

# Some Pronunciation-Induced Spelling Errors in Cameroon English

Raphael Tegha Ketcha, PhD

University of Bamenda

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## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the spelling mistakes that are idiosyncratically imposed by phonological variation in Cameroon English (henceforth CamE). The paper seeks to establish that, apart from graphology, there is a pronunciation spelling phenomenon where variation in CamE pronunciation conditions writers of English in Cameroon to spell a good number of words differently from what is obtained in Standard British English (Henceforth SBE) and Standard American English (Henceforth SAE). Data for the paper were collected through observation and two spelling tests, a diction spelling test and a multiple-choice spelling test, from sixty junior secondary school students (thirty male and thirty female from age 9 to 17) in GBHS Atiela – Bamenda. The students were from four different forms; Forms 1, 2, 3, 4 and they were chosen because they had not memorised several spellings like students of the upper classes. The school was chosen because it is in the metropolis and has students from diverse backgrounds. The data were analysed qualitatively using Generative Phonology as the theory. The findings reveal that CamE speakers of the secondary level, teachers and students, deviate from native English spelling (SBE and SAE) norms, unconsciously, through phonological processes as substitution, devoicing, analogy, epenthesis, metathesis and CamE-styled homophony. I recommend that a standard variety of pronunciation be adopted and that emphasis be laid on teaching pronunciation in order to curb spelling mistakes since the former is a major generator of the latter and / or a dictionary of CamE should adopt general acceptable spellings that related to Cameroon-derived names and other lexical items denoting cultural uniqueness.

**Keywords:** Pronunciation, spelling errors, Cameroon English, varieties, secondary school.

## INTRODUCTION

When one moves around major cities in Cameroon like Bamenda and Yaounde, one notices such glaring spelling errors in public notices as “*Safe-Content House for Rent*”, “*Firewud for sell*”, “*sellsgirl needed*” and “*food is redy*”. Most of these spelling errors are prompted by speakers’ unconscious internalised pronunciation rules. Though Cameroon, Nigerian and the Commonwealth countries are in the Outer Circle of English (Crystal, 2007; Anchimbe, 2022), “... English [in these countries] has now undergone nativization and indigenization ...” (Mowarin, 2013 p. 160). Consequently, ESL speakers are using the language the more while consciously and unconsciously shaping it to suit their sociolinguistic context and needs. Pedagogically, variations in accents of teachers is a major cause of pronunciation-induced spelling errors in Cameroon English. Previous works have identified different conflicting varieties of within CamE (Kouega, 1999; Ngefac, 2010; Ketcha, 2018). These authors have previously identified varieties that can be mostly grouped as ethnolects and sociolects. Since teachers of different subjects at secondary/ high school have different ethnic origins and different educational specialisations, levels and backgrounds, they tend to reflect pronounce English words differently, reflecting their ethnic and social backgrounds. This phenomenon thus results in the feeding of young learners of English with different sociolects and audiolects within CamE. Thus, the problem of pronunciation-spelling inconsistencies is birthed; this being the exact

opposite of spelling pronunciation which is largely the case in most ESL and EFL contexts. Whatever the variety of English spoken withing Cameroon, three levels of lects are spoken; the basilectal (characterised by L1 interference), mesolectal (mainstream variety mostly shaped by some lingua francas) and acrolectal varieties (RPrised and Americanised varieties).

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The pronunciation spelling phenomenon is well known in the circles of native English varieties but not in non-native English contexts. Rather in non-native contexts, orthography is blamed as one of the intra-linguistic factors for pronunciation variation on spelling. With the exception of Masanga (1983) who mentions pronunciation spelling in CamE, previous researchers on CamE have paid attention to graphology and not pronunciation spelling. These include scholarly works as Simo Bobda (2000a, b); Simo Bobda and Mbangwana (2004); Kouega (1999); Atechi (2006) and Masanga (1983).

