English Studies at NBU, 2021
Volume 7, Issue 2, pp. 147-166
https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.21.2.2

pISSN 2367-5705,
eISSN 2367-8704
www.esnbu.org

IMPLICIT ARGUMENTS IN UGANDAN ENGLISH

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Abstract

In standard British/American English, some transitive verbs, which are ontologically specified for objects, may be used with the objects not overtly expressed (for example, *leave*), while other transitive verbs do not permit this syntactic behavior (for example, *vacate*). The former have been referred to as verbs that allow implicit arguments. This study shows that while verbs such as *vacate* do not ideally allow implicit arguments in standard British/American English, this is permitted in Ugandan English (a non-native variety), thereby highlighting structural asymmetries between British/American English and Ugandan English, owing mainly to substrate influence and analogization. The current study highlights those structural asymmetries and ultimately uncovers some characteristic features in the structural nativization process of English in Uganda, thereby contributing to the growing larger discourse meant to fill the gaps that had characterized World Englishes scholarship, where thorough delineations of Ugandan English have been virtually absent.

Keywords: implicit arguments, Ugandan English, structural nativization, L2 English, substrate influence, analogization

Article history:
Received: 7 July 2021
Reviewed: 29 August 2021
Accepted: 30 November 2021
Published: 30 December 2021

Citation: Isingoma, B. (2021). Implicit Arguments in Ugandan English. *English Studies at NBU, 7*(2), 147-166. https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.21.2.2

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Funding
The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 754340 through a fellowship at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Study (FRIAS), University of Freiburg, Germany.

In natural languages, some transitive verbs, which are ontologically specified for objects, may be used with the objects not overtly expressed, without rendering the sentence ungrammatical, e.g. *leave* in Standard British/American English, while other transitive verbs do not permit this syntactic behavior, e.g. *vacate* (Fillmore, 1986; Iten et al., 2005). The former have been referred to as verbs that allow implicit arguments (Pethö & Kardos, 2010).The present study is set out to investigate the occurrence of sentences such as (1) in an L2 variety of English, i.e. Ugandan English (henceforth UgE), yet such sentences are said to be ungrammatical in L1 varieties such as British English (BrE) or American English (AmE) (Fillmore, 1986; Iten et al., 2005, Siemund, 2014)[1], thereby shedding more light on the structural nativization of English in Uganda in light of Schneider's (2007) model on the trajectorial development of World Englishes.

(1) (a) Did you lock?

(b) She has vacated.

Crucially, Iten et al. (2005, p. 2) state that the sentences in (1a) and (1b) are "quite bad". However, they contend that L2 speakers could easily use a sentence like "*Phyllis locked* to assert successfully that Phyllis locked the salient door" (p. 10), although they insist that "this would still be ungrammatical speech" (p. 10). Needless to echo that the production of such sentences and their acceptability by L2 speakers of English is a manifestation of structural nativization and thus an integral part of phase 3 in the evolution of New Englishes according to Schneider's (2007) Dynamic Model.

A generous nomenclature has developed as regards how to refer to the phenomenon of leaving out an argument that is ontologically specified in the lexical entries of verbs without rendering the sentence ungrammatical (2). Some scholars use, for example, "implicit arguments" (e.g. Pethö & Kardos, 2010) or "omitted arguments" (e.g. Ruppenhofer & Michaelis, 2014), while Fillmore (1986) uses "null complements". While there might be merits and demerits of using a given terminology, the present study uses "implicit arguments" simply as a descriptive term.

(2) (a) He ate.

(b) Don't even try.

[1] The labels British English (BrE) and American English (AmE) are used to refer to standard British English and standard American English.

(c) She has arrived.

(d) She has left.

Note that even though this study uses the term "implicit arguments" as a descriptive term, it subscribes to the view of transitivity as laid down by Hopper & Thompson (1980), whereby transitivity can be viewed in terms of degrees or scales, i.e. some constructions show high transitivity while others show reduced transitivity. Thus, from this perspective, while a verb such as *age* in its inchoative/intransitive use, with the meaning 'become old' (e.g. *He has aged a lot*.), is strictly monadic (i.e. it does not require or even imply a postverbal argument), the verb *eat* (e.g. *I have eaten*.) is dyadic, since it requires or implies a patient, i.e. a postverbal argument (cf. Levin & Hovav-Rappaport, 1995, p. 89). Hence, even though the OED lists the verb *eat* as both transitive and intransitive, what is seen as its intransitive use, or precisely "surface-intransitive" use (Fillmore, 1986, p. 96), could be equated to what Hopper and Thompson (1980, p. 254) regard as reduced transitivity, parallel to their use of *leave* in, e.g. *Susan left.* Crucially, Fillmore (1986, p. 99) and Iten et al. (2005, p. 1) include *leave*, in the sense used by Hopper & Thompson (1980, p. 254) above, among transitive verbs that allow implicit arguments.

