigeria) and Asian (India and China) corpus of climate change speeches were analysed. After the identification of most recurrent stance markers, the corpora were then saved in plaintext format and later subjected to the 2019 AntConc software for statistical analyses. Each linguistic variable was assessed in relation to frequency, concordance and implications, and later compared to other corpora in terms of frequencies and usages. The results revealed remarkable intra-continental similarities, with significant inter-continental disparities in stance preferences and usage which led us to the conclusion that there are certain parallels in the way politicians, from the same continent, write and talk about environmental issues, irrespective of the variety of English they speak.

Keywords: New Englishes, intra-regional, climate change discourse, variation, stance markers, parallels

1. Introduction

The spread of the English language from its traditional seats to new contexts, in the outer and expanding circles, has given room to new varieties with remarkably distinguished features. In fact, these new contexts have adopted and adapted the language to reflect their respective cultures (Kachru, 1985). Schneider (2007, p. 2) rightly remarks that

> ... [the English language] has begun to thrive and to produce innovative, regionally distinctive forms and uses of its own, in contact with indigenous languages and cultures and in the mouths of both native populations and the descendants of former immigrants, making ever deeper inroads into local communities.

Also, the multicultural diversity of the outer and expanding circles allows for multiple varieties of English with cultures that are quite evident in the proper adjectives used in identifying them.[1] The distinctive features of each variety make it phonologically, morphologically, syntactically, semantically and pragmatically different not only from native varieties, but also from other non-native varieties. Schneider (2007), however, proposes a dynamic model in which he argues that even with the unique features of the respective Englishes, their spread and diversities could be understood from a single underlying process "which builds upon the constant relationships and communication needs of the colonizers, the colonized, and other parties". He, like so many others (e.g., Kachru, 1985; McArthur, 1987; Görlach, 1990; Modiano, 1999; Crystal, 2003), however, argues from the logic of the obvious multiple variations[2] of the English language. The question that anxiously begs for an answer is whether there are any micro or macro convergences among the new Englishes, especially in the increasingly growing global climate change discourses.

More than ever before, climate change has proven to be one of the greatest threats to human existence and arguably one of the most discussed topics of the 21st century, with almost unbearable catastrophic effects, especially in vulnerable communities. In fact, scholars like Roudier et al. (2011) unanimously agree that climate change is far from being a prediction, it is an academic conclusion. The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), relative to previous reports, warns the international community against the dreadful fate of planet earth should humans remain indifferent to eco-friendly behaviours. Even the richest citizens in almost every country of the world are affected. Furthermore, while there are concerns about our national and international climatic changes, scientists are unanimous that "the range of published

[1] Generally, proper adjectives, mostly derived from country names, are often used to distinguish the different Englishes as seen in such examples as *Cameroon* English, *Nigerian* English, *Singaporean* English, *Indian* English and *Chinese* English.

[2] Variations in language use are often observable in the levels of language analysis — phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics.

evidence indicates that the net damage costs of climate change are likely to be significant and to increase over time" (IPCC, 2014). Indeed, with fast shrinking glaciers, breaking ice, shifting ranges of plants and animals, accelerating sea rise and more intense heat waves, humans, anchoring on the logic of eco-conservation, are beginning to see the dire need for national and international policies, built on regional justice and accelerated mitigation. The weight of the challenge begs for more concessions than confrontations and this is seemingly reflected in the frequency and manner of expressing stances on the issue across national and international boundaries.

Stance is an essential aspect in discourse practices and readers or listeners depend on it to better appreciate the contents of what is expressed by the writer or speaker. It expresses the author's perspectives, judgements, attitudes and opinions about what they write or say. According to Hyland (2005, p. 176), it reveals a "textual voice" and portrays certain attitudinal dimensions which include features that connect to a writer or speaker's self-mentions, judgements, opinions and commitments, or "steps back and disguises their involvement". The unavoidably fundamental question at this juncture is whether the gravity and inclusive nature of climate change inspire certain differences and similarities in the way speakers of different Englishes take stances on climate change issues.

Stance precedes agency since it is the fruit of deeply-rooted beliefs. Scholars such as Okri (1996), Berry (1988), Korten (2006), Eistetein (2011), Midgley (2011) and Stibbe (2015) have argued that our relationship with our environment is more or less a cognitive expression of our ecosophies. In other words, the eco-judgments we make anchor largely on the stories that inform our realities — our proverbs, myths, legends, etc. In fact, recent studies (e.g., Angwah, 2019, 2020) have proven that when eco-conservative lessons are framed in culturally familiar stories, locals are more likely to relate with and positively react to the issues that are raised. Their stances consciously or unconsciously reflect the philosophies inherent in the stories.

