IJELS

English Sentence Patterns in Cameroonian Book Blurbs

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
	This paper examines Cameroonian book blurbs, with a focus on identifying and analysing the various sentence patterns used by Cameroonian blurb writers in producing their blurbs. Data for the study are collected from 80 blurbs of books written and published in Cameroon, and in English. The books are randomly selected from four main fields: language, social sciences, hard sciences and fiction. The data are analysed based on the multidimensional perspective of the genre theory; with an inclination on the grammatical features of genres. The analyses focus not only on presenting the frequencies of the various sentence patterns identified in Cameroonian blurbs, but also on determining the functions of the patterns used in these blurbs. The findings reveal that Cameroonian writers make use of simple sentences, complex sentences and elliptical syntactic patterns in the various moves of their blurbs to realize different communicative intentions of the moves. These communicative intentions combine to realize the academic and promotional communicative purposes of the genre.

1. Introduction

Book blurbs are short descriptive texts, usually found on the back cover of published books. According to Bhatia (2004), blurbs belong to the colony of promotional genres, with the main communicative purpose being the "description and evaluation of the book in order to influence the future actions, attitudes and judgements of the readers" (p. 170). For this communicative purpose to be realized a number of communicative intentions have to be realized within the text. These include summarizing and evaluating the publication, attracting and convincing readership, providing the author's credentials, and identifying the market for which the book is suitable, all these with the aim of persuading potential customers to buy copies of the book (Valor, 2005). Therefore, book blurbs not only offer an academic description of books, but also serve as an appropriate and conventional means by which publishers promote their publications.

Kathpalia (1997) and Bhatia (2004) assign a six-move rhetorical structure to the typical book blurb. These include:

1. Headlines
2. Justifying the book
3. Appraising the book
4. Establishing credentials
5. Endorsements
6. Targeting the market

According to Kathpalia (1997, p. 18):

> While the opening moves *Headlines* and *Justifying the book* have the function of attracting readership and convincing them that the book is mainstream and/or new, the central move *Appraising the book* summarizes

and evaluates the book in question. As for *Establishing credentials* and *Endorsements*, they are proof of value moves which authenticate the book by providing the author's credentials and by quoting book reviews from established sources respectively. Finally, *Targeting the market* identifies the market for which the book is suitable.

Each of the six moves plays an important role in the realization of the communicative purpose of the genre. Previous studies have identified the use of these moves in Cameroonian book blurbs. However, it is difficult to see a Cameroonian blurb that has all six moves (Chindo, 2010 & Fornkwa, 2014).

Blurbs are not only conventionalized at the level of the rhetorical structure as seen above. According to Bhatia (1997a & 2004), conventionalization equally extends to the lexico-grammatical features, rhetorical strategies, text patterning and inter-discursive relations of the genre. Despite these conventional and institutionalized textual artefacts, the structure and contents of book blurbs vary greatly according to culture, discipline and the private intentions of some authors (Kathpalia, 1997). This, therefore, serves as a premise for us to investigate sentence patterns used by Cameroonian writers to realize the communicative intentions of this genre.

2. Literature Review
The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the genre theory. According to Bhatia (1997a: 313, 2004: 22), "genre analysis is the study of situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalized or professional settings". Bhatia (2002: 6) elaborates this definition by pointing out that:

> Analysing genre means investigating instances of conventionalized or institutionalized textual artefacts in the context of specific institutional and disciplinary practices, procedures and cultures, in order to understand how members of specific discourse communities construct, interpret and use these genres to achieve their community goals and why they write the way they do.

It is perceived here that such an investigation will primarily offer a linguistic explanation, instead of linguistic description of the textual artefacts used in specific institutional and disciplinary contexts, because it is intended to account for why members of specific professional communities use language the way they do. The investigation needs to focus on four main elements: institutional community goals and communicative purposes, textual artefacts or genres, discursive practices, procedures and processes, and discourse community membership (Bhatia, 1999). An accurate framework for analysing genre will therefore integrate these four elements.

In order to account for why members of specific professional communities use language the way they do, the analysis of professional genres can focus on determining how language is used in a professional context to do things (Bhatia, 2004); to give voice to social action (Martin, 1985), thus striking the "balance between analysis of text on the one hand, and social action on the other" (Bhatia, 2004:159). This is because any textual strategy (linguistic, rhetorical or cognitive) is used to realize a social function. The objectives of this study is thus to investigate how language is used to express the social functions of book blurbs in the Cameroonian context.