Just like non-reflexive/reciprocal transitive verbs (e.g. *vacate, reach)*, reflexive/reciprocal verbs belong to two categories in BrE/AmE: (i) those that allow their postverbal arguments (i.e. reflexive/reciprocal objects) to be left out without rendering the sentence ungrammatical, e.g. *divorce, kiss, marry* (reciprocal); *dress, bathe, exercise* (reflexive); (ii) those that do not allow their postverbal arguments (reflexive/reciprocal objects) to be left out without rendering the sentence ungrammatical, e.g. *resemble*, *love, help* (reciprocal); *clothe, pride, content, ingratiate, commit, disguise* (reflexive) (Huddleston, 2002, p. 302; Gillon, 2007, p. 8; Siemund, 2014). Hence, in the current study, the two categories are considered, since, ontologically, both are specified for postverbal arguments and, while some can be used without overtly expressing their postverbal arguments, others do not allow this in BrE/AmE.

As mentioned above, not all transitive verbs allow postverbal implicit arguments. Hence, according to Fillmore (1986) and Iten et al. (2005), the very synonyms (or near-

synonyms) of the verbs in (2) require their objects to be overtly expressed. Thus all the sentences in (3) are illicit:

(3) (a) * He devoured.
(b) * Don't even attempt.
(c) * She has reached.
(d) * She has vacated.

Semantic nuances between the synonymous verbs are said to be responsible for the (non-)omissibility of the postverbal arguments (Fillmore, 1986; Velasco & Muñoz, 2002; Ruda, 2017). Hence, each synonymous verb has its own selection restrictions, which allow it to accommodate an implicit argument or not. Crucially, this grammatical property can only become relevant if contextual variables permit it. Thus, the discoursal and situational contexts, as well as encyclopedic information, come into play in order to allow the occurrence of an implicit argument with a verb whose selection restrictions license omissibility (cf. Németh, 2000; Németh & Bikok, 2010).

Two broad categories of implicit arguments have been suggested (Fillmore, 1986), that is, definite and indefinite implicit arguments and these have been adopted in studies on implicit arguments (e.g. Glass, 2014; Ruda, 2017). Let us consider (4):

(4) (a) Jane is cooking.
(b) Jane is waiting.

The sentence in (4a), treated by Fillmore (1986, p. 96) as an indefinite implicit argument, is felicitous as the recoverability of the missing object is achieved via enrichment thanks to encyclopedic information, i.e. we know that usually people cook food. By contrast, (4b), which Fillmore (1986, p. 96) regards as a definite implicit argument, can only be legitimate, if any of the following possibilities comes into play: first, if there is a specific discourse referent mentioned earlier, whereby the implicit argument has an anaphoric relationship with the antecedent. Hence, the recoverability here is premised on anaphoricity, for example, involving the antecedent *I have to send the book now,* so that the missing object of *wait* is construed as *the book* or the act of *sending the book*. Second, the felicity of (4b) could also be due to the fact that the recoverability rests on cataphoricity, whereby the following sentence specifies what *Jane is waiting for*. In addition, the third option that accounts for the felicity of (4b) is that the recoverability could also be premised on the context, i.e. a contextual referent could be in mind, e.g. Jane

is at a bus stop or in front of a vaccination center, so that the interlocutor should be able to tell what Jane is waiting for based on the context, i.e. waiting for the bus or for vaccination, respectively.

While the literature above argues that the verbs in (3) preclude the occurrence of implicit arguments in L1 English, there is some evidence that there are instances where the verbs in question have been used with implicit arguments by L1 English speakers, as shown in the following examples (5):

(5) (a) I'm awfully sorry but in the morning we have to *vacate.* (BNC)

(b) I say bugger the diet and go full sugar full fat and *devour.* (COCA)

For Iten et al. (2005: 13), even though such examples have been heard among L1 English speakers, they are "nonetheless ungrammatical". Conversely, for Glass (2014) (as shown in (6) below) and Ruda (2014), such sentences are discourse-specific to a given community of practice or a given register, where assumptions about the missing referents are shared among interlocutors, since they share a common ground. For example, waiters can easily use *devour* without its object while talking about a patron's way of eating in a restaurant, since this use foregrounds the most salient information.

