

Hybridized Lexical Innovations in Ghanaian English

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ABSTRACT

Ghanaian English (GhE) remains one of the notable varieties of English in the discussion of World Englishes; yet many of its features have been very superficially described or totally ignored. One of such features is lexical hybridization. This paper discusses the forms and communicative domains of this very productive feature in the English of educated Ghanaians, and argues that the motivation to use such hybridized lexical formations stems from a conscious awareness of the mutual co-existence between English and the L1 languages in Ghana. The study, while it highlights an aspect of the distinctiveness of GhE lexicon, also has implications for the codification of the features of GhE for its legitimacy to be properly acknowledged in Ghana and beyond.

Keywords: lexical hybridization, lexis, Ghanaian English, New Englishes.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The English language has a long history in Ghana, emerging in the early 16th century as a result of the initial contact between the British and the people of Ghana (then known as the Gold Coast). When the British first arrived on the shores of Ghana, they realized there was the need to engage the local inhabitants in a common language to facilitate their trading and missionary activities, their two main initial goals. It was ideal for them to have chosen English, their own tongue, and so as Adika (2012: 152) recounts, “they trained some of the inhabitants as interpreters”. Boadi (1994) describes the use of English in Ghana in these early years as “Mercantile English” (cited in Adika, 2012: *ibid*). However, centuries after this early contact led to the contemporary trends of English in Ghana, which gained the status of official and somewhat ‘national’ language after Ghana’s independence in 1957. Since then, a number of varieties of English have evolved in Ghana, ranging from pidginized, uneducated and educated Ghanaian Englishes (Boadi, 1971; Huber, 1999). Today, English co-exists with over 50 L1 languages in the Ghanaian context, the dominant ones being Akan, Ewe, Ga, Hausa and Dagbani. While it is hard to determine the exact numbers of speakers for these L1 languages, Akan (with its dialectal variants) comes along as the most dominant, with over half of the country’s estimated population of 25 million people having some communicative ability in the language. However, most

Ghanaians speak mainly one Ghanaian language in addition to English. Thus as Nartey (1982: 183) has noted, “all educated Ghanaians are bilingual in English and at least one Ghanaian language”.

The present study is on lexical hybridization, and it represents educated users of English in Ghana. Although the education levels of text producers could not be directly obtained, the contexts in which the texts (e.g., national newspapers, conference presentations, and politicians’ talk at rallies) were produced suggest that the writers have attained a considerably high level of formal education, most likely a university or an equivalent tertiary degree. Further, the indigenous lexical forms in the hybrids analysed in this paper are mainly words from the dominant L1 languages identified above, a point of note that emphasizes the important role of these L1 languages in the Ghanaian linguistic landscape.

Research into the creative linguistic features of educated Ghanaian English has established the variety as one of the regularly cited emerging local standard varieties of English within Braj Kachru’s *outer circle* of Englishes (Kachru, 1992), which are most often described in the literature by the term ‘New Englishes’ (Pride, 1982; Platt, Weber & Ho, 1984; Anchimbe, 2007). For instance, Kachru himself has made references to Ghanaian English (Kachru, 1986, 1992) while other scholars such as Bamgbose, (1997) and Crystal (2003) have mentioned the variety in their work. In addition to these references made to Ghanaian English (hence, GhE), there exist quite a considerable number of studies which have aimed to highlight the productive features of GhE at various levels of linguistic analysis: phonology (e.g., Simo Bobda, 2000; Adjaye, 2005; Huber, 2008; Ngula, 2011), grammatical features (e.g., Owusu-Ansah, 1994; Huber & Dako, 2008, Ngula, 2010, Wiredu, 2012), vocabulary (lexis) (e.g., Bamiro, 1997; Dako, 2001, 2002, 2003), discourse (e.g., Owusu-Ansah, 1992), as well as a combination of some of these levels (e.g., Sey, 1973; Platt, *et al.*, 1984; Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008).

Despite the considerable interest already shown by scholars towards educated GhE through both the references made to it, and the empirical descriptions it has attracted, many of its linguistic features remain to be studied and brought to the fore. Consequently, we are at present still unable to wholly characterize the variety, and to provide comprehensive codification resources of GhE vocabulary and grammar to guide usage. To be able to achieve this, further studies on the typical linguistic features of GhE are worthwhile and must continue to seek our attention. The present paper is one additional contribution towards describing GhE. It describes lexical hybridization. Although a very pervasive lexical feature of GhE, lexical hybridization has yet to be studied in any depth in the Ghanaian context of English use.

