Igbo Language Borrowing: An Implicative Approach

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ABSTRACT

Borrowing is one of the many ways in which the lexicon or vocabulary of a language could be enriched. No language is known to be complete nor is there any language that is fully developed to the extent that new words are no longer needed. In that aspect, this study is designed to examine how languages borrow and evaluate the negative or positive implications to both languages. The concept of linguistic borrowing and its importance to Igbo language vocabulary enrichment was also discussed. The data was sourced from focused group discussion while the methodology involved the application of different types of borrowing like intra-lingual and inter-lingual borrowing. In analyzing some of the borrowed words, it was observed that there are more negative implications attached to the donor language while positive implications are more on the recipient language because, those borrowed words help in the enrichment of the recipient language vocabularies. The study therefore recommends that linguistic borrowing be encouraged and adapted by every language community so as to enhance and expand vocabulary.

Keywords: Borrowing, language, linguistic and vocabulary.

INTRODUCTION

Most times, in translation or interpretation, a translator is left in confusion as to how to fill in the gaps when the target language lacks an appropriate word for new concepts due to cultural differences and barriers. In addition, so many documents these days are being designed for unique communicative purposes that might include commercial cum business documents, political versus religious documents etc. Hence every language is dynamic; the translator could source for appropriate word in the dialects of the said language. A translator could as well adopt borrowing as a means of bridging the gap between the source language and the target language when there is no equivalence between the languages. There are many ways in which the lexicon or vocabulary of a language can be enriched. These include borrowing of words from other languages; creating new words to match new items that find their ways into the language, compounding coinage, blending, conversion, acronyms, derivation etc. Here, this research is focused on borrowing as the main factor for vocabulary enhancement. Borrowing occurs as a result of languages contact. Languages contact because of colonization, Conquest, Trading, Religion, Cultural Conflict, Marriages and most at times Tourism. For instance, ever since the British colonized Nigeria, sheintroduced her language into the Nigerian local languages. This mostly affected the three major Nigerian indigenous language thus Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba languages thereby contributing to the enrichment of vocabularies of these languages likewise subdue to some extent the recipient languages, for instance, an average Igbo man can hardly communicate freely in Igbo for hours without code switching into English language. In addition, through the adaptation of foreign religions like Christian/Islamic Religions other than the Traditional Religion of our fore fathers, new words had came into being. Once a new culture is accommodated, new words are bound to be adopted into Igbo or any language.

Similarly, the English language is not left out when it comes to borrowing. On the other hand, Latin dominated the English earlier and consequently, many Latinate expressions exist in the English language till date. The English language is unarguably the richest in vocabulary with more than five hundred thousand (500,000) words and fewer than half-a-million technical and scientific terms. This richness in vocabulary is as a result of borrowing hence statistics from [1], [2],and other researchers showed that eighty percent (80%) of these words are not of English origin. These words, lexicons or items are either of Latin, Greek, German, French, Italian, and Dutch, Bantu or even Igbo language origin as the case may be. For example, croissant (French), dope (Dutch), lilac (Persian), piano (Italian) and pretzel (German), others are sofa (Arab), tattoo (Tahitian), tycoon (Japanese), zebra(Bantu) and okra (Igbo).From the above, it then became obvious that borrowing is as old as any language because, man borrows terms so as to represent concepts vice-versa. Therefore, this study is limited to what borrowing is all about, ranging from its types, process as well as the implications associated with it likewise; the need to encourage borrowing as means of vocabulary expansion.

Theoretical Studies

As the issue of borrowing is gaining ground, it has attracted the attention of notable authors, scholars and socio-linguist. These then include the writers view and the researches that have been done concerning lexical borrowing. To Art (1996), in Yule (2010), borrowing existed long before the 10th Century and is derived from old English word "Borgain" to Borrow". This is to say that, everything borrows.

Nevertheless, borrowing is a process whereby a linguistic featuresin one language is used in another language. Therefore, borrowing results from contact between languages. These days, new fashion trends come up from one cultural background to the other, when this is done; new words are bound to follow it up. And to this, [3], in [4] sees borrowing as, "an attempt to produce in one language, patterns previously used in another language". To Rodman, borrowing is limited to when one language/dialect takes and incorporate into itself some linguistic element previously used in another. While [5] make it clear that borrowing is a sociolinguistic process which all language must undergo. They stress that all cultures that have contact are likely to borrow vocabulary from earth other. To [6], borrowing is seen as taking over of words from one language. English language for instance has borrowed from almost every language of the world. Okra (a kind of food vegetable) is an Igbo language word „okwuru" but it"s borrowed and adapted as an English word. To them [7], borrowing is a must for every language of the world. Haugen still maintains in [8], that borrowing from one language to another is predicted on some minimum of bilingual mastery of languages. This to certain extent could be because; one can only borrow from the language he understands.