Simo Bobda (2000a) focuses on the pronunciation of the NURSE vowel in sub-Saharan Africa and reveals that the vowel is rendered /a, ε, ɔ/ and holds that amidst factors such as language interference, the pronunciation of /ɜ/ varies between /ε, ɔ, a/, in sub-Saharan Africa, mainly as a result of orthography. As for Simo Bobda (2000b), though he mainly argues that colonial input accounts for phonological deviation in CamE, he goes ahead to demonstrate that deviant spelling is responsible for phonological divergences in CamE, for example, *t Cameroon* is pronounced /kamarun/, *principal* and *principle* are /prinsipal/ as well as /haiti/ is *Haiti* respectively for vowel assimilation, preservation of contrast and influence of deviant spelling (also see Simo Bobda and Mbangwana, 2004). Kouega (1999) identifies the different lects of CamE and reveals that graphology is one of the prime causes of phonological divergence in CamE. For example, he explains that /ɪ/ can be rendered /a/ and /ε/ in words whose spelling “suggests the diphthong /eɪ/, like *village, cottage* ... [or] where the letter -e- is rendered as /ɪ/ as in *budget, endeavor, preside*” and that /ʌ/ is rendered /ɔ/ mostly in words spelled with *u, o, oe, oo, ou* (Simo Bobda, 1994; 2000a). Atechi (2006 p. 83) opines that the “...influence of spelling is very strong on the speaker of English as a second language ... like the speaker of CamE... due to the fact that a speaker of CamE makes first contact with these words through reading, and not through listening as is the case with native speakers of English ...”.

Though Mbangwana (1987 p. 421) notes that “... the problem of spelling certain words correctly also crops up” as there is the divergent placement of stress and intonation in CamE which affects the doubling of final consonants in words, he does not connect an inch to segmental pronunciation problems that birth spelling mistakes in CamE.

Kouega (1999) attempted to identify different varieties of CamE, mostly based on education and professions. Following this perspective, he identified mainly the Pidginised and educated varieties of CamE, stating that the former is spoken mostly by primary school leavers or dropouts whereas the latter is spoken by university graduates. Ngefac (2010) rather grouped them under the basilectal, mesolectal and acrolectal varieties and proposed that the mesolectal varieties should be prescribed since it is the mainstream variety. Ketcha (2018) used Cameroon-produced audio-visual materials to come up with five different varieties within CamE. They are CamE I (the Nativised/ Pidginised), CamE II (mainstream CamE), CamE III (Rpirised CamE), CamE IV (Americanised CamE) and CamE V (Frenchised CamE).

This present paper distances itself from all existing sources in that it looks at the effect of pronunciation on spelling and not the other way round like Masanga (1983), Mbangwana (1987), Simo Bobda (1993) and Kouega (1999) who blamed pronunciation divergences in CamE on spelling. Ngefac (2010) and Ketcha (2018) simply identified and described the existing varieties within CamE.

## METHODOLOGY

Data for the paper were collected through observation and spelling tests. Before administering the tests, I

had observed that students' essays and public notices are written with several spelling mistakes, reflecting the way such words are pronounced in different CamE varieties. The two spelling tests used to collect data for this paper are a dictation test and a multiple-choice spelling test. Both tests were done using a selected set of words that prove problematic, from our observation. The dictation test, comprised thirty words, in thirty sentences, for students to spell. The multiple-choice spelling test, also built on the thirty words from observation, required that informants select the right spelling of a word from the list of words given. The tests were administered to secondary school students of different classes; Form One to Form Five. For each level, ten (10) students were selected, considering variables as age, sex and first language.

In all, sixty (60) students were selected from these five levels and tested in one classroom through three control agents. The control agents were teachers who respectively represented the three lects of CamE; CamE I, CamE II and CamE III. As concerns Test I, the simple dictation test, each control agent had to dictate sentences composed with the thirty words, for students to write them down. After administering Test I, Test II was done through the same three control agents who represented speakers of Pidginized CamE, Mainstream CamE and Rprised or Americanised CamE. During the administration of this test, respondents were given a list of thirty (30) multiple choice questions with one hundred and twenty (120) answers, for the students to select thirty (30) appropriate spellings; one for each question. Control agents allowed students to read out the questions and the control agents then read out the answer for the students to choose its correct spelling from the options given.

Control agent number one is a primary school teacher who has five Ordinary Levels; a Teachers' Grade I certificate and has taught for seven years. She represented speakers of CamE I. Control agent number two is a secondary school teacher of physics who has three (03) A' Levels and a Teachers' Grade II certificate. He has taught for twelve (12) years and he represents speakers of CamE II. Control agent number three is a secondary school English Language teacher; a holder of a B.A., M.A. and a Teachers' Grade II certificate who has taught for nine (09) years.