Hybridized innovations constitute systematic divergences in the vocabulary of educated Ghanaians in their day-to-day use of English, although there is some evidence (e.g., Ahulu, 1995) suggesting that hybrid forms also do occur in a variety of speech forms through pidgin English, broken English and the vernaculars. In this article, I focus on hybrid forms in what may be considered the

emerging educated Ghanaian standard variety, as the attested data upon which this study is based reflect educated English usage. Hybridized forms further attest to the fact that educated English in Ghana has taken a new shape, and therefore its unique ways of usage must continually be described up to the point where its distinctive linguistic features can be clearly visible. It is only at this point of visibility that standard GhE might become apparent, and can be recognized as a valid model for teaching and learning in the Ghanaian classroom. As Verma (1982: 175) observes, beyond British English and American English, “there are a number of standard Englishes, for there are several English-speaking countries in each of which there is a Standard English peculiar to that country”. Non-native English speaking contexts such as Ghana obviously form part of the several English-speaking countries being referred to by Verma. GhE, like other non-native Englishes, serves the communicative and communal needs of its users, thereby allowing users of English to express themselves in ways that reflect their own unique socio-cultural norms. This sociolinguistic reality is further attested to and acknowledged by Crystal when he states that “English in these communities is fostering an internal standard of educated usage which has a status and dynamic of its own” (Crystal, 2003: 359). Quite clearly, one of the domains where such fostering of internal standards is taking place in GhE is within the lexis.

2. LEXIS AND LEXICAL HYBRIDIZATION

In the context of the present study, the term ‘lexis’ (or lexicon) is used to describe vocabulary in general and to stress the entire list of vocabulary items in a language or variety of a language. In this case, I use it more specifically to refer to GhE vocabulary. Any living language or variety of language is likely to undergo various changes with time. The change might come in various forms, resulting from both external and internal processes. Internal lexical processes rely on the lexical resources of a language to create new notions and meanings in that language. For example, in GhE the lexical resources of Standard English are regularly used to create meanings different from what obtains in the native varieties of English. This has led to such innovations as semantic broadening, narrowing and shift.

Another example directly related to this study is borrowing in GhE. Borrowing is generally an external lexical process that has been found to be common in many languages. With English, the process involves words from languages other than English that find their way into the English lexicon. Although the term ‘borrowing’ itself seems to suggest ephemeral existence, usually the borrowed word eventually gets integrated into the lexicon of the new language it has entered (Crystal, 2003). In Ghana such borrowings from Ghanaian L1 languages (Akan in particular) into English are a common feature, and have contributed massively to the phenomenon I discuss in the present study – lexical hybridization.

A simple definition for this process of hybridization is thus given by leading world Englishes scholar Braj Kachru. Explaining hybrids in the context of Indian English, Kachru (1983: 138) says that a lexical hybrid or a mixed form is made up of elements (words) from two or more different languages, where at least one of the elements is from the local language. I adopt Kachru's definition in this study, as it aptly describes the elements explored in the present work.

3. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE LEXICON OF GHANAIA ENGLISH

Descriptive accounts of the features of GhE are generally few, and in the particular area of lexis the situation has not been any different, though lexis is one of the most important domains of analysis in the study of the new varieties of English (Kachru, 1986). Even so, discussions on the deviations that characterize the vocabulary of GhE have been pursued from different theoretical standpoints. Works like Sey (1973) and Ahulu (1994) have discussed these deviations from the prescriptivism and error-analytical position.

Sey's (1973) seminal work on GhE lists some of the variety's important lexical features (in addition to features of pronunciation and grammar). He groups the vocabulary of GhE into three: English words with native meaning, English words with new meanings, and words of Ghanaian origin. Sey correctly assumes that the divergences are dominant in the second type – English words with new meanings, and therefore goes further to identify six types of new meanings that have come to be associated with Target English (T.E.) words in GhE (coinages, semantic extension, semantic restriction, combination of SE & SR, semantic transfer and semantic shift). While Sey does not make space for hybridized forms in his work, he does not even believe that the GhE features he identifies are really legitimate, innovative features of GhE because he constantly uses the term 'deviant forms' to remind us that these are deficit characteristics by the Ghanaian user of English, and cautions that "the educated Ghanaian would not 'accept' anything other than educated British Standard English" (1973: 7).

