# Word order in additional language English spoken by multilinguals

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This paper reports on a study of word order in the spoken English of seven Congolese refugees who have recently arrived in Norway. Given that English is likely to be these speakers' primary language of communication in Norway before they require a working command of Norwegian, a description of their word-order preferences in English is a useful starting point for future studies of potential cross-linguistic influence from their English production to their Norwegian production.

The seven participants share language backgrounds to the extent that they speak one or more Bantu languages, e.g. Swahili and/or Kinyabwisha, and English. Furthermore, they acquired all or most of their knowledge of English while living in Uganda. On the basis of this, it was hypothesized that their English production would comply with the syntax of Standard English to a great degree, but also display features that could be explained with reference to characteristics of Ugandan English and Bantu languages. This hypothesis was further refined on the basis of previous research, which indicated that one might expect to find a higher frequency of left-dislocation than in Standard English (cf. e.g. Bamiro 1995: 197, Meierkord 2004: 128, Makalela 2007: 139, Mestrie 2010: 529, Nassenstein 2016: 413). The following research question formed the starting point for the investigation: In the spoken English of Congolese refugees, is there evidence of left-dislocation which complies with what one might expect from English learned in Uganda? Left-dislocation comprises an element (often a noun phrase) placed at the left periphery of a clause, with a co-referent pronoun in the core of the clause (Biber et al 1999: 138, 956; Winkle 2015: 111; Ssempuuma 2017: 37; Leuckert & Rüdiger 2020: 37, 48).

The material comprises one interview with each of the seven speakers. These vary in length from approximately 7 minutes to approximately 15.5 minutes, and in the number of words produced by the informants from 545 to 1,704. There is a general correlation between length in time and number of words, but there is no absolute linear relationship between these two variables. The material was transcribed using Word, and all clauses produced by the informants were examined to determine whether they contained left-dislocation. Clauses containing left-dislocation were then coded for central features to do with the form and function (syntactic and discourse) of the left-dislocation.

All the participants exhibited a considerably higher frequency of left-dislocations than that reported for Standard English by Biber et al (1999: 957). Most of these were realized by noun phrases, and many of these phrases were pronoun-headed, which is rare, judging from

the lack of reports of this feature in previous research (but see Winkle 2015: 129). The vast majority of the co-referent pronouns functioned syntactically as subjects, which is in line with previous research (Lange 2012, Winkle 2015, Ssempuuma 2017). The discourse functions were varied and in many cases involved several functions simultaneously, and more details of these will be provided in the conference presentation.