Data for the paper were analysed qualitatively, using the 10 L phonetic system and occasionally using the 6 L to differentiate vowel length between RP and CamE. The theory used in the paper is Generative Phonology.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Actually, the revelations in this paper demonstrate that pronunciation-induced spelling mistakes are generated mainly from three varieties of CamE; the Pidginized Variety (CamE I); Mainstream Variety (CamE II) and Educated/ Sophisticated Variety (CamE III) respectively representing the basilectal, mesolectal and acrolectal varieties of CamE (Kouega, 1999 p. 541; Ketcha, 2014:44-48). CamE III, in this study, is considered to be the acrolectal near-RP variety with traces of Americanisms. The major phonological processes that trigger spelling mistakes, through these CamE varieties, include substitution, devoicing of word-final consonants, restructuring of diphthongs, diphthongization of triphthongs or monophthongization of diphthongs, analogy and omission of silent letters. All these phonological processes manifest themselves through pedagogic inputs as the pronunciation of the words by pedagogues whose use of these three CamE varieties shapes students' spelling power.

### Vowel Substitution

Several sources have acknowledged that substitution is a major phonological process in CamE (Simo Bobda, 1999). Substitution is one of the phonological processes that lead to many pronunciation-induced spellings. These include replacement of /ɜ/ by /a /; /ɜ □/ by /i/ and /æ α/ by /a/.

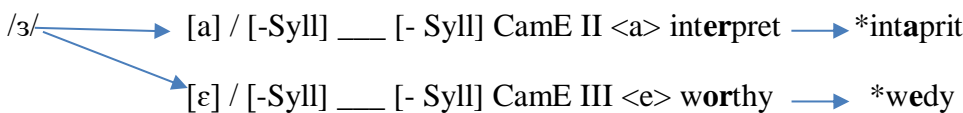
### Pronunciation of /ɜ/ as /a/ and /ɛ/

The substituting of /ɜ/ with /a/ pushes some Cameroonian writers of English to orthographically replace the

grapheme *er* with *a*. For example, when secondary school students hear /ɪntəprɪt/ for /ɪntɜːprɪt/ *interpret*, they write <a>, the CamE II pronunciation for <er>, or they write <e>, the CamE III grapheme for a derived /ɛ/ from /ɜː/. The following examples further illustrate this procedure:

Words	RP	CamE	Derived spelling	Phonological Process
interpret	/ɪn'tɜːprɪt/	/ɪntapɪt/	intaprit	/ɜː/ → a/C__C
interpreter	/ɪn'tɜːprɪtə/	/ɪntapɪtə/	intaprita	/ɜː/ → a/C__C
maternity	/mə'tɜːnəti/	/mataniti/	matanity	/ɜː/ → a/C__C
interpolate	/ɪn'tɜːpəleɪt/	/ɪntapo'let/	intapolate	/ɜː/ → a/C__C
colonel	/kɜːnl/	/kɛnɛl/	Kenel	/ɜː/ → ɛ/C__C
worthy	/wɜːði/	/wɛdi/	Wedy	/ɜː/ → ɛ/C__C
work	/wɜːk/	/wɛk/	Wek	ɜː → ɛ/ C__C

The first three words above illustrate that when native English /ɜː/ is substituted by CamE /a/ there is the tendency to represent the sound, orthographically, as <a>, being the direct influence of pronunciation. Similarly, the last four words indicate that when the NURSE vowel is pronounced /ɛ/, CamE students tend to write *e* instead of *or* or *olo*. Below is the rule capturing such spelling errors:



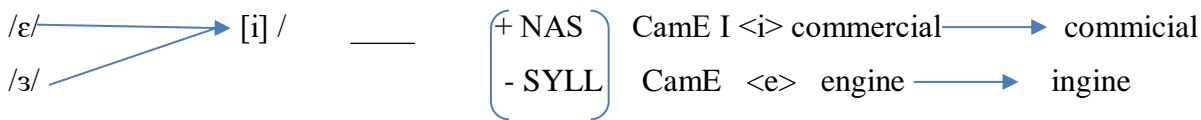
Rule above reads that when RP NURSE vowel is fronted to yield /a/, the resultant orthography is <a>, but when the fronting yields /ɛ/, the <er>, <or> and <o> of the NURSE is pronounced as /ɛ/ and spelled as <e>.