Ahulu's (1994) attitude on divergences in the lexis and other linguistic features of GhE does not depart significantly from that of Sey. On lexis, Ahulu identifies loan words like *kente* and *kwashiorkor* among others from Ghanaian languages in the English of Ghanaians, but argues that the forms often labelled 'Ghanaian' may not be peculiarly or uniquely Ghanaian. To him, such words have now gained international currency. Ahulu's rejection of GhE, especially with regards to modifications in the lexis, is captured in the following extract of his:

If lexico-semantic divergence in the written English of educated Ghanaians is not of such magnitude as would call for relexification of English in Ghana, then it will be of little help linguistically and educationally to identify a distinct Ghanaian variety of English much on

the basis of relatively few modifications that occur in the repertoire of educated Ghanaians. (Ahulu, 1994: 27)

But the condition Ahulu establishes for us – that there must be a complete revolution of English lexis in Ghana before a distinct Ghanaian variety can be appreciated – is quite far-fetched and untenable. It is noteworthy he admits that there are a few lexical modifications in GhE. That is precisely what is required of a variety of a language: the diverging features are invariably few whereas the converging ones are vast. That is how the different varieties remain mutually intelligible and are still recognized as the same language (Kachru, 1986). So GhE, Indian English, British English, American English and much else are varieties of the same language – English – because their common linguistic features far outweigh the differences that characterize them. Thus to call for a complete relexification of GhE, as Ahulu seems to be doing, is an attempt to eliminate the healthy association and intelligibility GhE shares with other varieties around the world. This is certainly not desirable. It is clear from their works that both Sey and Ahulu do not recognize the deviations (especially those relating to lexis) in the use of English by Ghanaians as the creative and innovative processes that are giving GhE its own character, and reflecting the Ghanaian cultural environment.

Other researchers and scholars such as Bamiro (1997) and Dako, (2002, 2003), arguing along the lines of the present author, however share the view that the deviations are not only a reflection of our socio-cultural conditions, but that such deviations also highlight the creative and innovative processes the English language is undergoing in Ghana. Dako's (2003) *Ghanaianisms: A Glossary*, for instance, accounts for vocabulary items peculiar to English in Ghana and used by English-speaking Ghanaians. The total number of Ghanaianisms in her work ranges between 2500 and 3000, and this comprises 60% of English origin items (e.g., lorry station), 30% of Ghanaian/W. African origin (e.g., shito) and 10% hybrids mostly created through affixation and compounding (e.g., akatamansonian). For Dako, these lexical features of Ghanaian English have become so entrenched, and now form part of the linguistic repertoire of educated users of English in Ghana.

Lexical hybridization is one of the very productive lexical features of non-native varieties of English, and has been attested and described in other outer circle varieties of English such as Indian English (Kachru, 1983, 2005), Fiji English (Tent, 2001), Pakistani English (Rahman, 1991), and Malaysian English (Thirusanku and Yunus, 2012). For example, two famous hybrids reported by Braj Kachru for Indian English are *bindi mark* (a dot-like mark put on the forehead by Hindi women) and *police walla* (a policeman). Thus while not much has been done on lexical hybridization in Ghanaian English, lexical studies of other new Englishes have given it more attention.

The present work offers a more comprehensive account of hybridized innovative forms in GhE. I show that lexical hybridization is an important part of the innovative changes taking place in the domain of the lexis of GhE. Though

the phenomenon is pervasive in the Ghanaian context, its treatment (particularly in Dako, 2003) has been superficial and therefore deserves further exploration. In the paper, I demonstrate that the lexical hybridized forms commonly used by educated Ghanaians in their English discourse are part of the lexical repertoire used to express culturally determined networks of activities that are typically Ghanaian.

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The present paper hinges on two different but related ideas applied in the description of language: the notion of languages in contact which was popularised by Uriel Weinreich (1970) and the idea of nativisation first introduced by Braj Kachru (1982, 1986) and further explored in Schneider's (2003, 2007) Dynamic Model, which examines the evolutionary development of post-colonial Englishes. These two ideas are particularly important in explaining and accounting for the typical innovative divergences being exhibited by regional varieties of English, especially those non-native varieties often described as 'New Englishes', of which GhE is a notable part.

4.1 THE ROLE OF LANGUAGES IN CONTACT

One of the ways to account for the variations and changes that occur in a language at all levels of linguistic analysis is to consider the role of languages in contact. Weinreich (1970) explains that when two or more languages come into contact, mutual influence eventually becomes inevitable. The outcome of the contact is what he refers to as "interference phenomena" (Weinreich, 1970: 1). He further establishes that the interference phenomena involve "those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language ...". These deviations may be manifested in such domains as the pronunciation, grammar, meaning and lexis.