2. Environmental discourses and new Englishes

The environment has always been inextricably connected to human. In fact, it is quite hard to trace environmental narratives to any particular time in history, perhaps because there is no humanity or earth without the environment. Concerns about issues plaguing the environment, however, gained steam in the 19th century when ice ages and other natural greenhouse effects were first identified (Lorius et al., 1985). Since then, there have been many efforts in the natural sciences to come up with state-of-the-art sustainable solutions to existing environmental problems. While such commendable hard scientific efforts build up, ecolinguists quickly realised that the solution to our environmental challenges may not only come from scientific breakthroughs or international conferences, but also and perhaps more importantly from the reorientation of our belief systems and patterns of communication (Alcamo & Bennett, 2003; Cox, 2012; Stibbe, 2015; Angwah, 2020). This thought has inspired different studies in this light. In fact, climate change discussions have

been analysed to test Down's model of "Issue Attention Cycle"[3] (Trumbo, 1996). Other scholars have assessed media biases on climate change (Boykoff & Boykoff, 2004; Angwah, 2019); compared variations of media coverage among nations (Brossard et al., 2004; Grundmann, 2007); framed national climate change patterns based on relative national policies (Grundmann & Krishnamurthy, 2010); and interrogated the stories we live by in terms of the extent to which they dredge into the fundamentals of environmental conservation (Stibbe, 2015; Angwah, 2020). Even with such seemingly inclusive literature on the issue, the linguistic techniques and manners of taking stances on climate change across varieties of English are not yet known.

Understanding the different linguistic patterns of addressing climate change across varieties of English is quite important. The cultural marks of the new Englishes give room for contextual framing of environmental stories that could inform positive actions to environmental solutions. Considering the degree of acculturation that has engulfed new Englishes (Kachru, 1985; Simo Bobda, 1994; Bamgbose, 1995; Schneider, 2007; Ngefac, 2010), framing stories within these varieties, for effective communal awareness, could have stronger impacts on communal nexus with the environment. This is particularly important because our environmental realities, coded and framed in "the stories we live by" (Stibbe, 2015), could inspire more practical actions to climate change solutions. Notably, there are hardly any visible lines between culture and language. Telling our stories in foreign tongues, therefore, could hamper communication and further defeat the very purpose of telling such stories. Stories are more comprehensible and reliable when framed in the pragmatic code of targeted communities. This explains why in this study, stances, in climate change speeches in two continents and four countries, are explored to assess levels of political commitment to climate change actions and solutions.

3. Stance and implications on climate communication

Stance is an essential aspect in communication. It presupposes a standpoint or point of view towards a particular phenomenon of discourse. Hyland (2005, p. 176) divides the term into four major components: hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions, and argues that through stance "authors are everywhere in their texts, presenting stance towards their topics and readers". Hedging is the expression of tentativeness in language use. It often subjects the veracity of claims to subjective assessment. Hyland (1998, p. 2) maintains that writers usually hedge to negotiate ideas and persuade their readers, yet giving them the chance to judge the claims for themselves. Hedges thus mitigate propositions to mark

[3] Down's model is built on three major ideas. First, there is a pre-problem stage in which experts recognise a problem, but the public is unaware of it. Second, there is an alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm, during which the public becomes aware of the problem, but confident of society's ability to resolve it. Third, while the public soon realises the cost effects and how difficult it could be to solve it, politicians realise the problem may even be caused by a condition that benefits society (Trumbo, 1996).

uncertainty, with the intention of either expressing politeness and saving face or simply reducing facts to opinions for purposes of acceptability. Beyer (2009) ascribes two characteristics to this term. First, he indicates that the term is used to express speakers' tentativeness towards a particular claim in which the proposition is transformed into an opinion rather than a fact. Second, it is used to increase the politeness and the social acceptability of claims to avoid conflicts between speakers and listeners.

Unlike hedging, boosting is at the other end of the continuum. It is a speaker's use of words or phrases to show conviction to a particular proposition. Hyland (ibid.) observes that boosters, such as "clearly", "obviously", and "of course", permit speakers to express conviction and assert their claims with confidence. Scholars (e.g., Myers, 1989; Hyland, 1998; Itakura, 2013) agree that boosters show engagement and solidarity with an audience, while emphasising shared information, group membership and direct engagement with readers or listeners. In fact, it would seem this reassuring property of booster inspired Yagiz and Demir (2015) to christen the terms "intensifier" or "certainty markers" which are sometimes used interchangeably. Most usages of boosters in discourse practices serve to increase the force of argument. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) remark that the modification of the illocutionary force of speech acts has much to do with increasing or decreasing the strength with which the illocutionary point is presented. Yagiz and Demir (2015) agree that "commitment in the illocutionary force may have concrete impact on the stakeholder" and this force finds expression in the skillful interplay of boosters in various discourses.