**Pronunciation of /ɜː/ and /ɛ/ as /i/**

CamE secondary school students also have the tendency of misspelling some class of /ɜː/ and /ɛ/ words with *i* in instead of the <er> or <e> graphemes that are supposed to be respectively. That is, due to the pedagogic input of, notably, the CamE I of Lamso speakers, post-nasal and pre-nasal /ɜː/ and /ɛ/ are rendered /i/, causing the students to write *i* for /ɛ/ and /ɜː/ instead of *er* or *e* as the case is in standard native varieties of English. For example, as respondents heard /kɔːmɪʃəl/ and /ɪntə/ instead of RP /kɔːmɜːʃəl/ *commercial* and /ɪntə/ *enter*, they severally spelled the words as *commicial* and *inta*, thus replacing <er> and <e> with <i>. Below are more examples:

Words	RP	CamE	Derived spellings	Phonological process
Commercial	/kɔːmɜːʃəl/	/kɔːmɪʃəl/	Commicial	/ɜː/ → i/N__
antcommercial	/æntɪkɔːmɜːʃəl/	/antikɔːmɪʃəl/	anticommicial	/ɜː/ → i/N__
Enter	/ɛntə/	/ɪntə/	inter/ inta	/ɜː/ → i/ #__N
senate	/sɛnɛɪt/	/sɪnɛɪt/	sinatē	/ɜː/ → i/ __N
engine	/ɛndʒɪn/	/ɪndʒɪn/	ingin(e)	/ɜː/ → i/ __N
supremacy	/sɜːprɛməsi/	/sɪprɛməsi/	suprimecy	/ɜː/ → i/ __N

The first two words above show that when /ɜː/ is realized as /i/, students spell it as *i* whereas the last four words prove that when /ɛ/ is pronounced as /i/, writers spell it as *i*. Clearly, this spelling mistake is triggered by the basilectal variety of CamE spoken mostly around some parts of the North West Region. In this basilectal form of English, /ɛ/ and, sometimes, /ɜː/ are realized as /i/ (Sala, 2010 p. 2; Ngefac, 2011 p. 7; Ketcha, 2014 p. 138). Below is the rule explicating this phenomenon.



The foregoing rule reads that due to the replacement of RP /ε / and /ɜ/ with CamE /i/ in the speech of CamE I speakers of Bansa origin, several students tend to spell <er> and <e> words with *i*.

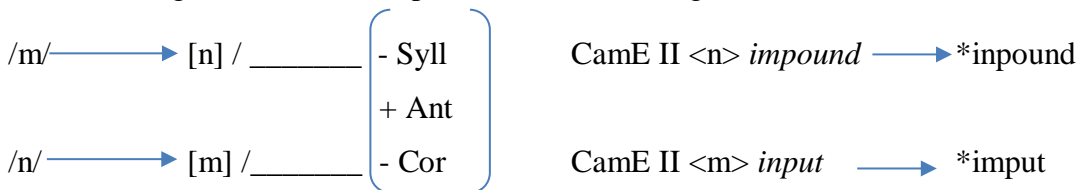
### Pronunciation of /m/ as /n/ and /n/ as /m/

Data for this paper show that some secondary school learners of English spell certain words with <n> instead of <m> whereas some spell <n> words with <m>. This spelling error can be blamed on the pedagogic input, particularly that of some CamE II speakers, mostly of North West origins, who divergently pronounced /m/ and /n/ as free variants. This phenomenon can be blamed on analogy as *input* is on analogy with *impute* etc. The following words demonstrate this finding.

**Table 3: Spelling Errors Generated by alternative use of /m/ and /n/**

Words	RP	CamE	Derived Spellings	Phonological Process
impossible	/ɪmpɒsəbl/	/ɪnpɒsəbəl/	inpossible	/m/ → n/_ [p{b}]
impregnate	/ɪmpɹegneɪt/	/ɪnpɹeknet/	inpregnate	/m/ → n/_ [p{b}]
impose	/ɪnpəʊz/	/ɪnpos/	Inpose	/m/ → n/_ [p{b}]
impound	/ɪmpaʊnd/	/ɪnpaun/	Inpaun	/m/ → n/_ [p{b}]
impressive	/ɪmpɹesɪv/	/ɪnpresɪf/	inpressive	/m/ → n/_ [p{b}]
input	/ɪnpʊt/	/ɪmput/	Imput	/n/ → m/_ [p{b}]
inpatient	/ɪnpeɪʃənt/	/ɪmpeʃənt/	Impatient	/n/ → m/_ [p{b}]

The renderings above can be captured in the following rule:



The rule above reads that words with <m> are erroneously spelled with, <n> and vice versa due to the influence the analogous pronunciation of /m/ as /n/ and /n/ as /m/ in CamE II by some teachers.