On this, he distinguished some types of borrowing to be a hybrid, a loanword that results from the blending of words from two languages. Loan translations are another form of borrowing where the word is directly translated into the native language form. Example, English„skyscraper", French „gratte-ciel", and Spanish „rascaielos" are also sometimes called „calques". A third type of borrowing is the semantic loan. [3] gives the example of the American Portuguese form „humoroso", which has been taken on the English meaning of the word humorous instead of retaining the meaning of capricious which it has in Portuguese. Loan homonyms, the fourth are also another type of borrowing exemplified in American Portuguese. The Portuguese word

"grosseria" means a rude remark. The English word „grocery" sounds similar, so „grosseria" is used for both a grocery and also a rude remark. Similarly, [1] indicates that in borrowing, changes are most times called loanword adaptation or loanword integration; but he specifies that there is a possible distinction between the two. Example is when the French [y] becomes [u] (with palatalization of the preceding consonant) in Russian, i.e. résumé for Russian rezjume while the English word weekend is assigned the default masculine gender in French le weekend [9], in his study on Yiddish American speech at Colombia University brought new terms such as contact and interference. He regards to contact as the meeting point of the population of two or more language while interference is seen as the borrowing that resulted in the phonic, grammatical or lexical. Again, that, there is usually the grammatical adaptation of borrowed word(s). That is to say, that the new words are usually from or native derivation pattern. Weinreich further indicates that:

A word which has been borrowed from one language into another is itself subject to the interference of the grammatical as well as the phonic system of the recipient language....entire sentence may even be transferred in unanalyzed form into the recipient language grammar. In assuming certain degree of bilingualism, , in [10], is of the view that: ...sociolinguistic implication of languages contacts vary; extreme contact situation leads to language mixture or diffusion. In some cases, the syntax of adjacent languages affects one another. ...it is established that contacts between languages result in borrowing of linguistic items to fill the gap and thus elaborate the vocabulary of a language.

Nevertheless, just as the above claims that language contact leads to language diffusion; it is an indirect means of expressing linguistic borrowing. Finally, [9] analyses of the"multisource neologisms" in (2003) challenges [3], classic typology of lexical borrowing. While [3], categorizes borrowing into either substitution on importation, [9] explores cases of „simultaneous substitution and important" in the form of camouflaged borrowing. He then proposes a new classification of multisource neologisms, words deriving from two or more sources at the same time. Examples of such mechanisms are phonetic matching, semantized phonetic matching and phono-sematic matching. Phono-semantic matching is distinct from calquing. While calquing includes (semantic) translation, it does not consist of phonetic matching (i.e retaining the approximate sound of the borrowed word through matching it with a similar sounding pre-existent word/morpheme in the target language). In all, loan information is classified into loan translation, transfer, expression, meaning and syntax depending on the relation of the source and target text. In every language, there are words that have not been borrowed from other languages but have developed with the language. In Igbo language for example such words are called "okwu okpu". While [11], call them "native words" in English language. These words have ever existed in the language naturally just as in "mmiri" (Water) and "oku" (fire). What then happens when there is need for word based on new concept? Here, one of the options left is to borrow word(s) either within the language (from dialects) otherwise known as intra-linguistic borrowing or from other languages (inter-linguistic borrowing) to bridge the gap.

Intra-Linguistic Borrowing

In this type of lexical borrowing, a particular language instead of borrowing from other languages to enrich its vocabulary, borrows directly from dialects within the said language. To Bloomfield (1933:11), this type of borrowing can be called dialect borrowing. Igbo language just like every other language does the same thing. For

instance, [10], list some of these Igbo lexemes that are borrowed from different Igbo dialects to follow:

Igbo lexemes	Dialect of Origin	English Meaning
Ọpapa	Enu Onitsha (Anambra)	Groundnut
Afere	Njikoka (Anambra)	Plate
Ezu	Aguata (Anambra)	Lake
Narị	Nsukka (Enugu)	Hundred
Puku	Ụmụahịa (Abia)	Thousand