The influence of languages in contact is more obvious and pervasive in a multilingual setting like Ghana where English (the official language) co-exists with the over fifty indigenous languages (L1). The Ghanaian situation is a clear case of "multiple language contact" as English has been in touch with nearly all the indigenous Ghanaian languages, though this contact occurred much earlier for some of the languages than for others. In Ghana today, the users of English are spread across the different ethnic groups in the country, and the mutual influence that exists between the L1 languages and English as a result of the contact is sufficiently evident when people speak or write either English or their first language. The present paper assumes that the lexical hybridized innovations identified as part of the lexical features of educated GhE can partly be accounted for in terms of the influences the L1 languages have on English. As Bamgbose

(1971: 47) has correctly noted, the influence of the local languages on English as a second language is strong because certain “patterns of the local languages – phonological, grammatical and lexical – tend to be transferred into English”. While L1 influence may not be responsible for certain divergences from native Englishes in the English of Ghanaians, it remains important in explaining many of the innovative divergences (including lexical hybridised forms) encountered in Ghanaian English (Ngula, 2011).

4.2 NATIVISATION OF ENGLISH

There is now a great deal of consensus among world Englishes scholars that the English language has been undergoing complex processes of nativisation and acculturation in many colonial and post-colonial contexts, including, for example, former British colonies in Africa and Asia which have continued to use English after independence (Kachru, 1986, 1996). In multilingual countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, India and Singapore, just to mention a few, long term contact of English has resulted in nativisation and acculturation, “the processes of change that localized varieties of English have undergone by acquiring new linguistic and cultural identities” (Kachru, 1996: 138). It is these processes that have led to the establishment of such varieties as GhE, Nigerian English, Indian English and Singaporean English. In these non-native varieties of English, the users have unavoidably appropriated and changed English to reflect their own situation and experiences; or to be more precise (as the process is still on-going) the users are unavoidably appropriating and changing English to reflect their own situation and experiences. An integral part of the processes of acculturation relates to the linguistic changes that occur at the levels of pronunciation, lexis, grammar, discourse styles and others.

Kachru (1996, 1997), in his widely applied framework for the spread and use of English around the globe, names these countries where English is undergoing nativisation and acculturation the *Outer Circle* countries. The others on his three concentric circles are the *Inner Circle* and the *Expanding Circle*. The Inner Circle refers to native-speaking countries such as the UK, the US, Canada and Australia, where English is the primary language. The Outer Circle includes those countries where English was spread as a result of colonization by members of the Inner Circle. Countries like Ghana, Nigeria, India and Malaysia are in this Circle. In the Outer Circle countries, the status of English is very high and is recognized as an institutionalized second language with many functional roles. It has already undergone some acculturation and nativisation and it is envisaged that these processes will continue for some time. The Expanding Circle includes the rest of the world for whom English is primarily a foreign language, including countries like Japan, Thailand, China and Egypt.

As far as norms guiding usage are concerned, these circles of English communicate different messages. The Inner Circle varieties are *norm-providing*,

the Outer Circle varieties are *norm-developing* and the Expanding Circle varieties are *norm-dependent* (Kachru, 1996). By replacing the terms English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) with the corresponding circles in his model, Kachru asserts that English is no longer the property of one country; it belongs to all who use it, especially in Outer Circle countries where new norms are rapidly emerging and achieving stability as a result of the on-going acculturation and nativisation processes taking place. In this regard, he argues that the norms and standards that guide usage should no longer be determined solely by Inner Circle/ENL varieties. Besides, if English is to retain its capability of continual adjustments (especially in non-native contexts), it cannot be confined within native speaker standards, nor can native speakers dictate the norms according to which it should be used in all contexts. What is more, “the very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it” (Widdowson, 1994: 385). The implication is that in many countries where English is used as a non-native variety, (especially in Outer Circle Countries where English has been in use for a relatively long period of time) the users of English have developed a strong emotional attachment to the language, an indication that they feel they own English, and therefore think of it as one of their languages (Kachru, 1982).

Kachru’s model has come under various criticisms lately. For instance, Canagarajah (2006) feels that there is the need to revise the model, given certain complexities it is unable to address. He maintains that in the current world where people have to “constantly shuttle between different varieties [of English] and communities, proficiency becomes complex” and “one needs the capacity to negotiate diverse varieties to facilitate communication” (p. 233). These criticisms, however, while legitimate, may be seen more as isolated cases rather than as the situation with the majority and core members in each of the three circles. The model does still remain a useful classification of Englishes around the world.

Schneider’s (2003, 2007) Dynamic Model that explains the evolutionary development of the new Englishes in terms the distinctive features that emerge suggests five main phases/stages of development: phase 1) *foundation* is the starting point where the English is ‘transplanted’ in a new (colonial) territory; 2) *exonormative stabilization* is where the territory has been fully established as a colony, with a considerable number of English settlers/speakers co-existing with the indigenous people. At this stage, English language norms are still determined by the input standard variety (usually British English), but one can already begin to notice emerging local norms especially in the areas of lexis and phonology. Phase 3) *nativization* is the stage where considerable transformation takes place, marking the starting point of the evolving distinctive local variety as seen in lexis, sounds and grammar. Phase 4) *endonormative stabilization* is the stage after independence where English is retained as a/an (co-) official language serving a wide range of functions internally (in domains such as the press, business, governance, education etc.); the new variety of English fully evolves in this stage with users generally accepting and associating themselves with local standards

and norms. The final phase 5) *differentiation* marks the point where the endonormatively stabilised variety may further develop a range of regional and social dialects.