### Monophthongization of RP Diphthongs

Some spelling errors are induced by teachers when they tend to monophthongise RP diphthongs in their speech. Atechi (2006 p. 126) already noticed the monophthongisation of RP diphthongs in CamE. These include the monophthongization of /eɪ/ to /ɛ:/; /aʊ/ to /a/ and /əʊ/ to /u/ discussed in turns below.

#### The Monophthongisation of /eɪ/ as /ɛ/

The monophthongization of /eɪ/ often yields /ɛ/ in most CamE varieties, particularly in the mainstream variety (Mbangwana, 1987 p. 414). However, at the lower mesolect or the basilect, some speakers of CamE, who mostly hail from Bui of the North West Region of Cameroon, have the tendency of monophthongizing /eɪ/ to /ɛ/. Simo Bobda (ibid) already reported that /eɪ/ is "... occasionally rendered as a more open /ɛ/..." Atechi (2006 p. 126), exemplifying this rendering demonstrates that /eɪ/ is replaced with /ɛ/ in such words as *aids*, *faith* and *shaped*. The data for this paper shows that, due to the replacement of /eɪ/ with /ɛ/ by teachers of CamE I mostly originating from the North West Region (from Pinyin, Banson, Wum etc), some young learners of English have the tendency to mistakenly spell <ai> and <a> words with <e> as illustrated



in the following table:

**Table 4: Spelling Errors from Monophthongization of /eɪ/ to /ɛ/**

Words	RP	CamE	Derived spelling	Phonological process
self-contained	/selfkəntend/	/sefkəntən/	self-content	/eɪ/ → ɛ/ ___ C
salesgirls	/seɪlsgɜ:l/	/seɪlsgɛ/	sellsgirl	/eɪ/ → ɛ/ ___ C
faith	/feɪθ/	/fɛθ/	fet	/eɪ/ → ɛ/ ___ C
wait	/weɪt/	/wɛt/	wet	/eɪ/ → ɛ/ ___ C
great	/greɪt/	/grɛt/	gret	/eɪ/ → ɛ/ ___ C

The spelling errors in table 4 above were noticed in the speech of a few writers who originate from some areas around the North West Region of Cameroon as Banso, Aghem and Pinyin natives. The rule that captures these errors is as follows.

/eɪ/ → [ɛ] / \_\_\_ C      CamE I <ai>self-contained → \*Self-content

This rule illustrates that due to pedagogic input of /ɛ/ for /eɪ/ by some CamE I and CamE II speakers, <ai> and <ea> are spelled as <e>.

**Pronunciation of /aʊ/ as /a/ or /u/**

Due to the monophthongization of /aʊ/ as /a/ or /u/, particularly in CamE I and CamE II, several pronunciation errors arise. Below are some examples.

**Table 5: Pronunciation Induced Spelling Errors from Monophthongization of /aʊ/**

Words	RP	CamE	Derived spellings	Phonological Rule
counterfeit	/kaʊntəfɪt/	/kantafɪt/	cantafit	[aʊ] → a / ___ N
encounter	/ɪŋkaʊntə/	/ɪnkantə/	incanta	[aʊ] → a / ___ N
pouch	/paʊtʃ/	/puʃ/	push	[aʊ] → u / ___ ʃ
couch	/kaʊtʃ/	/kuʃ/	cush	[aʊ] → u / ___ ʃ

Table 5 above illustrates that when /aʊ/ is monophthongized to /a/, *ou* words are spelled with *a* as the case is with *counter* /kaʊntə/ and *counterfeit* which when pronounced /kanta/ and /kantafɪt/ by some CamE I/II teachers are spelled *canta* and *cantafit*. The table also reveals that when /aʊ/ is reduced to /u/, some *ou* words are spelled with *u* as *pouch* /paʊtʃ/ and *couch* /kaʊtʃ/. which, because they are respectively pronounced as /puʃ/ and /kuʃ/, tend to be spelled as <push> and <cush>. Below is the phonological rule that captures the phonological process responsible for these spelling errors in CamE.