According to Bhatia (2004), the genre theory is multidimensional in nature and usually incorporates issues on move structure, linguistic realization, rhetorical strategies, generic variation, text patterning and inter-discursivity within particular genres. Relating to linguistic realization, Bhatia (1993) proposes three levels for such analysis: analysis of lexico-grammatical features, analysis of text-patterning or textualization, and/or structural interpretation of the text-genre.

With regard to the analysis of lexico-grammatical features of a text, a large-scale corpus-based statistical analysis of a representative sample of the variety in question can be done by studying the specific features of language that are predominantly used in the variety to which the text belongs (ibid: 24-25). Such an analysis may focus on the statistical use of some language features such as the use of various tenses, certain types of sentences, clauses, words or expressions in the corpus. However relevant, such analyses fall short of providing "adequate information about the way communicative purpose is accomplished in a particular genre" due to the fact that they emphasize only surface features (Bhatia, 1993:25). It is, therefore, necessary for such analyses to be complemented by advancing "insights to the rationale underlying the selection and distribution of surface linguistic features" (ibid: 26).

Based on this dimension of the genre theory, our analysis of Cameroonian book blurbs will therefore not only focus on identifying the sentence patterns of these blurbs, but also on offering explanations as to why such patterns are employed; that is, how they contribute to the realization of the communicative purposes of the genre.

Previous studies have shown how grammatical features, in general, and sentence patterns, in particular, are used to realize various communicative intentions in some genres. Valor (2005) identifies the abundant use of intensifying adverbs, positive evaluative adjectives and superlative constructions, and other linguistic and discourse strategies to praise the books and the authors in blurbs. Bhatia (2004: 170) observes "the use of a range of adjectives, complex nominals and verbs" which all combine to realize both the academic and promotional functions of book blurbs. Cacchiani (2007) identifies the lexico-grammatical patterns used for evaluation and intensification in order to realize the promotional and marketing functions of the book blurb. In an analysis of blurbs of five books in the series *Understanding Language Series*, Muhammad (2015) identifies the abundant use of positive evaluating adjectives, superlative constructions, ellipsis, the address form *you*, and curiosity arousers and some of the linguistic devices employed by blurbers in order to realize the communicative purposes of the genre. Küçüksakarya (2016), in a linguistic analysis of Turkish novels' blurbs examines the use of parts of speech, tenses and clause types and advances explanations as to how these language devices contribute to the realization of the persuasive function of the blurbs. Fornkwa (2020) examines the lexical features of Cameroonian blurbs and comes out with findings showing that Cameroonian blurb writers use verbs, nouns, positive evaluative adjectives and adverbs, to realize various communicative intentions in the different moves of the blurbs, which all combine to realize the academic and promotional communicative purposes of the genre, hence advertising the book described or its author in the eyes of the target population. From the literature reviewed above, it is evident that most previous works on lexico-grammatical features of book blurbs have focused on the use of parts of speech in the genre. This study moves on to the syntactic level in order to examine the sentence patterns used in this genre.

3. Methodology

Data for this study include blurbs of books written and published in Cameroon, and in English. The data have been stratified according to four main fields in which Cameroonians commonly publish books: language, social sciences, hard sciences and fiction. Given the large size of the data, a sample of 80 blurbs has been randomly selected; 20 from each of the four fields. In order to ensure that the sample is representative enough, the blurbs selected have been distributed as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of sample data

Field	Discipline	No. of blurbs	Total
Fiction	Novel	8	
	Play	6	
	Poetry	6	20
Language	Linguistics	10	20
	School textbooks	10	
Social sciences	History	5	
	Geography	5	
	Others[2]	10	20
	Chemistry	5	
	Physics	5	
	Mathematics	5	
	Others[3]	5	
Hard sciences			20

The analysis is done by reading through the selected blurbs and identifying the various sentence patterns used in the different moves of the blurbs. The frequencies of the patterns identified in the moves are presented in tables. Furthermore, explanations are advanced to justify the use of particular syntactic patterns in the different moves; thereby determining how they contribute to the realization of various communicative intentions.