(6) (a) He *devoured.* Then we ordered a molten cake.

(b) […] and they *vacated* at the end of the lease.

(c) I *attempted* and failed miserably…

It might thus be right to indeed assume that such usage is restricted to a given community of practice in L1 English. A search in the *British National Corpus* (BNC), for example, shows just two entries for the verb *vacate(s/d)* used with postverbal implicit arguments, i.e. a 0.02 normalized frequency per one million words.

Implicit arguments in L2 English

Implicit arguments in L2 English have not yet received thorough delineations. However, there has been sporadic mention of the occurrence of implicit arguments in L2 varieties of English where L1 varieties prohibit it. Jowitt (2019, p. 89) mentions the verbs *disappoint, enjoy* and *mention* as verbs that occur with implicit arguments in Nigerian English, while Schneider (2007, p. 170) mentions *reach* and *waive* in Indian English

(IndE). For Ghanaian English, Blench (2016, p. 19) lists *greet, reach* and *resemble*, while Huber & Dako (2004, p. 855) mention *afford*. It is, however, worthwhile to point out that, although Jowitt (2019, p. 89) claims that the use of *disappoint* with an implicit argument (as in *She always likes to disappoint*) is idiosyncratic to Nigerian English, this usage is also found in both BrE and AmE, as shown in example (7):

(7) His latest novel does not disappoint. (OALD)[2]

Moreover, a quick search in the *Global Web-based English* (GloWbE) corpus shows 472 entries for BrE and only 31 entries for Nigerian English. Similarly, while *enjoy* (in the sense of 'have a good time') is not used in BrE with an implicit argument, AmE uses it in such a manner (cf. Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Buregeya (2019, p. 91-93), first of all, echoes Hocking's (1974) admonition to East Africans not to use the verbs *reach, enjoy, afford, discuss* or *get* without their overt postverbal arguments. To these, Buregeya (2019) adds 13 verbs that Kenyans use in this way and provides examples, some of which are given in (8):

(8) (a) […] I really *appreciate*.
(b) A creoloid has native speakers while a pidgin does not *have.*
(c) Please *ignore* if you have already *taken*.

While Buregeya (2019), following Hocking (1974), includes *discuss* on the list of the verbs that preclude postverbal implicit arguments in L1 English, the OED and LDOCE provide the following sentences (9), in which there is the occurrence of implicit arguments:[3]

(9) (a) Small groups allow people to interact, *discuss* and ask questions […] (LDOCE)
(b) While they were *discussing*, he forgot to whistle […] (OED)
(c) Shame-based intellectuals love to *discuss* and complexify. (OED)

Thus, the difference between BrE and KenE with respect to the use of *discuss* with implicit arguments might be an issue of frequency rather than total preclusion in BrE.

[2] OALD = Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary
[3] LDOCE = Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

As far as UgE is concerned, similar mention of the use of implicit arguments with verbs that do not allow them in L1 varieties has been made by Fisher (2000, p. 60) and Isingoma (2014, p. 52), who provide the following examples ((10) and (11)), respectively:

(10) (a) Those who cannot *afford* should find another school.
(b) Have you done the work? Yes, we have *done.*

(11) We closed the factory *basing* on a number of irregularities […]

In L1 English, *afford* (10a) requires an overt object, while the reply in (10b) should be realized as either a full sentence, which would require the object to be overtly expressed (i.e. *Yes, I have done it/the work*), or as a reduced reply, which would require the removal of the lexical verb (i.e. *Yes, I have*), or simply as *Yes*. As for (11), L1 English would use *based*, or *basing ourselves*, or *basing our decision* (see discussion in Section 4).

As pointed out earlier, many of the cases of implicit arguments in L2 varieties are just mentioned in passing and appear to be based on impressionistic judgments without a solid empirical basis and, above all, usually without explicatory analyses – a gap that this study sets out to fill.

Data and methodology

In 2018, the written component of the ICE-Uganda was released. However, though well balanced, the corpus is very small, with barely 400,000 words[4] and thus provides only a few cases of implicit arguments. As Mukherjee (2009, p. 131-2) puts it, small corpora such as this do not provide enough data for an analysis of lexico-grammatical phenomena. Unsurprisingly, many of the verbs under investigation (see list below) either are absent from the corpus or are used in a few sentences with overt postverbal arguments. For example, the verbs *resemble* and *vacate* yield only three incidents each in the ICE-Uganda and it is therefore not surprising that none of them has implicit arguments.