As Huber (2012: 218) has rightly pointed out, English in Ghana now finds itself “between the Nativization Phase and the Endonormative Phase”. Perhaps Ghana should have been moving faster into Phase 4 but for the slow pace at which studies are being conducted into GhE. A major problem inhibiting comprehensive studies into the distinctive linguistic features of GhE has been the lack of publicly available electronic corpora on the variety. Studies on GhE so far have relied on relatively small datasets, leaving many of the features identified as markers of the variety contentious and inconclusive. This situation continues to limit the level of acceptability and tolerability of endonormative features of GhE. Large electronic corpora on GhE, especially diachronically designed ones, are therefore required to effectively operationalise Schneider’s Dynamic Model in the Ghanaian context. However, the model remains relevant in the description of endonormative features such as hybridized formations, which is the focus of the present study. The relatively small dataset examined for this paper show that lexical hybridization seems to be a stabilised feature considerably acknowledged by educated Ghanaian users of English.

5. DATA AND METHODS

The sources of data from which the lexical hybridized forms were obtained to advance the argument of this paper are varied, including those based on my observations and field investigations over the past five years within such domains as political rallies, conferences, lecture situations, shops, market places, restaurants and notices. Part of the data was also obtained from Ghanaian media sources – newspaper, radio and television – collected in 2010, as well as from prose fiction produced by Ghanaian authors. Ideally, huge electronic corpora on GhE should provide a firmer and more comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon explored here; however, in the absence of such corpora on English in Ghana, the sources of data assembled here represent a good effort by an individual researcher. In looking out for hybridized forms within pieces of discourse in the sources of data, I was guided by the principle that all such discourses should be examples of English usage from mature, educated Ghanaians who are using the language to accomplish important communicative needs.

The analysis carried out on the data was mainly a qualitative content analysis. My goal was simply to describe the lexical hybridized formations commonly encountered in GhE, and attempt to show the motivation for the use of these hybrids which, in my view, have become an integral part of the lexicon of GhE. After deriving all the hybridized forms from the data, interviews were also conducted to ascertain two things: 1) whether or not the lexical hybridized forms extracted were actually known and used by Ghanaians and 2) the appropriate

English translation or meaning for the entire hybridized form which contains at least one element from a local language and at least one element from English.

In total, seventy seven (77) examples of hybridized lexical innovations were obtained in the data examined. It should be indicated that forms that are place names (e.g., Labadi beach, Tema station, Elmina castle, etc., where Labadi, Tema and Elmina are the names of the places where the beach, station and castle are located) were not included as cases of hybridization. While such place name forms are natural rather than innovative creations, they are found in all varieties of English.

It came to light that these hybridizations could be grouped under different headings reflecting different domains of English usage in Ghana. The hybridizations were thus grouped under the following sub-headings: social, cultural, monetary (financial), health (medicinal) and politics. I now discuss some of the hybridized forms that are commonly encountered under these sub-headings.

6. LEXICAL HYBRIDIZED FORMATIONS IN GHANAIAN ENGLISH

6.1 THE SOCIAL DOMAIN

Innovative hybridized forms found within the social domain include those commonly used in fashion, work, entertainment, recreation, and sports. Some examples are: *kayaye girl* (a young female porter); *adom fm* (an fm with grace, apparently God's grace); *ahomka fm* (an fm that makes you feel good); *akwaaba restaurant* (a welcoming restaurant); *ebusua dwarfs* (a football team but the hybrid actually connotes a family team); *kasahari night* (a night of rap music); and *adwinsa publications* (a 'never ending ideas' publications but also connotes a local publishing house of repute and high quality).

Notably, most of these indigenous lexical resources are typical nouns that occur as modifying 'adjectives' within the hybrids, as in *ebusua dwarfs* or *kasahari night*, where the local words are nouns. However, a few have a peculiarly different form. For instance, the Akan form *akwaaba* is a sentence in its own right (means, *you're welcome*). It thus occurs as a sentential modifier in the hybrid *akwaaba restaurant*. These excerpts of hybridized forms are a reflection of a Ghanaian society that is unable to resist the influence of indigenous lexical terms in their English discourse, hence the use of the hybridized forms.