Attitude markers are basically the use of linguistic features that express the speaker's attitude or judgement towards the proposition they express. Chen (2012) considers attitude markers as one of the components of interpersonal metadiscourse. The others are hedges, emphatics or boosters, relational markers, and personal markers or self-mentions. Attitude in discourse could be expressed in various ways. It could be expressed through modal verbs of obligation (must, should, have to, etc.), attitude verbs such as "hope", "think", "believe", etc. It could also be expressed through such intensifiers as "very" and "extremely". Essentially, the use of such lexical features in clauses indicates implicit relativity of level of truthfulness and could perhaps only be of high value to the author(s). Blagojevic (2009, p. 64) adds that it could be expressed through sentence adverbs such as "unfortunately" and "most importantly" which could "appear both with the positive meaning (outstanding, fortunately) and the negative one (with little justifications)". In this study, however, we limited our analysis to the most recurrent attitude verbs, sentence adverbs and adjectives in the corpora.

Self-mentions refer to the level of authorial presence in discourse with the principal purpose of constructing authors' identities in their texts. They are often expressed with the use of personal pronouns and possessive adjectives, and these grammatical features have been considered quite relevant in the relationship between authors and readers (Kuo, 1999). Kuo (ibid.) argues that effective mastery of personal pronouns permits readers/writers to identify with the trend of discourse. In fact, Afsari and Kuhi (2016) conclude that self-

mentions are the degree of overt author presence in a text measured by the frequency of first person pronouns and possessive adjectives.

Over the years, scholars and researchers (Beyer, 2009; Schmied, 2013; Adams & Quintana-Toledo, 2013; Aull & Lancaster, 2014; Angwah, 2019; etc.) have investigated stance in different discourse genres. Even at that, the term has until now seemed to be almost an exclusive preserve for academic discourse (Beyer, 2009; Nkemleke, 2011). A question worth considering here is whether this concept could not be equally explored in environmental discourses, considering its glaring undercurrents as a fundamental communicative technique in climate communication.

Climate communication is designed to facilitate the dissemination of information on the effects of anthropogenic climate change, and institutional and individual stances on the issue are quite relevant. Chadwick (2017) asserts that climate communication informs, warns, persuades, mobilises and solves critical environmental problems. It, therefore, stems from the logic of effective communication of climate conservative policies for pro-eco global public agencies. While the urgency of public and specialised actions is often superficially evident in speeches, speakers' self-mentions, judgements, opinions and commitments are often encoded in their linguistic preferences. In the present study, we analyse stance markers in African and Asian climate change speeches, in a bid to show the levels of convergences and divergences in the types, uses and frequencies of stance markers in nations and regions.

4. Methodology

The corpus for the present study was made up of 345 climate change speeches from West Africa (Cameroon and Nigeria) and Asia (India and China), obtained from climate change-related departments and country-specific websites in the four respective contexts of the study. The Cameroon corpus was obtained from two sources — ministerial archives (from the Ministries of Nature and Environment, Mines and Energy Resources and Wild Life and Forestry) and the Internet. The corpora of Nigerian, Indian and Chinese climate change speeches were obtained from the countries' specific websites[4]. Though there were many speeches on these websites, the corpora were built up in a descending order. That is, the speeches of senior officials were considered more relevant since their perspectives on the issue are often closer to the country's agenda and plan of action. These speeches amounted to 151813 words (38373, Corpus of Cameroon Climate Change Discourse (CCamCCD); 37613, Corpus of Nigerian Climate Change Discourse (CNCCD); 37853, India; 37974, Corpus of Chinese Climate Change Discourse (CChCCD)). For the purposes of effective comparative analyses, direct quotations, graphs and statistics were taken off, leaving just the direct speeches of the authors. Since the corpora had different sizes, it was

[4] Nigerian Federal Ministry of Environment; Indian Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection.

necessary to normalise for a more effective analysis. That is, the frequency of a particular variable was divided by the total number of words in the corpus and calculated per 10000, and this gave us the frequency of a particular variable per 10000 words. Table 1 presents the composition of the corpora.

Table 1: Corpus compilation

Continent	**Countries**	**No. of texts**	**No. of words**
West Africa	Cameroon	60	38373
	Nigeria	77	37613
Asia	India	92	37853
	China	116	37974
Total		345	151813

Though some of the speeches were originally conceived and delivered in French and Chinese, the English translations did not pose any problem since stance is more of an ideological phenomenon (Lakoff, 1972; Hyland, 2005) than of lexical preferences. The compilation of the corpus was closely followed by a close reading for the identification and classification of most recurrent stance markers for analyses. Most recurrent stance markers were identified and later sorted by frequency. The features were identified and classified under four broad categories as can be seen on Table 2.