[4] See https://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/engling/researchUG3.html.

Due to the problem of data sparseness, posed by small corpora, Mukherjee (2009, p. 132) reasons that while Internet data may be problematic with regard to teasing out the actual authors, "web-derived corpora with texts from online text archives" may provide a viable alternative. For that matter, similar to Mukherjee (2009), this study uses web-based data (12,000,000 words) that was collected by Isingoma and Meierkord (2019) and has been called Web-UG. As Isingoma & Meierkord (2019) put it, Web-UG was compiled using Sketch Engine's WebBootCat (Kilgarriff et al., 2014) and procedures applied by Davies and Fuchs (2015) in their compilation of GloWbE. The retrieval of Ugandan websites was done using highly frequent 3-grams as seeds, while unauthentic websites (i.e. those that were not Ugandan), e.g. mirror sites of Google, were excluded, and data was downloaded between May and July 2017 (Isingoma & Meierkord, 2019: 311). While this is a less controlled and arguably rudimentary corpus translating into what the compilers have dubbed as "a quick and dirty" corpus, it is, nevertheless, "reflective of recent UgE" (Isingoma & Meierkord, 2019, p. 311). Consequently, the corpus is not tagged or parsed, but it is searchable, since it is possible to investigate an unannotated corpus, using concordancing software (Esimaje & Hunston, 2019).

The verbs used in this study belong to the category of verbs that do not allow postverbal implicit arguments in BrE/AmE (cf. Fillmore, 1986; Iten et al., 2005; Siemund 2014). The verbs were selected randomly from the three works, provided they belonged to the two broad categories under consideration, namely: reflexive/reciprocal verbs and non-reflexive/reciprocal verbs. The dichotomy "definite vs. indefinite implicit arguments" was not explicitly investigated, although the 2 categories are indeed present in the sentences under consideration. The following verbs were searched in the corpora: *vacate*, *pledge*, *vow*, *lock*, *resemble*, *discover*, *afford*, *base, reach, oppose*, *devour, peruse, await, pride*, *commit*, *disguise*, *appreciate*. The verbs were searched in Web-UG, using AntConc (cf. Anthony, 2014). Each verb under consideration was typed in the search box in a lemmatized manner. Cases with implicit arguments (as well as those with overtly expressed arguments) were identified manually.

Results and Discussion

From the data in Web-UG, a mixed attestation of the verbs under consideration was established as regards their occurrence with implicit arguments, as shown in the following table:

Table 1

Occurrence of implicit arguments in Web-UG

Verb	**Attestation/Normalized Frequency (1 million words)**	**Verb**	**Attestation/Normalized Frequency (1 million words)**
afford	19 (1.54)	oppose	06 (0.48)
appreciate	16 (1.30)	peruse	09 (0.73)
await	08 (0.65)	pledge	03 (0.24)
base	129 (10.48)	pride	13 (1.05)
commit	55 (4.47)	reach	03 (0.24)
devour	04 (0.33)	resemble	03 (0.24)
discover	13 (1.05)	vacate	16 (1.30)
disguise	30 (2.43)	vow	04 (0.32)
lock	01 (0.08)		

For some verbs, the number of occurrences is relatively high (e.g. *commit, disguise, vacate, afford*), while for others there is a relatively low attestation (e.g. *vow, discover, lock*). Prima facie, two main reasons may be considered in order to account for this: first, although this corpus is bigger than the ICE-Uganda, it is still a comparatively small corpus. For example, the verb *resemble* is used with implicit arguments only 3 times, thereby representing a 0.24 normalized frequency per one million words, and there is no single occurrence of the verb used with the L1 English obligatory reciprocal pronoun *each other/one another* in the corpus. Hence, the 3 entries depict 100% of the occurrence of the reciprocal verb used in UgE without its postverbal argument (see Figure 1 below and discussion thereof). In other words, there are simply few discourse situations depicting the use of *resemble* as a reciprocal verb in the corpus. If we compare the normalized frequency of *resemble* in Web-UG (12,000,000 words) and that in the 100 million-word BNC, we realize that the BNC has 29 entries of *resemble(d) each other/one another*, with