It is important to point out that about 75% of the indigenous words that enter into the hybridizations identified in this study are from varieties of the Akan language. The rest are from the other major local languages in Ghana: Ewe, Dagbani, Ga and Hausa. The examples cited above in the social domain alone attest to the Akan dominance; apart from *kayaye*, whose origin is the Ghanaian Hausa speaking communities, *adom*, *ahomka*, *akwaaba*, *ebusua*, *kasahari* and *adwinsa* are all originating from Akan. The dominance of Akan words in the hybridizations is largely because Akan functions as the most widespread

indigenous language in Ghana. It appears to be spoken by more people across Ghana than any other local language.

6.2 THE CULTURAL DOMAIN

Within the domain of culture, the hybridizations identified relate to tradition, alcoholic beverages, festivals, food and clothing. The hybridized forms highlight the typical Ghanaian culture relative to the list of items here. The lexical hybridized forms include *adinkra symbol* (a symbol of 'farewell' often on cloths, walls, pottery, etc.), *kente cloth* (a special Akan ceremonial cloth), *bresuo dry gin* (a locally made alcoholic beverage, 'bre suo' suggests water for the tired), *damba drums* (specially designed drums for the Northern festival of 'Damba'), *tuo dzaafi special* (staple food in Northern Ghana), *olonka cup* (a measuring cup for grains and other foods), *dawadawa tree* (a tree that grows in Northern Ghana; 'dawadawa' is a food additive which enhances taste and flavour), and *aponkye soup* (goat soup).

Clearly, the indigenous words in the hybridizations in this domain are ethnically restricted in terms of their origins; for example, while *adinkra* is from the Akan language, *damba* is from Dagbani, one of the languages in the northern part of Ghana. But the people who make use of the hybridized forms which contain these indigenous lexical items cut across ethnic lines, an indication that hybridizations are a typical lexical feature in GhE. The use of these lexical hybridized forms is not limited or peculiar to certain groups of Ghanaians.

6.3 THE MONETARY (FINANCE) DOMAIN

In the context of GhE, some very typical hybridized forms occur in discussions relating to money, bank transactions and dubious financial transactions carried out often by people in authority. The most frequently occurring forms are *mmofra account* (a bank account for kids), *akuafu cheque* (a farmers' cheque), *sakawa deal/budget* (carries the sense of a deal/budget that is fraudulent and non-transparent), *wahala budget* (carries the sense of a budget that unleashes hardships) and *sika card* (money card). Some of these hybridized formations do occur in other contexts with inflectional variations. A typical example of the use of 'wahala' in a comment to sports news by a sports enthusiast reads: "The GFA must ... resolve all those institutional and managerial *wahalas* if they really want the best for Ghana football".

Some of these hybrid forms, I must acknowledge, have been identified and noted in previous studies, and so the present findings confirm their stability in the English discourse of educated Ghanaians. A typical example is the documentation of *akuafu cheque* in Dako (2003).

6.4 THE HEALTH (MEDICINAL) DOMAIN

In Ghana, quite a number of locally made products that have medicinal properties, and can cure certain ailments and give people healthy life tend to have names that are hybridized formations. Examples that come under this domain are *agbeve tonic* (a kind of life-saving tonic), *chocho cream* (a skin infection cream), *famanyame powder* (literally ‘commit it to God’ powder, a natural cure for skin defects), *signal bitters* (bitters for wellness), and *ahomka ginger* (a ginger garnished toffee that makes you feel good and well). Though these are locally made products, their brand names are not entirely local as one would have expected. The use of hybridized formations is an effective effort at bridging the gap between English and the local languages. While there are specific domains where each of these two (English vs. the local languages) is predominant, blends of the linguistic resources of the two do occur, as is the case with the phenomenon of lexical hybridization, but also with the sociolinguistic processes of code mixing and code switching.

6.5 POLITICAL DOMAIN

At political rallies and elsewhere, the English of politicians is characterized by hybridized formations on issues of campaign, politics, voting and governance. Notable examples of hybridizations in this domain are *fellow akatamansonians* (a solidarity address to members of a political party; akatamanso means ‘umbrella’), *fellow kukrudites* (a solidarity address to members of a political party; kukrudu means ‘elephant’), *Nkrumaist ideals* (ideals of Nkrumah) *kokromoti power* (power of the thumb), *agbenaa campaign* (a sure victory campaign) and *ku me preko demonstration* (literally a kill-me-once-and-for-all demonstration, a kind of a daring street protest).