Table 2: Recurrent stance markers for further analysis with AntConc

Linguistic Variables	**Epistemic modal verbs**	**Epistemic lexical verbs**	**Epistemic adjectives**
Hedges	might, can, may	seem, appear, assume	likely, possible, estimated
Boosters	must, will, have/has to	show, prove, establish	important, certain, successful
Attitude markers	**Attitude verbs**		**Sentence adverbs**
	like, propose, choose		hopefully, personally, globally
Self-mentions	**Personal pronouns**		**Possessive adjectives**
	I, you, we, us		my, our, your, their

The linguistic features were subjected to AntConc which facilitates the retrieval of quantitative information. AntConc is a freeware, multi-platform, multi-purpose corpus analysis toolkit which presents the data in a Key Word in Context format for easier analyses. Each occurrence was closely studied and only those with epistemic contents were considered for analyses. The frequency of variables was divided by total number of words per 10000 to obtain the Y frequency at every 10000 words.

5. Results and discussion

We were first of all concerned with the frequency and distribution of the categories of stance markers we considered for analyses. We noticed that in a corpus of 151813 words, 25818 (12.90%) of them fell within the definition of stance markers. The following figure shows the distribution of stance markers in the corpus.

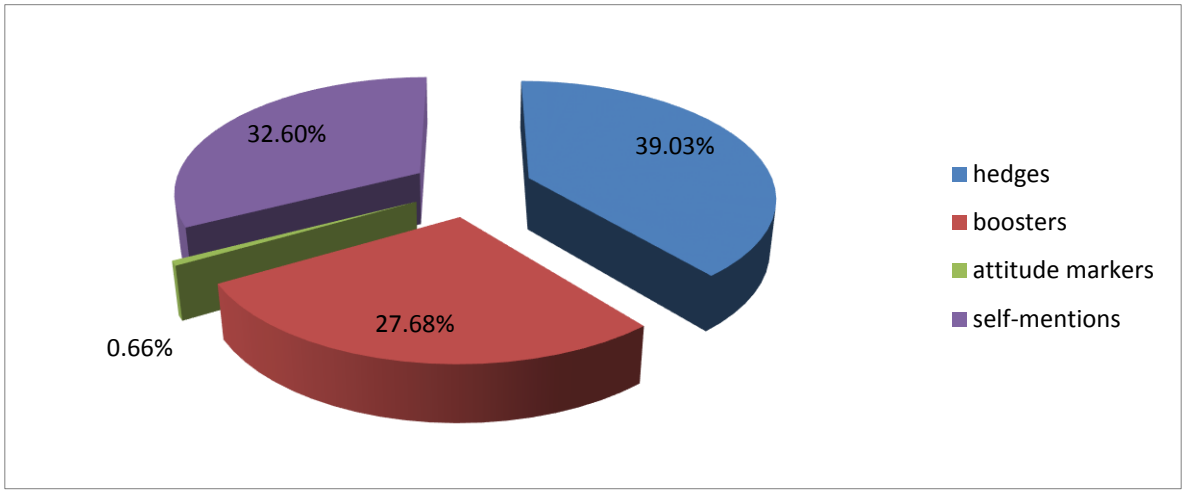

Figure 1: Distribution of stance markers in the corpus

Clearly, climate change speeches are significantly mitigated. From the above statistics, 25818 (12.90%) words of the total word stock (151813) mitigated different propositions. Several factors account for the mitigation of climate change speeches. First, stance devices function more or less as regulators of claims and pointers of speakers' degree of commitments to the truth value of their propositions. Since the leading diplomatic stakeholders of climate change mitigation and adaptation are government officials, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) work more with governments than individuals, the issue cannot therefore be apolitical.

What is, however, particularly interesting is how nations mitigate climate change propositions and the degree of variations across nations and cultures. Observably, there was variation in the use of hedges in the West African and Asian corpora, with very slim intra-regional margins but noticeable inter-regional variations as can be seen on Table 3 below.

Table 3 presents the frequency of hedges per 10000 words in the respective corpora. Clearly, while West Africans are most likely to hedge their climate change speeches, Asians, on the contrary, are less likely to do so. Remarkably, the intra-regional gaps are quite close, with wide inter-regional differences. In fact, unlike the case of the CWACCD, hedges are less recurrent in the CACCD. The inter-regional gap could perhaps be better appreciated on Figure 2 below where we summed up all the frequency to obtain the percentage value of hedges in the two corpora.