the normalized frequency of 0.29, just slightly above Web-UG's 0.24 frequency in the use of *resemble* without the reciprocal pronoun. Thus, the 0.24 (Web-UG) and 0.29 (BNC) frequencies depict the parallel general usage of *resemble* without the reciprocal pronoun in UgE and with the reciprocal pronoun in BrE. The second point is that, as Isingoma and Meierkord (2019, p. 318) observe, Ugandans are usually torn between exonormativity and the actual daily linguistic practices in the country. Therefore, overly prudent Ugandans will try their level best to write carefully in a bid to avoid Ugandanisms, even though the forces of substrate influence and other L2 learning processes such as analogization may still affect how they speak. Under such circumstances, one can assume that for such a category of Ugandans, where there are occurrences of implicit arguments with some of the verbs under consideration, that may be an artefact of what Ruda (2017) and Glass (2014) have termed discourse-specific idiosyncrasies of given communities of practice.

The picture presented in Table 1 can be enriched by the graph below (concomitantly with the raw dada in the Appendix). The graph juxtaposes the occurrence of implicit arguments with the occurrence of overtly expressed arguments with the selected verbs in Web-UG:

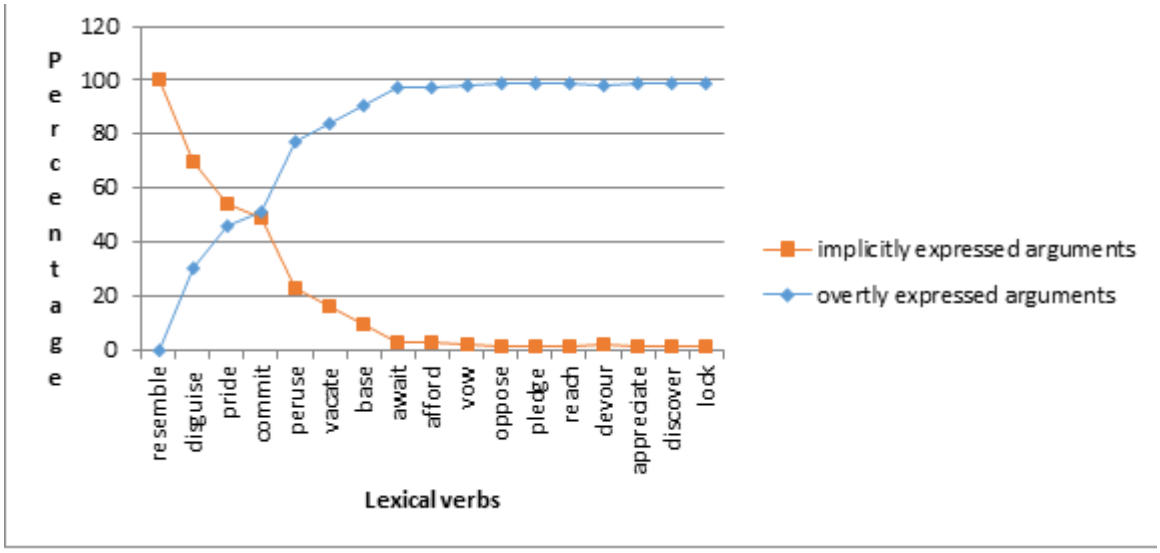

Figure 1. Overt vs. implicit arguments in Web-UG

As has already emerged from Table 1, *resemble,* in its reciprocal use, occurs with implicit arguments in all the 3 hits (100%), which leaves no occurrence with overtly expressed reciprocal pronouns. It is followed by *disguise*, for which 62.50% of the

occurrences are implicit argument uses out of the 48 hits reflecting its occurrence with both overtly and implicitly expressed arguments. Following on are verbs such as *pride* (54.16%), *commit* (48.67%), *peruse* (22.50%), *vacate* (15.84%) and *base* (9.46%). A pattern seems to suggest itself with reflexive/reciprocal verbs showing more preference for implicit arguments in UgE. This is statistically significant with a p.value of 0.0002. However, some non-reflexive/reciprocal verbs such as *peruse* and *vacate* also show high incidences of occurring with implicit arguments in UgE comparably with the BrE use of verbs such as *concur* with implicit arguments, where 68 out of the 250 hits of the verb's usage in the BNC (i.e. 27.2%) involve implicit arguments. However, many of the non-reflexive/reciprocal verbs have relatively low incidences of occurrence with implicit arguments, e.g. *pledge* (5.65%), *afford* (2.56%), while *devour* and *oppose* have 1.99% and 1.47%, respectively. Others have much lower incidences. Contextual and discoursal situations may be responsible for the varied incidences and evidence from the BNC also paints a somewhat similar picture, in that while *concur* has up to 27.2% of implicit arguments in BrE, *promise* has only 3.66% out of the total 5,953 hits where it is used.