/aʊ/ → [a] / \_\_\_  $\left( \begin{array}{l} - \text{Syll} \\ + \text{Nas} \end{array} \right)$       CamE I/II      <ou> counter → \*canta

/aʊ/ → [u] / \_\_\_  $\left( \begin{array}{l} - \text{Syll} \\ - \text{Stop} \\ + \text{DR} \end{array} \right)$       CamE I      <u> couch → \*cush

**Restructuring of RP Diphthongs or triphthongs**

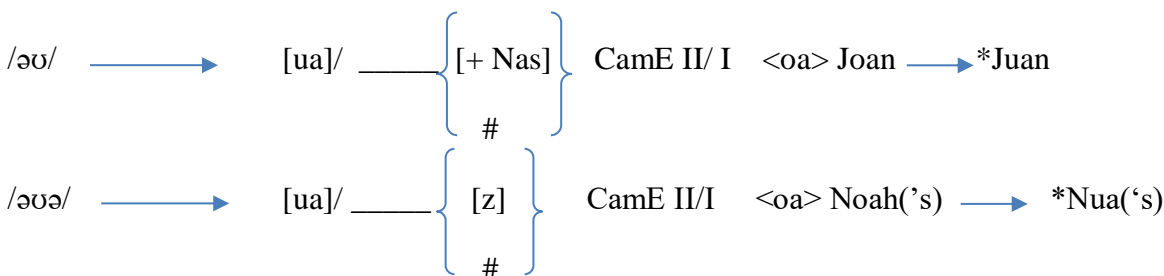
Some words are misspelled due to the fact that diphthongs, as well as the triphthongs, are restructured to /ua/. This is discussed and illustrated in 1.3.1 and 1.3.2.

### Restructuring of /əʊ/ and /əʊə/ to /ua/

The sound /əʊ/ is mainly replaced by /o/ in CamE II. Nevertheless, in some words spelled with <oa>, our data reveals that some CamE I and II speakers have the tendency to restructure this vowel to /ua/, the reason it is most likely to be spelled as <ua>. Indeed, a number of our informants did spell the <oa> of /əʊ/ as *ua* due to the divergent realization of /əʊ/ as /ua/. This again is a phenomenon mostly triggered by the mesolectal variety of CamE. The following words illustrate this finding.

Words	RP	CamE	Derived spelling	Phonological Process
Joan	/dʒəʊn/	/dʒuan/	Juan	/əʊ/ → ua/ __ N
Johanna	/dʒəʊhənə/	/dʒuana/	Joana	/əʊ/ → ua/ __ N
coagulate	/kəʊægjuleɪt/	/kuagulet/	kuagulet	/əʊ/ → ua/ __ G
boa	/bəʊə/	/bua/	bua	/əʊə/ → ua/ __ #
Noah's ark	/nəʊəz 'ɑ:k/	/nuas a:k/	Nua's ark	/əʊə/ → /ua/ __ Z

The words in table 6 above exemplify the phenomenon where, because of divergent pronunciation input from teachers who restructure /əʊ/ and /əʊə/ as /ua/, <oa> is spelled <ua>. This phenomenon is still common in the speech of CamE I/ II speakers.

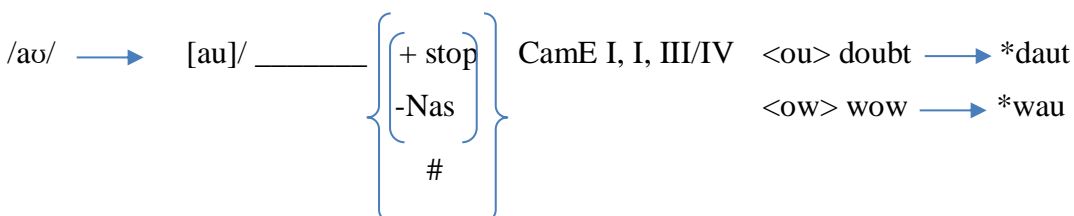


### Restructuring /aʊ/ as /au/

The restructuring of /aʊ/ as /au/, as phenomenon that typically characterises the English speech of all CamE speakers (CamE I, II, III and IV) is also responsible for spelling errors in CamE. Actually, some Cameroonian users of English have the tendency to write /aʊ/ words with *a*; words which are otherwise spelled with *ou* or *ow*. This phenomenon was noticed mostly in the writings of some secondary school respondents who as teachers pronounced the words with the derived restructured /au/. The following words illustrate this view:

Words	RP	CamE	Derived spellings	Phonological Process
doubt	/daʊt/	/daut/	daut	/aʊ/ → au/ __ t
south	/saʊ/	/saut/	saut	/aʊ/ au/ __ t
wow	/waʊ/	/wau/	wau	/aʊ/ au/ __ #
loud	/laʊd/	/laut/	laut	/aʊ/ au/ __ t

The rule capturing this spelling error is as follows:



## Spelling Errors Due to Devoicing

Another vital phonological process through which pronunciation triggers spelling mistakes in Cameroon English is devoicing. This concerns mostly the devoicing of word-final obstruents (Simo Bobda, 2008; Atechi, 2008) as /d/, /b/ and /g/, mostly as a result of pedagogic inputs. As pedagogues pronounce word-final /d/ as /t/, students tend to write <t> instead of <d> (Kouega, 1999). Similarly, when /g/ is pronounced as /k/ (Simo Bobda, 2008; Simo Bobda and Mbangwana, 2004; Atechi, 2006), students tend to write <k> or <c> instead of <g>. Data for this paper also revealed that as a result of devoicing word-final /z/ to /s/ (Simo Bobda and Mbangwana, 2004), respondents severally spelled <z> as <s>. The following table illustrates the spelling errors caused by final consonant devoicing in CamE:

Words	RP	CamE	Derived spelling	Phonological process
hug	/hʌg/	/hək/	Hok	/g/ → /k/
bug	/bʌg/	/bək/	bok, bock	/g/ → /k/
log	/lɒg/	/lɔk/	lok, lock	/g/ → /k/
wig	/wɪg/	/wɪk/	wik, wick	/g/ → /k/
pad	/pæd/	/pat/	pat	/d/ → /t/
bud	/bʌd/	/bɔt/	But, bot	/d/ → /t/
bulb	/bʌlb/	/bɔlp/	bolp, bulp	/d/ → /t/
mob	/mɒb/	/mɔp/	mop	/d/ → /t/
web	/wɛb/	/wɛp/	wep	/d/ → /t/
buzz	/bʌz/	/bus/	bus	/z/ → /s/
Liz	/lɪz/	/lis/	Lis	/z/ → /s/
cuz	/kʌz/	/kɔs/	kos	/z/ → /s/

The following rules capture the devoicing:

$$\left( \begin{array}{l} - \text{ Syll} \\ + \text{ Voice.} \end{array} \right) \longrightarrow [- \text{ voice}] / \text{ \_\_\_\_\_\_ } \# \text{ CamE I, II, III, IV} \quad \begin{array}{l} <g> \text{ hug} \longrightarrow *hok \\ <d> \text{ bud} \longrightarrow *bot \\ <b> \text{ mob} \longrightarrow *mop \\ <z> \text{ Liz} \longrightarrow *Lis \end{array}$$

## Omission of silent letters

Data for this paper also revealed that the omission of silent letters also leads to mistakes in several cases. When pedagogues use RPrised CamE (CamE III) or Americanised CamE (CamE IV) and do not pronounce silent letters such as *g, k, h, p, l, t, i* and *s*, several secondary school students tend to write the words without the silent letters. This is probably because students seem to be used to other CamE varieties (CamE I and II) wherein silent letters are often pronounced (Simo Bobda and Mbangwana, 2004). The following words illustrate this phenomenon.

Words	RP	CamE	Derived spelling	Process
knuckle	/nʌkl/	/nɔkəl/	nockle	Omission of <i>k</i>
knoll	/nɒl/	/nɔl/	nole, noll	omission of <i>l</i>
feign	/feɪn/	/fen/	fein, fane	omission of <i>g</i>
khaki	/'kʌki/	/ka'ki/	kaki	omission of <i>h</i>
psalter	/sɔltə/	/sɔta/	salter	omission of <i>p</i>
pseudonym	/sʊdənɪm/	/sɔdonɪm/	sodonym,-nim	omission of <i>p</i>