Table 3: Micro distribution of hedges in the corpus per 10000 words

Hedges		**Corpus of West Africa Climate Change Discourse**		**Corpus of Asian Climate Change Discourse**	
		CCamCCD	**CNCCD**	**CICCD**	**CChCCD**
Epistemic modal verbs	might	77.65	73.64	3.45	4.47
	can	81.82	85.60	6.34	5.00
	may	40.39	39.08	5.01	3.16
Total		**199.86**	**198.32**	**14.8**	**12.63**
		398.18		**27.43**	
Epistemic lexical verbs	seem	40.65	35.89	0.79	0.52
	appear	24.23	26.05	2.37	1.84
	assume	36.48	43.07	1.05	0
Total		**101.36**	**105.01**	**4.21**	**2.36**
		206.37		**6.57**	
Epistemic adjectives	likely	39.61	35.36	3.96	3.68
	possible	16.41	18.87	2.37	1.84
	estimated	8.86	11.69	2.90	2.10
Total		**64.88**	**65.92**	**9.23**	**7.62**
		130.8		**16.85**	

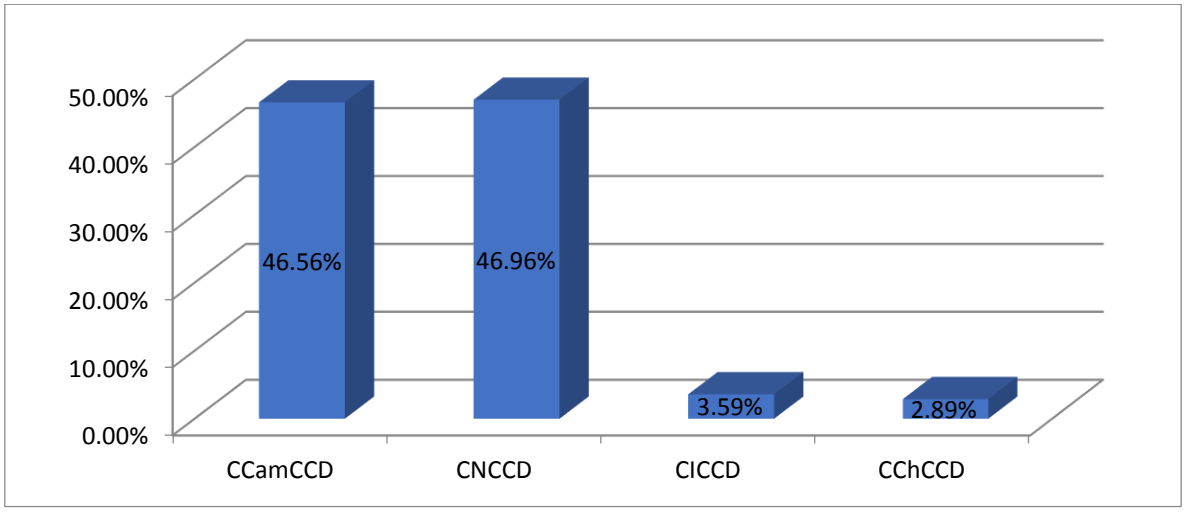

Figure 2: Inter-Regional Variation of Hedges in West African and Asian Corpora

From the above figure, the margin between the CCamCCD and CNCCD is clearly significant. While the statistics on Table 3 shows very slim micro intra-regional margins, the macro picture here seems to suggest a lot of intra-regional similarities in the way politicians hedge their climate change propositions. Arguably, this variation could be the

effect of the political realities and practices in both continents. China and India are more politically independent on the global landscape than Cameroon and Nigeria. Consequently, they are likely to be more confident and outspoken on the issue than most African nations that depend largely on the aids of Western nations to mitigate the crisis. Interestingly, the intra-regional and inter-regional variations were equally quite evident in the frequency of boosters in both corpora as can be seen on Table 4 below.

Table 4: Micro distribution of boosters in the corpus

Boosters		**Corpus of West Africa Climate Change Discourse**		**Corpus of Asian Climate Change Discourse**	
		CCamCCD	**CNCCD**	**CICCD**	**CCCCD**
Epistemic modal verbs	must	25.01	30.04	87.70	102.43
	will	8.86	14.35	83.48	108.57
	have/has to	3.90	12.76	20.87	49.24
Rel. total		**37.77**	**57.15**	**192.05**	**260.24**
		94.92		**452.29**	
Epistemic lexical verbs	show	0.26	1.06	23.51	29.49
	prove	0.78	1.59	20.34	26.86
	establish	4.95	1.86	35.40	51.87
Rel. total		**5.99**	**4.51**	**79.25**	**108.22**
		10.5		**187.47**	
Epistemic adjectives	important	1.82	3.45	78.46	82.95
	certain	0.78	1.32	13.73	15.80
	successful	2.60	3.98	77.40	43.71
Rel. total		**5.2**	**8.75**	**169.59**	**142.46**
		13.95		**312.05**	

There are evidently inter-regional variations in the use of boosters in the CWACCD and CACCD, considering the broad margins in the frequency of boosting devices in the corpora. The results revealed that Asians are more likely to boost their climate change propositions than West Africans. What is particularly interesting here is the intra-regional similarity in the corpora. Cameroonian and Nigerian politicians scarcely boost their climate change claims compared to Indian and Chinese politicians. This tendency could be an effect of a global climate change politics that, based on environmental justice, proposes incentives to less affected regions and countries to weigh in as much effort in environmental conservation as the principal actors of climate change and global warming. The severity of the issue seems to linguistically unite people with similar realities and the above table shows such ties between Cameroon and Nigeria and between China and India. Figure 3 presents a clearer picture of this phenomenon.