The verb *base*, in many of the sentences in the corpus (i.e. Web-UG), is used with the *-ing* form, as in (12).

(12) God rejected his plea *basing* on the fact that this particular…

In (12), BrE/AmE would use the participial form *based* or the *-ing* form + an obligatory reflexive pronoun or a full NP, which acts as the direct object. That is, (12) would, for example, be realized as (13) in BrE/AmE:

(13) (a) God rejected his plea *based* on the fact that this particular…
(b) God rejected his plea *basing himself* on the fact that this particular…
(c) God rejected his plea *basing his decision* on the fact that this particular…

One might argue that possibly the UgE usage in (12) is also participial with the only difference being that UgE uses the present participle (*basing*), while BrE/AmE uses the past participle (*based*). However, there is evidence where UgE uses the verb in a non-particpial form, as exemplified in (14) from Web-UG, and this use appears to be the basis for the use of *basing* in (12):

(14) (a) What did you *base* on to feature these artists?
(b) Many of us actually *base* on people.
(c) I want to *base* on the code of conduct.
(d) He did not *base* on the past to target a […]
(e) […] farmers should *base* on the quality of piglets.
(f) The district would *base* on the work plan.

It thus seems clear that the UgE usage of the verb *base* is a case of an implicit argument in parallel with verbs such as *reach* or *commit*.

According to Huddleston (2002, p. 302), the verb *resemble* in its reciprocal use cannot be used without overtly indicating the reciprocal pronoun *each other/one another*. By contrast, the 0.24 normalized frequency per one million words of occurrences in Web-UG (amounting to 100% of all the incidents) show that *resemble* can be used in its reciprocal meaning with the reciprocal pronoun omitted. Similarly, according to Siemund (2014, p. 52), verbs such as *pride, ingratiate, content* are only useable reflexively and verbs such as *commit* and *manifest* have the obligatory reflexive use if they mean 'pledge' and 'appear', respectively. The results from Web-UG show a high incidence of occurrence (at varying degrees) of *disguise* (69.76%), *pride* (54.16%), *commit* (48.67%) in UgE with the obligatory reflexive pronoun argument left out.

It is important to note that although Siemund (2014, p. 52) insists that *commit* in the sense of 'pledge' requires an obligatory reflexive pronoun, the OED shows that it can be used without the pronoun in this sense. Moreover, a simple search of *commit(s)* used without a reflexive pronoun in GloWbE gives 88 entries in BrE. This suggests that *commit* seems to have joined the category of reflexive verbs that allow their reflexive pronouns to be omitted without rendering the sentence illicit (e.g. *wash, exercise*) in BrE. This is not surprising as speakers of BrE/AmE have used analogical leveling to regularize many grammatical patterns in their language (cf. Isingoma, 2018, p. 395). In fact, the examples provided by the OED showing the use of *commit* with an implicit reflexive object are as recent as 1982, as opposed to the examples where a reflexive object is overt, which date back to 1839. In addition, the OED indicates that this meaning was only added in June 2002 (at that time in a draft form). It is not clear, however, whether the presence of *commit* in Web-UG with an implicit reflexive object is a result of Ugandans mirroring BrE/AmE speakers or it is a result of their own innovation based on leveling or substrate influence (as will be seen shortly). In a similar vein, the OED lists *pride* as a verb that can be used without its reflexive object as in *My brother, I pride in your courage* (OED, 2009:

s.v. pride, v., Anna M. Wilson Days Mohammed 39). However, unlike *commit*, which yields many hits in GloWbE, *pride* has only three in the British and one in the US section; this compares with ten hits in the Kenyan and nine in the Indian section. Going by this, one might assume that it is more of an L2 feature, despite the fact that the OED shows examples that date back to the 14th century. Crucially, the OED quotations, the instances in GloWbE or even the COHA[5] (where there are just a handful of entries) and the Ugandan data could also mean that while *pride* might have been used more widely with an implicit argument in BrE/AmE in the past, this use has declined in contemporary L1 English but it remains acceptable in UgE.