Inter-Linguistic Borrowing is another type of lexical borrowing that helps to enrich functional words in any given language. This type involves borrowing from another language(s) all together. When two languages come into contact, there is relative status among the two languages. Though all languages perform the basic action of communication, not all languages equally enjoy the same status. Some languages are more prominent than others. In other words, when two languages come into contact, one must dominate the other. The one that dominates less does most of the borrowing. It then becomes bidirectional when the two languages borrowed from each other, symmetrical when there is equal borrowing while it is asymmetrical when one language borrows more than the other as in the case of English and Igbo languages where Igbo borrows more. Negative Implicative Approach to language Borrowing Unless in outright borrowing, the phonotactics of the language that does the borrowing (recipient language) is considered. In Igbo language for instance, consonant clusters are not allowed and consonant does not come at the end of any Igbo word unlike the English where consonants can cluster up to four times as in "attempts". Again, the phoneme, velaric nasal /ŋ/ occurs in the beginning and at the middle of Igbo language words but never at the end. An instance is the word "ṅụọ" / ŋuo/ drink and, "aṅụrị"/aŋuri/ happiness. While in English language, it only occurs at word middle and end but never at beginning as in sing and /siŋ/ and singer /siŋer/. Therefore, in this case for proper adoption and adaptation of English word into Igbo, these rules have to be recognized and adhered to. [3], indicates that loan words are borrowed and twisted, the borrowed word then goes through adoption and adaptation process before it is fully assimilated into a recipient language. Examples of such words from English into Igbo languages are as follows:

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English	Igbo
Chiffon	Ichafu
Earrings	Iyerinti
Umbrella	Mbuloda
Handkerchief	Nkachiifu

In the above examples, it is obvious that Igbo language does not allow consonant cluster so, the cc is usually replace with cv so as to rhyme with the phonotactics of the recipient language. This, thereby serve as a negative implication to the donor language while no harm is done to the recipient language. Secondly, to the word "mbụlọda" for umbrella, the phonotactics of Igbo language is also considered because, the language uses polysyllabic (n/m) "myiri ụdaume". So an Igbo word can take a position of either: cv, as in you (gị) cvv, as in come (bịa) ꞤCv as in hunting (nta).

In the above last example, since the polysyllabic sounds in Igbo are /n/m/ sounds, therefore, the places of articulation of the phonemes involved are being considered. In the word "mbụlọda", /m/ sound is attached to /b/ sound because, they are both bilabial sounds. Hence "mma" beauty, not "nma".

Adaptation

This is another type of inter-lingual borrowing. Here, when a word is borrowed, it goes though adoption and adaptation before it is fully accepted in a particular language. The word adaption simply implies rendering the borrowed item using the phonetic, morphological, and syntactic rules of the target language. Changing of the spelling is another process that most borrowed words undergo in Igbo language, most words are borrowed from the English and their spellings changed so as to match with the phonology of the Igbo language. Examples of such words are:

English	Igbo
Tycoon	Taịkuunu
Flower	Fụlawa
Pump	Poompu
Exercises	Esesaịziisi

Positive Implications

Outright borrowing is type of inter-lingual borrowing that has positive implication to the donor language. It involves complete and total borrowing of an item. In this type of borrowing, the phonetic, phonological, morphological and syntactic rule of the source language is adopted and respected. Some Examples of outright borrowed words in Igbo are;

English	Igbo
Go to Johnson Street	Gaa na Johnson Street
They live in New York	Ha bi na New York
I live in GRA	Ebi m na GRA

The underlined words are borrowed outrightly. Below are some examples of outright borrowing from Yoruba, Efik, Igala and Hausa language

Efik	Igbo	English Meaning
Ekpem	Ekpem	Bottle

Yoruba	Igbo	English language
Ọtangele	Ọtangele	A kind of osmetic
Akara	Akara	Beans cake
Ọga	Ọga	Master
Ashawo	Ashawo	A prostitute

Hausa	Igbo	English language
Agidi	Agidi	A kind of food
Dogo	Dogo	A very tall person
Wayo	Wayo	Fraud
Suya	Suya	Meat snack

Igala	Igbo	English Meaning
Onuku	Onuku	A foolish person

Nationalization

Nationalization is also an example of an Inter-lingual borrowing. In this type of borrowing, a linguistic item is borrowed and the orthography of the target language is used in writing down the item rather than using the orthography of the source text. In Igbo translation, this type of borrowing is known as Igbonization. Some of the examplesare;

English	Igbo
Summer	Sọma
Stove	Sutoovu
Snow	Sunoo
Bottle	Botulu
Computer	Komputa
John	Joonu