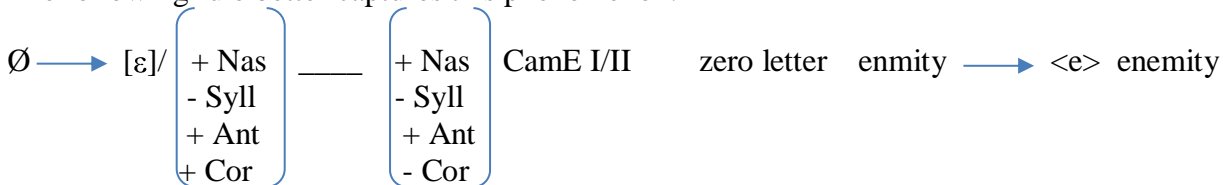
business	/bɪznɪs/	/bɪsnɪs/	bisnes	omission of <i>i</i>
isle	/aɪl/	/aɪl/	ai,eye	omission of <i>s</i>
sentence	/sɛntəns/	/sɛnɛns/	senence	omission of <i>t</i>
twenty	/twɛntɪ/	/twɛni/	tweny	omission of <i>t</i>

### Vowel Epenthesis

It is already a well-established fact that there is vowel epenthesis in several non-native Englishes such as CamE (Mbangwana, 1987). From our data, it was realized that in such words where consonant clusters are broken up through vowel epenthesis, there is spelling deviation. This concerns words such as the following:

Words	RP	CamE	Derived Spelling	Phonological Process
enmity	/ɛnmɪti/	/ɛnmɪti/	enemity	insertion of /ɛ/
small	/smɔl/	/sumɔl/	sumall	insertion of /u/
smoke	/smɔk/	/sumuk/	sumuk	insertion of /u/
smooth	/smuð/	/sumut/	sumut	insertion of /u/
milk	/mɪlk/	/milik/	milik	insertion of /i/

The following rule better captures this phenomenon:



### CONCLUSION

From the illustrations in the foregoing sections, it is clear that various phonological processes pose intelligibility problems that promote spelling mistakes in the written CamE of some secondary school students. The phonological processes, as demonstrated above, are final consonant devoicing, substitution, omission of silent letters, diphthong/ triphthong restructuring, monophthongization and vowel epenthesis. The phonological processes are mostly promoted by variations in pronunciation by teachers. As pedagogues vary from one variety to another, say from the basilect to the mesolect or from the mesolect to the acrolect, students are induced into wrong spellings. Based on these findings, I recommend that pronunciation programmes/ curricula at teacher training colleges should be harmonised and taken more seriously.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: List of Respondents

S/N	Sex	Age	Class
01	Male	12	Form 1
02	Male	12	Form 1
03	Male	09	Form 1
04	Male	11	Form 1
05	Male	11	Form 1
06	Male	11	Form 1
07	Male	11	Form 1
08	Male	10	Form 1
09	Male	10	Form 1
10	Male	10	Form 1
11	Male	09	Form 1
12	Male	11	Form 1
13	Male	11	Form 1
14	Male	11	Form 1
15	Male	09	Form 1
16	Male	11	Form 2
17	Male	10	Form 2
18	Male	10	Form 2
19	Male	11	Form 2
20	Male	10	Form 2
21	Male	10	Form 2
22	Male	10	Form 2
23	Male	10	Form 2
24	Male	10	Form 2
25	Male	10	Form 2
26	Male	11	Form 2

27	Male	12	Form 2
28	Male	12	Form 2
29	Male	12	Form 2
30	Male	13	Form 2
31	Female	12	Form 3
32	Female	13	Form 3
33	Female	13	Form 3
34	Female	12	Form 3
35	Female	16	Form 3
36	Female	13	Form 3
37	Female	13	Form 3
38	Female	13	Form 3
39	Female	12	Form 3
40	Female	13	Form 3
41	Female	13	Form 3
42	Female	13	Form 3
43	Female	12	Form 3
44	Female	15	Form 3
45	Female	14	Form 3
46	Female	15	Form 4
47	Female	15	Form 4
48	Female	16	Form 4
49	Female	15	Form 4
50	Female	14	Form 4
51	Female	16	Form 4
52	Female	15	Form 4
53	Female	17	Form 4
54	Female	15	Form 4
55	Female	14	Form 4
56	Female	14	Form 4
57	Female	14	Form 4
58	Female	15	Form 4
59	Female	15	Form 4
60	Female	14	Form 4

### Appendix B: List of Control Agents

S/N	Age	Mother Tongue	Educational Qualification	Profession	Variety
01	45	Lamso	G.C.E. O' Level and CAPIEM	Primary School Teacher	CamE I
02	43	Pinyin	GCE A' Level plus DIPES I	Secondary School Teacher	CamE II
03	37		M.A, plus DIPES II. in English Language	High School teacher/ part-time University Lecturer	CamE III