As already pointed out earlier, analogization is likely to play an important role in the occurrence of both non-reflexive/reciprocal verbs (e.g. *vacate, reach*) and reflexive/reciprocal verbs (*e.g. commit, resemble*) without their obligatory objects, since there are a number of verbs in BrE/AmE that are used without overtly indicating the postverbal arguments, as either full NPs or (reflexive/reciprocal) pronouns. We could adopt Haspelmath's (2007, p. 2010) dictum about reciprocal verbs which are no longer used with the reciprocal objects such as *kiss*. Haspelmath (2007) states that the non-overt expression of the reciprocal pronoun is realized due to frequent use and the resultant holistic storage of the verb in the mental lexicon. This analysis may be extrapolated to reflexive verbs listed above. Thus, this use makes both L1 and L2 speakers (in relation to the verb *commit*) and L2 speakers (in relation to e.g. the verb *disguise*) level the usage of these verbs in analogy with verbs such as *adjust* (*oneself*), *hide* (*oneself*) for which omitting the reflexive object is grammatical.

While analogization may be at work here, substrate influence also favours the use of such verbs without overtly expressing their objects. For example, the equivalents of the verbs *afford, reach* and *peruse* in five commonly used Ugandan L1s below (cf. Namyalo et al., 2016) are realized as shown in Table 2 and can be used with postverbal implicit arguments:[6]

Table 2

L1s' equivalents for afford, reach, peruse

[5] The Corpus provides records from the year 1810.

[6] Luganda, Runyankole and Rutooro are Bantu languages, while Acholi is a Western Nilotic language and Lugbara is a Central Sudanic language.

English	Luganda	Runyankole	Rutooro	Acholi	Lugbara
afford	-sobola	-sobora	-sobora	twero	eco
reach	-tuuka	-hika	-taaha	oo	can
peruse	-soma	-soma	-soma	kwan	la

All the L1 verbs can be used with postverbal implicit arguments. For example, the following sentences are licit in Luganda (15) and Acholi (16):[7]

(15) (a) Monika y-a-tuuk-a eka bulungi
Monica 3s-PAST-reach-FV home well
'Monica reached home well.'

(b) Monika y-a-tuuk-a bulungi
Monica 3s-PAST-reach-FV well
'Monica reached well.'

(16) (a) Monika o-oo gang maber
Monica 3s-reach.PAST home well
'Monica reached home well.'

(b) Monika o-oo maber
Monica 3s-reach.PAST well
'Monica reached well.'

One important thing that we need to note here is that the L1 verbs in the table above not only mean *afford, reach* or *peruse*, but also they mean *manage, arrive* and *read*, respectively. In other words, while English has synonyms that behave differently as regards their syntax, the L1s do not have this kind of varied syntax since instead of two verbs with subtle semantic differences, there is only one general verb. The synonyms in English behave differently because of the semantic nuances between them (Fillmore, 1986; Velasco & Muñoz, 2002; Isingoma, 2020). For example, as regards semantic nuances between synonyms, Isingoma (2020) shows that while *attempt* and *try* are indeed synonymous, in that both mean 'to make an effort to do something' (OALD), they differ denotationally as *attempt* involves an additional denotational specification on the

[7] For the Acholi verb, the past tense is tonally realized.

referent, i.e. the theme of *attempt* is usually difficult. This additional semantics is not specified when *try* is used. What we observe with respect to *attempt* vs. *try* is intralinguistic synonymy. In a situation where we have equivalent meanings in two different languages, we are effectively dealing with synonymy as well but this time round it is interlinguistic synonymy (cf. Edmonds & Hirst, 2002). Hence, the intralinguistic behavior for the English synonyms may extrapolate to interlinguistic synonymy, thereby allowing for syntactic variability between the languages under consideration. Thus, while *peruse* has the denotational specification of 'read in a careful way' (cf. OALD), its equivalent in Acholi (*kwan*), for example, does not have that specification, since it more precisely means *read*. Thus Acholi *kwan* behaves syntactically like English *read* and not like *peruse*. Relevantly, while the syntax of *kwan* thus transfers easily in the L2 English use of *read* for these speakers, the (near-)synonym *peruse* results in analogical levelling if speakers transfer their L1 syntax. As is clear, *read* is more common than *peruse*, and levelling will tend to follow the syntactic behavior of the more common verb. From the foregoing, one may surmise that an L2 speaker of English may have recourse to both forces at the same time, i.e. substrate influence and analogization, since the results will be the same, i.e. using a verb such as *peruse*, *afford,* or *reach* with a postverbal implicit argument, as observed in the Ugandan corpus. Evidently, how and to what extent the two forces interact is an interesting area but for the current purpose is outside the scope of this study.