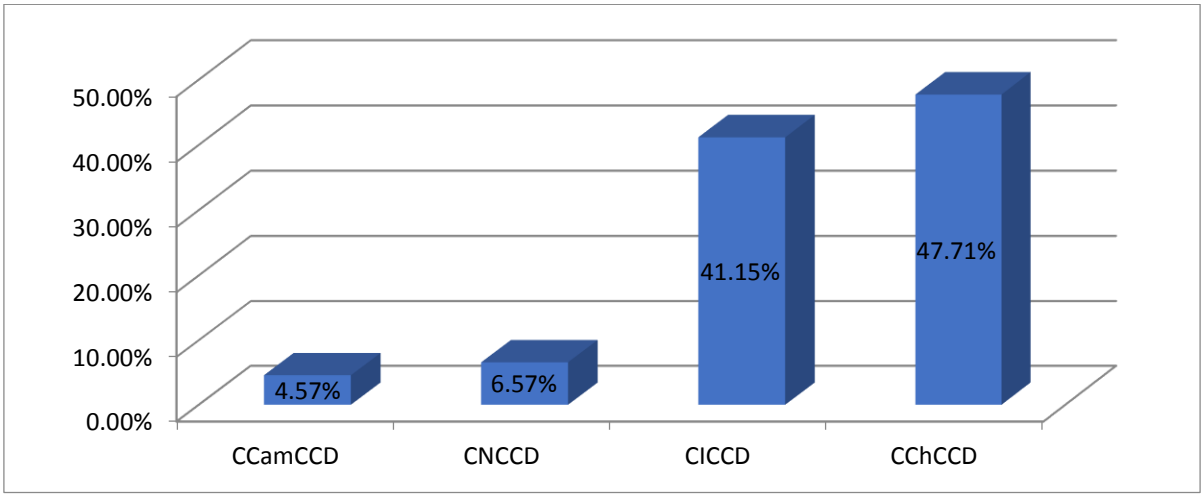

Figure 3: Boosters in West African and Asian corpora of climate change discourse

Similarly, we notice such intra-regional similarities and inter-regional variations in the use of attitude markers. Clearly, the frequency of attitude markers in the corpora was superlatively less recurrent. This is perhaps because climate change discourse tends to be an extension of political discourse. The leading actors in climate politics are observably governments with well-known diplomatic foundations. Consequently, they tend to be very diplomatic in the way they address the issue. Attitude markers, which reveal a lot about personal or institutional beliefs, are often observably scarce. Even at that, we still observed some slight intra-regional parallels in their frequencies of use as can be seen on Table 5 below.

Table 5: Attitude markers in the CWACCD and CACCD

Attitude markers		**Corpus of West Africa Climate Change Discourse**		**Corpus of Asian Climate Change Discourse**	
		CCamCCD	**CNCCD**	**CICCD**	**CCCCD**
Attitude verbs	like	5.21	4.78	0.26	0.52
	propose	4.16	3.45	0.52	0
	choose	0	0.79	0	0
Rel. total		**9.37**	**9.02**	**0.78**	**0.52**
		18.39		**1.3**	
Sentence adverbs	hopefully	0.78	0.53	0.26	1.31
	personally	0	0	0.26	0.26
	globally	0.26	0.79	1.58	1.84
Rel. total		**1.04**	**1.32**	**2.1**	**3.41**
		2.36		**5.51**	

The variation of attitude markers was not so apparent compared to what obtains with hedges and boosters. The distribution of attitude verbs, however, shows some differences

in both corpora. The divergences in sentence adverbs were not very recurrent, especially because the total frequency of the targeted linguistic variables was not significant enough for any meaningful scientific conclusions. Even at that, we observed that attitude markers are notably more recurrent in the CWACCD than in the CACCD. This could be the effects of political maturity in global politics. Since China and India are more economically and politically viable and also often rated on the same scale as most Western nations, they tend to argue from a position of power, unlike West Africans who rather argue from a subordinate position. Unlike China and India, West Africans seem to appeal more for necessary cooperation and aids in addressing the issue and this could account for their recurrent use of attitude markers in climate change speeches and declarations. The above statistics could perhaps be better appreciated on Figure 4.