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2 Others here include: Philosophy, Sociology and Anthropology.

3 Others here include: medicine, technology and Biology.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the blurbs selected for this study revealed that the main sentence patterns used in Cameroonian blurbs are the simple sentence, the compound and complex sentences and elliptic syntactic patterns. These patterns play different functions in the various moves of the blurbs in which they are used.

4.1 The simple sentence

The simple sentence here is understood as that consisting of only one clause (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973). A close examination of the Cameroonian blurbs collected for this study revealed that the simple sentence is used in some sections of these blurbs. However, there is some variation in its use in the various moves of the blurbs. Table 2 below presents the frequency of the simple sentence in relation to the moves and the number of blurbs in which they were identified.

Table 2: Frequency of the simple sentence

Move	Justifying the book	Appraising the book	Establishing credentials	Endorsements	Targeting the market
Blurbs with the move/80	42	54	56	12	27
Those with the sentence	26	15	41	2	2
Percentage	61.90%	27.78%	73.21%	16.67%	7.41%

From Table 2 above, the frequency of the use of the simple sentence is not very high in Cameroonian book blurbs. The only moves in which this type of sentence has a high frequency are the *Establishing credentials* and the *Justifying the book* moves. In the rest of the moves, the frequency of the simple sentence remains relatively low. However, this type of sentence is used in various moves for specific purposes.

 Establishing credentials is the move in which the simple sentence has its highest frequency. This type of sentence was identified in 41 of the 56 out of the 80 blurbs that had this move. A close examination of the simple sentences identified in this move revealed that the most common patterns of sentences used in the move are those following the SVC and the SVO clause patterns. These patterns are used to give precise information on whom the author is and what s/he does or the certificate s/he holds respectively. In some cases, the SVOA pattern is used to give precise information on what the author does and where s/he works. The following examples extracted from some of the blurbs analysed clearly illustrate the effective use of these patterns in the *Establishing credentials* move.

(1) *The author is a fellow of New York and Cameroon Academy of Sciences.*

(2) *He is a laureate of the National Book Development Council.*

(3) *George D. Nyamndi holds a Doctorate degree in African literature from the University of Lousane in Switzerland.*

(4) *She has been teaching English Language and Literature in various High Schools in Cameroon.*

In Examples 1 and 2, the SVC pattern is used to state exactly whom the author is; that is, there is a co-referential relation between the author and his qualification. This is because the writers place the author in these examples as the Subject of the sentences, and the qualification as the Subject Complement, while using a linking verb to connect the two elements. In Example 3, the SVOA pattern is used to state exactly what certificate the author holds and where he obtained it. Consequently, the author is used in this sentence as Subject, his certificate as Object and where he obtained it as Adverbial. In example 4 the SVOA pattern is used to state exactly what the author does and where she works. Therefore, the writer places the author at the Subject position, what she does at the Object position, and where she works at the Adverbial position, all these connected by a transitive verb. Such precise information stated in simple sentences reveals the exact credentials of the author. Through these sentences, the reader and potential buyer immediately grasps the required information about the author and is, therefore, able to evaluate without any waste of time the authority the author has in the field, therefore, determining the credibility of the publication in question, and deciding whether to buy the book or not.

In the move *Justifying the book*, the simple sentence was identified in 26 of the 42 out of the 80 Cameroonian blurbs that had this move. In this move, the type of simple sentences noted to be commonly used is the Subject-Verb-Complement-Adverbial

(SVCA) and the Subject-Verb-Object-Adverbial (SVOA) clause types. These patterns are used here to adequately give precise information on the field in which the book falls; that is, stating exactly what the book is and what kind of knowledge is handled in the book respectively. The following examples extracted from some of the blurbs analysed clearly illustrate this.

(5) **New Frontiers in English** *is a five-year English Language course for English-speaking students of Cameroon secondary schools.*

(6) **Essentials of Cameroon History** *is a concise handbook on the history of Cameroon form 1800.*

(7) **Advanced Level Pure Mathematics for Cameroon Schools** *covers in detail the syllabus for Advanced Level Mathematics*

(8) **A-Level Organic Chemistry Without tears** *covers all the syllabus for A-Level organic chemistry.*

In Examples 5 and 6, the subject position is occupied by complex NPs expressing the titles of the books, then the verb *to be* is used as a linking verb, and other complex NPs are used as complements expressing what the books are. While the PP in example 5, functioning as an adverbial, indicates the target population of the book, that in example 6 says more about the material found in the book. In Examples 7 and 8, simple sentences are used to state exactly what is treated in the books. Complex NPs stating the titles are used as subjects, a transitive verb is then used, and other NPs are used as objects indicating to material covered in the books. It can therefore be seen here that the simple sentence adequately fits in the *Justifying the book* move as it can be used to give precise information on the field of the book; thus helping the reader of the blurb to determine exactly how important the book can be just by reading the opening lines of book blurbs.