One additional linguistic feature noted in some of the hybridized forms in this domain is the derivational affixation seen in the indigenous word part of the hybrid. The first three hybrids here exemplify this morphological process: *akatamanso – nians*, *kukrud (u) – ites*, *Nkrum (ah) – aist*. Within this political domain the use of *kokromoti power* is very pervasive in GhE, especially when people are getting themselves ready to cast their votes during elections. Political leaders, party activists, the electoral commission, the media, etc. are constantly found advising the electorate on the need to vote, or (especially with political parties) on how to vote, using their power of the thumb. For example, in an advertisement rolled out in the media by the Electoral Commission of Ghana, people were urged to “register to get your *kokromoti power*”.

7. MOTIVATION FOR HYBRIDIZED FORMATIONS IN GHANAIAN ENGLISH

So how do we explain why lexical hybridizations have come to find a notable place in the lexical system of GhE? Though the present research did not directly elicit information from users to address this question, a plausible explanation as to why hybridizations have been incorporated in the English discourse of educated Ghanaians can be established. It should be mentioned that the use of the local words in the hybridized forms is not the result of the need to refer to local objects, items and cultural constructs for which there are no equivalent words in English.

Clearly, these local words have near English equivalents that could be used in order to avoid the hybridizations. For instance, *akuafɔ cheque* could have been *farmers' cheque*, just as *sika card* would convey the same meaning if it were *money card*. This suggests that the innovative process of hybridized formation in GhE is a deliberate linguistic act which emanates from an awareness of the co-existence of the lexical system of English on the one hand, and the systems of the local languages on the other. It is this awareness that makes it possible for words to be borrowed from a local source to create new collocations in English. As Y. Kachru and Smith (2008: 107) note, “borrowing items from an indigenous source language is one device that is used for nativization of a language in a new situation”.

The use of hybridized innovations in the lexicon of GhE may be unfamiliar to users of English in the Inner Circle, but it, together with other lexical features such as loan translation and lexical meaning change, gives the variety its unique local identity. However, GhE lexicon generally still maintains its international currency because the senses carried by the majority of words and expressions remain the same in other native and non-native varieties worldwide. This further supports the view that non-native Englishes should maintain international intelligibility, but as well, retain local identities (Bamgbose, 1998).

8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, I have tried to discuss a very pervasive yet understudied lexical feature in GhE: lexical hybridization. The use of hybridized formations in the English discourse of educated Ghanaians is further testimony of the innovative tendencies in this variety of English, and amply reflects Schneider's (2003, 2007) *endonormative stabilization* of the Dynamic Model. As Widdowson (1994: 385) has said, non-native users of English “must not just speak English, but use it to speak their mind, for English is used to carry the weight of all kinds of experiences, much of it very remote indeed from its ancestral home”. The hybridized forms reported in this study, together with the range of previous studies on the lexis, grammar, pronunciation and discourse styles of GhE, are the very

markers that distinguish GhE from other varieties of English. One important implication of this study is the need for the development of representative corpora of GhE to significantly enhance linguistic descriptions into this variety. In recent years, corpora have served as basis for language descriptions, especially in native Englishes, and these descriptions have led to massive codifications of the linguistic features of these native varieties. For example, the most comprehensive reference grammars of English (Quirk *et al.*, 1985 and Biber *et al.*, 1999) have been produced in native English contexts and have corpora as their basis. Therefore to enhance linguistic descriptions into GhE, and subsequently codify these features, the development of corpora for the variety as a starting point is crucial and inescapable.

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APPENDIX: COMPLETE LIST OF THE HYBRIDIZED FORMS IDENTIFIED IN THE DATA

Hybrid form	Domain	Source combination	Literal/descriptive, all-English interpretation
aboakyir festival	cultural	Akan + English	game hunting festival
abodam boutique	cultural	Akan + English	crazy boutique
adae(kese) festival	cultural	Akan + English	'resting place' for the famous Ashanti Kingdom
adehye chambers	social	Akan + English	chambers for royals
adom herbal centre	health (medicinal)	Akan + English	grace herbal centre
adom junction	social	Akan + English	'grace' junction
adom tv	social	Akan + English	'grace' television station
adinkra lodge	social	Akan + English	farewell lodge
adwinsa publications	social	Akan + English	unending ideas publications
agbena campaign	political	Ga + English	connotes a victory campaign
agbeve tonic	health (medicinal)	Ewe + English	a life-saving tonic
ahomka fm	social	Akan + English	an fm station that makes you feel good
ahomka ginger	health (medicinal)	Akan + English	ginger garnished toffee
akonfem socialism	political	Akan + English	guinea fowl socialism
akroma plaza hotel	social	Akan + English	a hotel, 'akroma' literally is an eagle
akufo cheque	monetary (finance)	Akan + English	farmers' cheque
akwaaba restaurant	social	Akan + English	a welcoming restaurant, 'akwaaba' means welcome
alafia bitters	health (medicinal)	Hausa + English	bitters for wellness
amani stew	cultural	Akan + English	dry herring stew
amansie international hotel	social	Akan + English	nation building international hotel
amegashie auditorium	social	Ewe + English	'amegashie' is an Ewe family name
anansi stories	cultural	Akan + English	spider stories
aponkye soup	cultural	Akan + English	goat soap
awukudae festival	social	Akan + English	literally a Wednesday festival
akwaaba restaurant	social	Akan + English	a welcoming restaurant, 'akwaaba' means welcome
asomdwee park	political	Akan + English	peace park
bosome rural bank	monetary (finance)	Akan + English	monthly rural bank
bresuo dry gin	cultural	Akan + English	water for the tired: thirst quenching dry gin