Two of the languages above, which are non-Bantu (i.e. Acholi and Lugbara) use non-reflexive verbs as the equivalents of the English reflexive verbs, i.e. Lugbara uses *oyo so* 'make a promise' for *commit oneself*, *oja wura* 'change colour' for *disguise oneself* and *ma afuri* 'have pride' for *pride oneself*. A similar situation holds for Acholi, where *oporo* 'pretend', *cike* 'promise' and *tye ki awaka* 'have pride' are used for *disguise oneself, commit oneself* and *pride oneself*, respectively. For the Bantu languages (i.e. Luganda, Runyankole and Rutooro), reciprocalization and reflexivization are coded by means of a morpheme on the verb complex, resulting in one word. For example, in Rutooro *disguise oneself* is realized as *-efoora,* with the grapheme 'e' encoding reflexivity. But the equivalent of *commit oneself* is realized non-reflexively in Rutooro, i.e. *-raganiza* 'promise'. Similar patterns hold for Runyankole and Luganda. Hence, the use of non-reflexive equivalents in L1s and morphological reflexives/reciprocals (as opposed to the periphrastic English reflexives/reciprocals) favour the use of reflexive/reciprocal verbs without overtly

expressing the reflexive/reciprocal pronouns in UgE. However, the proviso here, as mentioned above, is establishing to what extent analogization or substrate influence contributes to the peculiar use of verbs with implicit arguments in UgE and to what degree they interact to influence the UgE usage. For now, we can only content ourselves with the fact that they play some role in the state of affairs described above.

Conclusion

As seen in this exposition, implicit arguments are used in UgE with verbs that are said to prohibit them in BrE/AmE. This points to the structural divergences that set apart UgE from BrE/AmE and therefore provides more evidence of the structural nativization of English in Uganda. However, UgE shares this phenomenon with other L2 varieties of English (e.g. KenE), although the extent of usage and array of the verbs involved are different. While Buregeya (2019, p. 92) states that the use of implicit arguments in KenE seems to be possible with every verb that requires an obligatory postverbal argument in BrE/AmE, in UgE this is not the case. Some verbs or some uses of verbs do not allow implicit arguments in UgE. The verb *eat,* for example, cannot be used anaphorically outside replies to polar questions, e.g. in UgE **Jane ate* cannot be a reply to *Where is my cake*?, as is the case in BrE/AmE (cf. Fillmore, 1986). Similarly, a sentence like **The clothes were wet, so I dried* (cf. Huddleston, 2002) is not allowed in UgE. In the L1s under consideration here, the equivalents of these sentences are not allowable either. While the L1s allow a wide range of verbs to be used with implicit arguments, not all the verbs in those languages allow implicit arguments in every situation (see Isingoma, 2020 for an analysis of implicit arguments in Rutooro). Hence, while the use of implicit arguments is pervasive in UgE compared to BrE/AmE, it does not involve all verbs or all uses of a given verb.

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Appendix

Occurrence with overt vs. implicit arguments

Verb	Verb type	Overt arguments	Implicit arguments	Total	Proportion of occurrence with implicit arguments in percentage
resemble	Reflexive/reciprocal	00	03	03	100
disguise	Reflexive/reciprocal	13	30	43	69.76
pride	Reflexive/reciprocal	11	13	24	54.16
commit	Reflexive/reciprocal	58	55	113	48.67
peruse	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	31	09	40	22.50
vacate	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	85	16	101	15.84
base	Reflexive/reciprocal	1208	129	1337	09.64
await	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	287	08	295	2.71
afford	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	721	19	740	2.56
vow	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	192	04	196	2.04
oppose	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	402	06	408	1.47
pledge	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	227	03	230	1.30
reach[8]	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	242	03	245	1,22
devour	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	197	04	201	1.99
appreciate	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	1348	16	1364	1,17
discover	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	1175	13	1188	1.09
lock	Non-reflexive/reciprocal	100	01	101	0.99

[8] Only frequencies relating to the meaning 'arrive at a place' were considered in the count. This is premised on the fact that a given sense of a verb may allow implicit arguments, while other senses may not (Fillmore, 1986, p. 100)