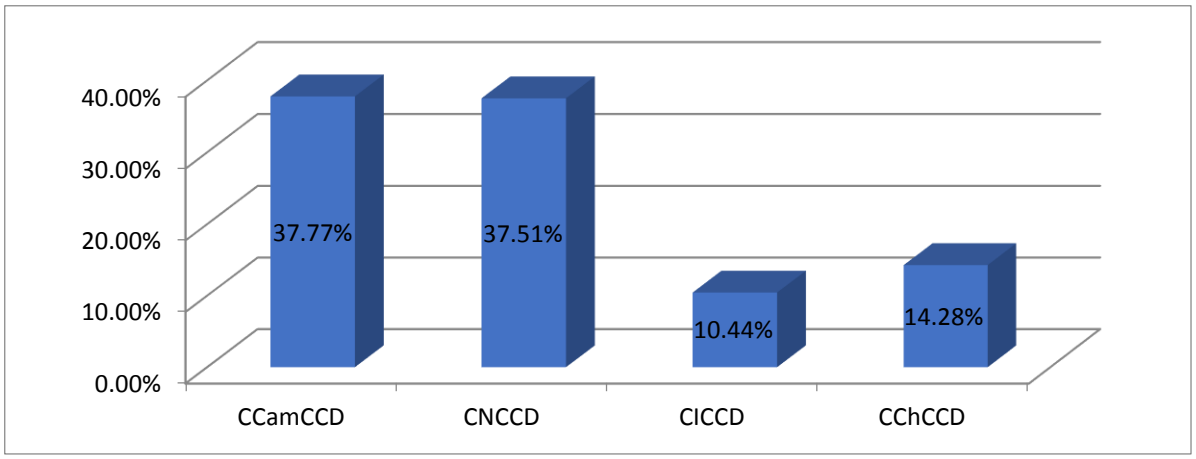

Figure 4: Attitude markers in the CWACCD and CACCD

There were no remarkable differences in the way the variables were used in the four respective corpora. There were all used to mitigate different climate change propositions in order to show speakers' or nations' levels of involvement, understanding or beliefs on national and international responses to the issue. Even with a relatively minimal use of attitude markers in both corpora, we noticed that West Africans are more likely to express an attitude towards their climate change propositions compared to Asians. The observable underuse of attitude markers in the corpora could stem from the political orientation the country-specific leading stakeholders adopt. While Asians seem to be more competitive, especially with Western nations, and are observably often involved in blame politics on the issue, West Africans rather appear to discuss the issue from a vulnerable perspective. They see it as a means to lobby funds for bottom-up agencies to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Even at that, politicians tend to be less sentimental in diplomatic discussions (Tannen, 2012) and so most likely to avoid linguistic features that evoke sentiments or express direct attitudes towards their propositions.

Similarly, self-mentions were quite recurrent in both corpora, though Asians are most likely to overuse it. Table 6 below presents the distribution of self-mentions in the corpora.

Table 6: Self-mentions in the CWACCD and CACCD

Self-mentions		**Corpus of West Africa Climate Change Discourse**		**Corpus of Asian Climate Change Discourse**	
		CCamCCD	**CNCCD**	**CICCD**	**CCCCD**
Personal pronouns	I	61.50	59.02	45.43	11.08
	you	10.68	9.57	7.66	12.90
	we	142.28	138.51	161.94	184.59
	us	12.50	5.84	20.07	35.28
Rel. total		**226.96**	**212.94**	**235.1**	**243.85**
		439.9		**478.95**	
Possessive adjectives	my	8.59	14.09	19.54	24.22
	our	91.47	109.53	109.10	108.23
	your	2.60	1.32	11.35	15.27
	their	18.50	21.53	78.72	85.05
Rel. total		**121.16**	**146.47**	**218.71**	**232.77**
		267.63		**251.48**	

Though self-mentions are clearly recurrent in both corpora, they occur more in the CACCD than in the CWACCD as could be better appreciated in the figure below.