bronya special	social	Akan + English	Christmas special
chocho cream	health (medicinal)	Hausa + English	a skin infection cream
damba drums	cultural	Dagbani + English	specially designed drums for the northern festival of 'Damba'
dawadawa powder	cultural	Hausa + English	flavour enhancing food additive
dawadawa tree	health (medicinal)	Hausa + English	thick tropical tree
dipo rite	cultural	Akan + English	puberty rites, initiates adolescent girls to womanhood
famanyame powder	health (medicinal)	Akan + English	'commit it to God' powder
fellow akatamansonians	political	Akan + English	solidarity address to members of a political party (NDC), 'akatamanso' means umbrella
fellow kukrudites	political	Akan + English	solidarity address to members of a political party (NPP), 'kukrudu' refers to the elephant
fontomfrom drums	cultural	Akan + English	a talking drum used to communicate royal messages
goro boys	social	Hausa + English	connotes middle men, 'goro' means cola nut.
gye nyame sign	cultural	Akan + English	'gye nyame' means except God
juju pot	cultural	Akan + English	'juju' suggests black magic
kaklaku stool	cultural	Akan + English	a chieftaincy stool of the Anlos
kama conference centre	social	Akan + English	'kama' carries a sense of beauty
kasapreko bitters	cultural	Akan + English	kasapreko – speak with confidence/ an witty speaker
kasapreko distilleries	cultural	Akan + English	names the place where kasapreko products are distilled
kawo kudi junction	social	Hausa + English	names a junction, kawo kudi literally means 'bring money'
kelewele joint	cultural	Ga + English	fried ripe plantain joint
kelewele seller	cultural	Ga + English	fried ripe plantain seller
kente cloth	cultural	Akan + English	A coloured textile made in Ghana
kente weaver	cultural	Akan + English	colourful Akan cloth weaver

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kete dance	cultural	Akan + English	a royal dance of the Akan people
kokonte joint	cultural	Akan + English	powdered cassava used in cooking (a special food of the Nzema's)
kokromoti power	political	Akan + English	power of the thumb
kuapa credit union	monetary (finance)	Akan + English	good farming credit union
Kumi preko demonstration	political	Akan + English	'kill-me-once-and-for-all' demonstration
medimafo live gospel	cultural	Akan + English	medimafo means my advocate (God)
mmofra account	monetary (finance)	Akan + English	account for children
ngmayem festival	cultural	Ga + English	a harvest and thanks giving festival of the Krobo people
nhyira tv	social	Akan + English	a blessed tv station, 'nhyira' means blessing
Nkrumaist ideals	political	Akan + English	Ideals of Nkrumah, Ghana's first leader
obenesu crescent	social	Akan + English	car-dependent curved area
obenesu link	social	Akan + English	car-dependent link
obonu fm	social	Ga + English	obonu – name of a drum for the Gas
odawna market	social	Ga + English	odawna is the name of a suburb in Accra
odo rice restaurant	social	Akan + English	name of a popular restaurant, 'odo' denotes love
odwira festival	cultural	Akan + English	a festival celebrated by the Akuapem, 'odwira' means purification
olonka cup	cultural	Hausa + English	a cup, often used for measuring cereals
papaye fast food	social	Akan + English	it is good to be kind fast food
papaye restaurant	social	Akan + English	it is good to be kind restaurant
royal akyem banquet	cultural	Akan + English	Akyem – an Akan ethnic group
sakawa budget	monetary (finance)	Hausa + English	dubious budget
sakawa deal	monetary (finance)	Hausa + English	dubious deal
sika card	monetary (finance)	Akan + English	money card
tegbeza festival	cultural	Ewe + English	te (yam) gbeza (festival) so tegbeza means yam festival

tuodzafi special	cultural	Hausa + English	A staple food in northern Ghana, made from dry powdered maize and cassava
wahala budget	monetary (finance)	Hausa + English	a budget of hardships
zara restaurant	social	Hausa + English	star restaurant