In the *Appraising the book, Targeting the market* and *Endorsements*, the simple sentence is not commonly used. Out of the 80 blurbs analysed, the simple sentence was identified in only 15 blurbs in the move *Appraising the book*, 2 blurbs in the move *Targeting the market* and 2 blurbs in the move *Endorsements*. It is understood here that in these moves, the most frequent types of sentences to be identified are the complex sentences. Therefore, in the few cases in which simple sentences can be identified, they are used together with complex ones. This happens in situations in which the author chooses to use simple sentence in order to state some precise information within some sort of complex discourse.

Consider the following example of a section of the *Appraising the book* move of one of the blurbs analysed in this study.

(9). ...*It is made up of several units with each unit carrying seven sections.*

<u>*SECTION ONE deals with Speech Work.*</u> *Here the student is made to know and use the sounds that make up the English language, revise work on stress and intonation and finally practise syllabification.*

<u>*SECTION TWO duels generally on Listening Comprehension.*</u> *This is a vital section in the "O" Level G.C.E. Examination, which this book treats profoundly.*

<u>*SECTION THREE is on Understanding and Response*</u>. *It is made up of several parallel passages from a variety of sources – the sciences, the arts, fiction and general reading – all chosen to provide not only enough practice material for the candidate, but also to reflect the multi-disciplinary approach now recommended in the teaching and learning of the language...*

As illustrated by the simple sentences underlined, the writer of the blurb decides to make use of simple sentences in the *Appraising the book* move in order to state precise information. In Example 9 under study here, the simple sentences are used as topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph that gives a general statement on what is developed in the paragraph. After this simple sentence, the rest of the paragraph is then developed by a series of complex sentences, advancing the details of the contents of the section. The use of the simple sentence in this move alongside complex sentences is thus effective in that it simplifies this part of the blurb that is usually complex, thereby rendering it easily readable and catchy. The simple sentences used here thus effectively highlight the main features of the book in question.

It can therefore be concluded in this section that the simple sentence is a dominant and effective grammatical feature of Cameroonian blurbs because of the following reasons:

- Simple sentences are used generally in the English language to say who or what people or things are. That is why their use is a dominant grammatical feature of the *Establishing credentials* move in Cameroonian blurbs, since in this move, blurb writers say who the authors of the books advertised are. In like manner, their use is common in the *Justifying the book* move because writers use them to say what the books advertised in the blurbs are.

- SVO patterns are used in language to say what people or things have or do. Consequently, Cameroonian blurbers use these patterns in the *Establishing credentials* move to say what the authors of the books advertised have or do, and in the *Justifying the book, Appraising the book* and *Endorsements* moves to say what the books have or do.

This kind of precise information expressed in simple sentences adequately suits the context of book blurbs, which usually face serious constraints in length. Besides, using simple sentences equally makes book blurbs easily readable, thus rendering them favourable to potential buyers who may not always have the time and patience to read long and complex sentences.

4.2 Compound and complex sentences

A compound sentence is that which has two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction. A complex sentence on the other hand, is that which has an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. The dependent clauses are joined to the independent clause using a subordinating conjunction. It should be noted here that the type of clauses involved in these processes can either be finite clauses (whose V element is a finite verb phrase), non-finite clauses (whose V element is a non-finite verb phrase) and verbless clauses (containing no V element). Considering that both compound and complex sentences have more than a single clause, we are going to examine their use in book blurbs together.

A close examination of the Cameroonian books blurbs collected for this study revealed that compound and complex sentences involving the processes of coordination and subordination, respectively, and also the types of clauses identified above, are used in the different moves of Cameroonian book blurbs. The following table presents the general frequency of these sentences in the sampled Cameroonian blurbs in relation to the moves in which they were identified.