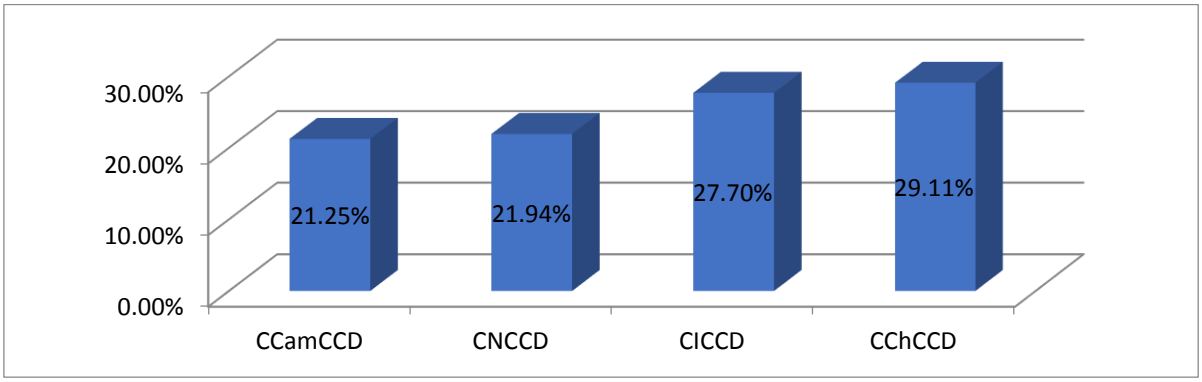

Figure 5: Self-mentions in the CWACCD and CACCD

Observably, the margin in the use of self-mentions in the four corpora was relatively slim. Comparatively, Asians are more present in their speeches than West Africans. Self-mentions are extremely important in discourse cultures, especially because they do not only carry listeners along, but also show authors' level of involvement in what they write or talk about. The political stakeholders identify more with the problem — they see it as a domestic issue that requires a collective agency to resolve it. This is reflected in the frequency of the individual and collective subject pronouns "I" and "we", respectively. This was equally the case with the possessive adjective "our", the most recurrent possessive adjective in the four corpora. While the possessive adjective "their" was also quite recurrent

in the CACCD, it was less recurrent in the CWACCD. This could be a response to rhetoric on collective global response with little interest in global justices and primary consequences on key greenhouse gasses emission actors. The use of the possessive adjective "their", therefore, shifts the blame to others, presumably to bigger economies that have a fairly visible reputation of emitting significant proportion of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere. Consider the following textual examples that point to this line of thinking.

(1) Nigeria, as a leading member of the African Group during the negotiation strongly advocated for developed countries to take the lead and responsibility in emission reductions in both the short and long term, and fulfil **their** obligations under the Convention to provide finance, technology and capacity to developing countries.

In the Asian corpora, the possessive adjective "their" is rather mostly used to assess national agencies to climate change solution as can be seen in example (2).

(2) The leading officials have done better at playing a leading role, the community-level Party organizations have further played **their** part as solid fortress, and the Party members have strengthened **their** exemplary roles; they all have been devoted to **their** work and further advanced the environmental protection effort.

Personal pronouns and possessive adjectives, like other hedges, boosters and attitude markers, generally show speakers' levels of commitment to what they say. They clearly demonstrate speakers' stances on the issue and give an insight on their thoughts and beliefs. Politicians use such markers to effectively attribute responsibility of environmental degradation and regional and national roles in mitigating and adapting the crisis.

6. Conclusion

Inter-continental variations in stances on climate change discourses are not unexpected, given the extensive academic conclusion on variations among new Englishes (Kachru, 1985; Simo Bobda, 1994; Schneider, 2007). Intra-continental similarities, however, do not only suggest a lot about climate change politics, but also insinuate a certain level of macro convergences in the West African and Asian Englishes in climate change politics. Arguably, climate change politics is the fruit of regional climate change effects, and nations respond to the issue based on their realities. Since Cameroon and Nigeria find themselves in the same region, they tend to express almost similar stances on the issue. Similarly, India and China tend to address the issue in almost the same way considering that they belong to the same continent and seem to have more in common. This could account for the near similarity in the frequency and manner of expressing stance in their climate change propositions and also facilitate diplomatic discussions on the issue since nations can better understand each other from the perspective of eco-geographical spaces.

The results revealed that while West Africans are most likely to hedge climate change speeches, Asians are most likely to boost them. Hedging and boosting show very distinctive characteristics in speech and speakers' attitudes. The implication here is that, West Africans tend to be reticent and seem to argue from a vulnerable end, considering their very limited economic power to positively and effectively respond to the issue. West Africans seem to be quite sceptical of climate science and their scepticism is reflected in their use of language. Asians argue from a relative position of power. Boosting their claims shows a certain degree of certainty. It projects China and India as leading stakeholders in the issue on the international landscape.

The intra-regional similarity of stances in climate change propositions could also have a relatively deep implication in our understanding and deconstruction of the new Englishes. Though the Englishes in the four respective contexts, in two distant continents — West Africa and Asia —, could be intelligible to a certain extent, there are arguably remarkable differences in form and patterns of use. However, the global devastating effects of climate change seem to have compromised lexical preferences and use, especially those that express an attitude or judgement towards the truth value inherent in propositions. Nations tend to identify with those with similar interests not only in beliefs and perspectives, but also in word choices and frequency of use. The statistics provided in this study show very close intra-continental margins with clear inter-regional gaps which is quite suggestive of a certain level of macro resemblance in the way nations that share similar regional realities respond to climate change issues.

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