

Adjunct Placement in Educated Nigerian English

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Abstract : In nonnative language use environments, language users have been known to demonstrate marked variations both in the spoken and written productions of the target language. For instance, analyses of the written productions of Nigerian users of English have shown inappropriate sequencing of sentence elements resulting in distortions in meaning and/or other problems of syntax. This study analyses the structure of sentences in the written production of 450 educated Nigerian users of English to establish their sensitivity to adjunct placement and the extent to which it exerts on meaning interpretation. The respondents were selected by a stratified random sampling technique from six universities in south-south Nigeria using education as the main yardstick for stratification. The systemic functional grammar analytic format was used in analyzing the sentences selected from the corpus. Findings from the analyses indicate that of the 8,576 tokens of adjuncts in the entire corpus, 4,550 (53.05%) of circumstantial adjuncts were appropriately placed while 2,839 (33.11%) of modal adjuncts occurred at appropriate locations in the clauses analyzed. Conjunctive adjunct placement accounted for 1,187 occurrences, representing 13.84% of the entire corpus. Further findings revealed that prepositional phrases (PPs) were not well construed by respondents to be capable of realizing adjunct functions, and were inappropriately placed.

Keywords : adjunct, adjunct placement, conjunctive adjunct, circumstantial adjunct, systemic grammar

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