Table 3: Frequency of compound and complex sentences

Move	Justifying the book	Appraising the book	Establishing credentials	Endorsements	Targeting the market
Blurbs with the move/80	42	54	56	12	27
Those with the sentence	22	54	45	12	27
Percentage	52.38%	100%	80.36%	100%	100%

From Table 3 above, the frequency of compound and complex sentences is very high in all the moves of Cameroonian book blurbs. Compared to that of the simple sentence, the frequency of these sentences is higher in all the moves, except in the *Justifying the book* move, where that of the simple sentence is slightly higher than that of compound and complex sentences. It is, therefore, necessary here to critically examine the functions of these sentences, used alongside the simple sentence in the various moves of book blurbs.

The *Appraising the book* and *Endorsements* moves that were respectively identified in 54 and 12 of the 80 blurbs analysed both had a 100% frequency of compound and complex sentences. That is, in all the 54 blurbs having the *Appraising the book* move, the sentences were used in this move; just as was the case with the 12 blurbs having the *Endorsements* move. What is important here is to determine their function in these moves.

It should be recalled here that *Appraising the book* and *Endorsements* are moves in which the book is previewed, described and evaluated (Kathpalia 1997). A close examination of the Cameroonian blurbs collected for this study revealed that in these moves, blurb writers make use of a series of compound and complex sentences in order to realize the communicative intentions of the moves. These sentences are formed through the combination of finite, non-finite and verbless clauses, using the strategies of coordination and subordination. Consider the following examples of the *Appraising the book* and *Endorsements* moves extracted from some of the blurbs analysed.

(10). ...*Current trends in the subject such as the use of concepts, systems, environmental problems such as tectonic hazards, floods, drought, soil degradation and management have been highlighted where ever applicable and explanations simplified to facilitate easy understanding for the targeted age group (14-17).*

A unit on fieldwork has been incorporated and this aspect has been made more practicable by providing well defined objectives, clear foci as well as procedures to follow depending on the topic. To further stimulate interest in fieldwork, simple activities which may readily be carried out or undertaken around the school have been suggested at the end of most units...

(11). *Shadrach Ambanasom's* **Son of the Native Soil** *is a tragic tale, which documents how modern African political partnership impacts perversely on clan and village loyalty and solidarity. It is an intelligent work, written in a very picturesque language, fertile with suspense, flashback, intrigue, philosophy and dilemma. It raises the fundamental question of elite commitment in rural African politics and entreats the reader to find an answer to it.*

In Example 10, which is the *Appraising the book* move of one of the blurbs analysed, the writer in the first sentence of this move uses coordination to put together two independent clauses; the first describing the book and the second presenting a positive evaluation of the book. In the second independent clause of this first sentence, subordination is used to embed a non-finite infinitive clause which further indicates the value of the book to its readers. The second sentence of this example follows the same pattern as the first. In the third sentence of the example, subordinating processes have been used to put together a series of clauses describing and evaluating the book, into one superordinate clause: the sentence begins with a non-finite dependent clause and then continues with the independent clause which incorporates another dependent relative clause.

In Example 11 which is the *Endorsements* move of one of the blurbs analysed, the writer in the first and second complex sentences uses subordination to put together a series of finite, non-finite and verbless clauses that describe and evaluate the book in question. In the third sentence, coordination is used to put together two independent clauses; the first evaluating the book and the second indicating its impact on the reader.

From the analysis of the compound and complex sentences in these examples of the *Appraising the book* and *Endorsements* moves, it is clear that these sentences adequately suit the contexts of these moves. This is because these are moves in which complexity of issues relating to the structure, topics or themes, qualities and value of the book are handled. Therefore, to present all these issues conveniently in one move, there is a need for the use of compound and complex sentences that are capable of incorporating a variety of ideas.

As illustrated in Table 3, compound and complex sentences were identified in the *Targeting the market* move of 27 of the 80 blurbs analysed. This also implies a 100% frequency because this move was identified in only 27 of the 80 blurbs analysed. Therefore, these sentences were identified in the *Targeting the market* move of all the blurbs having this move. Our interest here is to determine their functions when used in this particular move. Consider the following examples of this move, extracted from some of the blurbs analysed in this study.

(12) *Teachers, students and those interested in basic earth sciences will find this book a necessary companion.*

(13) *This book is indispensible for all those preparing for the G.C.E. examination.*

These two examples are just a replica of the *Targeting the market* move of most, if not all, of the blurbs analysed. In both examples, dependent clauses have been embedded in the main clauses in order to give more precision to the population targeted in the book. In Example 12, the non-finite –*ed* participle clause is subordinated in the subject, while in Example 13, the non-finite –*ing* participle clause is subordinated in the object; both indicating the target population for which the book is suitable. Thus the complex sentence adequately suits the context of the *Targeting the market* move in book blurbs because, in it, the target population can conveniently be identified and at the same time described. The type of sentence, therefore, has a double function in this move; the identification and description of the target population of a particular book.

Table 3 shows that compound and complex sentences were identified in the *Establishing credentials* move of 45 of the 80 blurbs analysed. This gives the frequency of 80.36%, given that this move was identified in 56 of the 80 blurbs. It should be recalled here that the simple sentence, used to state exactly whom the author is, what s/he does and the certificates s/he holds, also had a high frequency in this move (identified in 41 of the 56 blurbs). The question that arises here is, therefore: what are the functions of the compound and complex sentences in this move that also has a high frequency of the simple sentence?

A close examination of the *Establishing credentials* move of the blurbs under study revealed that the functions of compound and complex sentence in this move are quite different from those of the simple sentence. Previous studies have proven that besides using this move to state whom they are, what they do and the qualifications they have relating to the books they publish, Cameroonian authors equally exploit the *Establishing credentials* move to present their biography; recounting their profile from the time of birth to the time of publishing the book in question (Fornkwa, 2015). Compound and complex sentences are thus used in this move in order to adequately realize this latter intention of the authors; narrating their lives. Consider the following example extracted from one of the blurbs analysed in this study.

(14) *Tanyi MBUAGBAW, born in Sept 1929 in Tali, Manyu, Cameroon, escaped to school in 1936; had his primary education in Tali and Mamfe, secondary education in Sasse and university education in Ibadan and London. Had had a 2-year UNESCO Fellowship in 1962-1964 for the study of French in Besancon, France, and teacher education, primary in Switzerland and secondary in the USA.*

He has had training for and taught in the primary, secondary, teacher training and the university. He holds the following diplomas: BSc, Post-graduate Certificate in Education (Ibadan), Diploma in Education, MA and Ph.D. (London). He has held positions of responsibility as: Education Officer and Principal, Government Teacher Training College, Kumba; Inspector of Education (Secondary and Teacher Education), West Cameroon; Director of Institute of Pedagogy attached to the Ecole Normale Superieure, and Cultural Delegate, West Cameroon...

In this example, which is just a section of the *Establishing credentials* move of one of the Cameroonian blurbs analysed, we can note the use of compound and complex sentences in which the author endeavours to concentrate information about himself as much as possible. The processes of coordination and subordination are used here in order to put together different types of clauses, each expressing something about the author. In the first sentence, for example, coordination has been used to express information on when the author went to school and where he did his primary education, secondary education and university education. Besides, in the same sentence, subordination has been used to put in apposition with the subject a non-finite participle clause indicating the author's date and place of birth. We can therefore see here how, just in a single sentence, the author succeeds to concentrate so much information about himself. The complex sentence, therefore adequately suits the context of *Establishing credentials* move of Cameroonian blurbs as it is enormously exploited by most of the authors who are interested in self-publishing to concentrate as much information about themselves as possible.

As illustrated in Table 3, compound and complex sentences were equally identified in the *Justifying the book* Move of 22 of the 80 Cameroonian blurbs under study. This gives a 52.38% frequency, given that this move featured in 42 of the 80 blurbs analysed. It should be recalled here that, as stated in the previous section, the simple sentence, used to state precisely either what the book is or what is treated in the book, also had a high frequency in this move. The main preoccupation here is, therefore, to determine the function of compound and complex sentences in this move.

A close examination of the *Justifying the book* move of the blurbs under study revealed that compound and complex sentences are used in this move in order to state what the book is while including information on the field in which the book is written. The main sentence formation strategy noted to be used in the complex sentences in this move is subordination. Consider the following examples extracted from some of the Cameroonian blurbs analysed in this study.

(15) *BASIC THEMES IN PHYSICAL AND PRACTICAL GEOGRAPHY is a textbook designed to meet the requirements for G.C.E Ordinary Level Examination in Physical Geography, Mapwork and Fieldwork.*

(16) *ADVANCED PHYSICS COMPREHENSION AND EXPERIMENTAL DATA ANALYSIS is a complete course book which covers all the technical skills required for Comprehension and Experimental Data Analysis for G.C.E. Advanced Level Physics Paper III examinations.*

As can be seen from the two examples above, after stating what the book is in the main clause, a subordinate clause, functioning as a complement, is added to further elaborate the field; that is, themes covered in the book. The complex sentence is thus effective in this move as it is used to identify and establish the field of the book, hence realizing the communicative intention of this move within the blurb genre.

It can therefore be concluded in this section that compound and complex sentences adequately fit in the context of book blurbs because they can be used to concentrate information within the blurbs. Through the processes of coordination and subordination, complexity of issues relating to the topics/themes and qualities of the book advertised, the target population, the

life of the author and the field of the book are concentrated in the *Appraising the book* and *Endorsements* moves, the *Targeting the market* move, the *Establishing credentials* move, and the *Justifying the book* move, respectively. Concentrating such complex issues in single sentences is an effective space-saving strategy in a blurb because blurbs are texts that face serious constraints on length.

4.3 Elliptical syntactic patterns
The elliptical syntactic patterns under study here are mainly clauses in which a part has been omitted. It can either be the subject, part of the predicate or the whole predicate. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 251) "ellipsis is most commonly used to avoid repetition, and in this respect, it is like substitution". Besides, "by omitting shared items, attention is focused on new material" (ibid).

A close examination of the Cameroonian blurbs under study revealed that elliptical syntactic patterns are a common grammatical feature of these book blurbs. These patterns are used mainly in the *Appraising the book* and the *Establishing credentials* moves of the blurbs. The table below presents the frequency of these patterns in these two moves of the blurbs examined.

Table 4: Frequency of elliptical syntactic patterns in Cameroonian blurbs

Move	Appraising the book	Establishing credentials
Blurb with the move/80	54	56
Number with the pattern	19	22
Percentage	35.19%	39.29%

Table 4 above shows that the frequency of these elliptical syntactic patterns is not very high in the moves in which they are used. However, it is necessary here to describe such patterns and explain how they are effective within the context of book blurbs.

In the *Appraising the book* move, the cases of ellipsis noted involved situations where either the subject or the subject and part of the predicate of a clause are omitted. The following examples extracted from some of the blurbs analysed illustrate this.

(17)   *The unique features of this book are:*

❖   *Covers the National Chemistry teaching scheme for form three.*

❖   *Designed in specific units (1-16) according to the needs of the students.*

❖   *Each chapter begins with learning objectives to guide the students.*

❖   *Each chapter has a summary to help the students with "last minute revision".*

❖   *Each chapter has exercises which are made up of various types of questions.*

❖   *The language used is simple to ease comprehension and interpretation.*

❖   *Most chemical terms are defined and examples given where necessary.*

❖   *There are illustrations where possible to facilitate and encourage the learning of chemistry.*

❖   *Written with emphasis on local examples from the chemical industry.*

Clear cases of ellipses can be seen in this example in the clauses highlighting the first, second and last features of the book. The clause highlighting the first feature has no subject, while in the clause highlighting the second and last features, the subject and part of the verb have been omitted.

(18) **Key features:**

• *Extensive and in-depth treatment of the Ordinary level physics syllabus.*

• *Simplicity in content, style and illustrations.*

• *Clearly focused objectives and aims which appear at the beginning of each chapter.*

- *Catchy topics and subtopics to help access information on varied aspects of the subject.*

- *Presentation of new material is followed by frequent summary statements, worked examples, revision exercises and sample GCE questions.*

- *Practice takes precedence over theory hence experiments are laid out in a systematic manner…*

In example 18, cases of ellipsis can be seen in the first four sentences highlighting the features of the book. In these sentences, the subject and the verb have been omitted and focus is laid only on the presentation of the new information to be found in the book. The writer finds it unnecessary here to begin these sentences with statements such as *The book has* or *There is/are* because these will be repeated statements saying nothing about the qualities of the book, hence occupying space for nothing.

We then note here that, as illustrated in Examples 17 and 18, the ellipsis is used in the *Appraising the book* move, especially when the book is being described because the blurb writer's major preoccupation here is to provide important information to be found in the book. There is, therefore, the omission of introductory phrases that, if used, will be repeated while containing no important information about the book. Besides, the omission of these phrases is justified by the fact that they are already implied in the context of book blurbs. So there is no need to overtly state them in the blurbs.

In the *Establishing credentials* move, elliptical syntactic patterns are noted to be used in some clauses as a result of the subordination and coordination of clauses in single sentences. These elliptical patterns involve mainly the omission of either the subject or the subject and part of the verb of some of the subordinated or coordinated clauses. The following examples extracted from some of the blurbs analysed illustrate this phenomenon.

(19) *Tanyi MBUAGBAW, born in Sept 1929 in Tali, Manyu, Cameroon, escaped to school in 1936; had his primary education in Tali and Mamfe, secondary education in Sasse and university education in Ibadan and London…*

(20) *Born December 1965, Emmanuel Achu underwent secondary education at PSS Mankon and CCAST Bambili before proceeding to the University of Leeds and ENSET Douala, specialising in Civil Engineering…*

In the two examples above, due to the process of subordination, the subject (co-referential with that of the superordinate clause) and an appropriate form of *be* are ellipted in the adverbial non-finite participle clauses beginning with *born*, while in Example 19, due to the device of coordination, the subject of the second independent clause is omitted because it is the same with that of the first independent clause since the two clauses fall within the same sentence. We observe here that because of the urge of concentrating as much information as possible about the author in this move of the blurbs, phrases that are found to be repetitive and not providing any new information are simply omitted in some contexts so as to allow more space for the narration of the author's life and experiences. This is because of the fact that some Cameroonian authors, as has been observed in the previous studies, are interested in using the *Establishing credentials* move of their blurbs for self-publishing (Fornkwa 2014). The use of elliptical syntactic patterns, therefore, serves them well here since such patterns help in economizing the space they very much need in order to write more about themselves.

It can thus be concluded in this section that the use of elliptical syntactic patterns adequately suits the context of book blurbs because such patterns, as stated by Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) avoid unnecessary repetition hence, focusing attention on important information that better promotes the book (or the author). The use of elliptical patterns is, therefore, a successful strategy in book blurbs because, as echoed by Kathpalia (1997: 421), "blurbs are of necessity brief and cannot afford to be repetitive due to severe constraints upon length".

5. Conclusion

This paper aimed at analysing English sentence patterns in Cameroonian book blurbs. The findings reveal that simple sentences, compound and complex sentences, and elliptical syntactic patterns are used in the different moves of the blurbs for various purposes. Simple sentences are used to provide precise information on the books advertised, their authors and target population, thereby making the blurbs catchy and easily readable by potential customers. Through the processes of coordination and subordination, the compound and complex sentences are used to incorporate information on the book advertised, the field, the topics/themes covered, the structure, the author and the target population. So much information is concentrated in such complex sentences since blurbs are generally very short texts but must communicate information enough to persuade potential customers. Elliptical syntactic patterns are used as a space-saving strategy to avoid repetition and unnecessary information, thus providing space for important information that can attract potential customers. The simple, compound, complex and elliptical

patterns used, therefore, help in realizing various communicative intentions, which all combine to realize the communicative purpose of the genre; getting potential customers to buy the books advertised in the blurbs.

What stands out as the specificity of Cameroonian blurbs is the abundant use of compound and complex sentences in the *Establishing Credentials* move. Cameroonian blurbers use a series of compound and complex sentences in this move in order to concentrate as much information as possible about the author. This is done so as to satisfy their urge for self-publishing. Ngwane (2005) had already noted that the substantial increase in book production in Cameroon in due to self-publishing and vanity publishing. Book writers make sure that in their blurbs, they write about themselves as much as possible, recounting all their academic and professional achievements right from the basic to the tertiary levels. This is because, as Nkemleke (2010) puts it, high profile academic scholarship in Cameroon is a relatively recent phenomenon. So Cameroonian book authors who have attained academic scholarship in reputed local and international institutions find in their blurbs a golden opportunity to write and recount their academic exploits since they believe to belong to a kind of elite corps that has a highly selective membership.

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