Possibly Causes of Linguistic Borrowing Research shows that in linguistic determinates of borrowing, some conditions give rise to borrowing and therefore constitute the reasons to borrow. Most at times, adaptation of foreign cultures give raise to adaptation of new foreign words. [6], gives three sociological variables that affect the kind language is used in writing down the item rather than using the orthography of the source text. In Igbo translation, this type of borrowing is known as Igbonization. Some of the examples are; and intensity of

borrowing to include: Prestige which is the social dominance of one language that come into contact with the other languages. When two or more languages come into contact, the most populated one dominates the other because it is almost impossible for two languages to meet on genuinely equal terms. An example here is the English and Igbo languages. English language dominates Igbo language due to its vocabulary enrichment. Secondly is the number of speakers of the two languages. This applies to the relative number of speakers of the two languages thus the recipient language and the donor language. The language whose number of speakers is higher, tends to dominate more. On this, [5], points out that, if the dominant language is spoken by a small minority of the population, its position is much less inviolate than when its dominance is supported by

its wide and spread use. Finally, is the intensity and variety of borrowing, this determines the kind of words borrowed. The intensity of the use of the borrowed form is high or low depending on the set of people that use it and the area of use as well. Words borrowed by few people are not likely to attain greater height in terms of its wide spread use compared with that borrowed and used by greater number of people [9]. Also, there are words exclusively borrowed by people of different ages and sexes. Such words are not intensively use rather they only have their monolingual and bilingual variety unlike some borrowed words that have high frequency of use due to the area of their usage such as Market, Hospital, Churches or even school hence they fall within the category of daily activities example, "ntaneetị" forinternet, "feesi buuku" for facebook

Importance of Linguistics Borrowing

Certain classes of words are more commonly borrowed than others usually words for exotic concepts or ideas. Here, what is exotic varies from language to language. Thus, English names for creatures not native to Great Britain and almost always loanwords, and most of the technical vocabulary referring to classical music is borrowed from Italian. Igbo language, most of the socio media terms are borrowed from English language. Examples of such words are: kọmputa forcomputer, gọgụụlụ for google, wasaap for whatsApp etc. On these, [6] high lights these four importance concepts as regards to linguistic borrowing;

 Borrowing from other languages are more economical than describing
the terms fresh.
 It need for language to resolve the clash of homonyms.
 The need to expand the semantic field of a word.
 The existence of a symbolic association of a source language in most situations with the need to help words that serve as slang to carry out their purpose to maximum.

This is mostly when the mother tongue attributes an unfavorable attitude.
 Borrowing helps in inter cultural relationship hence every culture is interpreted through language.
Prestige which could be individual or collective.
 Need which is usually an objective need to express new ideas like scientific and technological discoveries, travel including national life and culture etc.
Similarly, [10], claims that, "all languages of the world acquire lots of their vocabularies through borrowing". English which is the most popular language in the world has many other languages that made it what it is today, thanks to borrowing. Again as a nearly 100%language, researches show that English has in it French 29%, Latin 29%, German language, 26%, Greek, 6%, other unknown languages, 6% while terms derived from proper names have the remaining 6%. The speakers of English seem to prefer exotic terms in their expressions. These are however far from being the only reason

individuals may use an exotic expression because, it seems to them to be the most suitable term or possibly the only term with no equivalent in their own. This research work explored and examined the concept of borrowing in Igbo language with the aim to finding out the implications it has on the recipient /donor languages. Its types, importance, processes involve and as well the possibly reason(s) why languages borrow have also been examined. It was observed that language. Most of the French vocabularies entered English in the Middle Ages because French was then the only language of political and social power plus language the channel through which mainland European culture reached Britain. Similarly, most of the Latin vocabularies entered English during the Renaissance directly or through French because Latin was the European languageof Religion, Education and learning thereby making English vocabulary one of the richest. While Bright, in [2] agrees with the above and states that the most obvious reason for borrowing is the need of a term in the matrix language for some previously unknown phenomenon.

Therefore, English language for example is what and where it is today because ,it embraced borrowing, as such Igbo language can still get to its destination if it can adjust to borrowing from other contact languages in general and from its

different dialects in particular. Borrowing occurs as a result of language contact and therefore, becomes a general thing because all languages borrow words from other languages. In analyzing the data, it was observed that the borrowing creates room for variation. This is because, when a word is borrowed and adapted in another language, if the speakers of those who use the recipient language are higher, it makes that particular word to lose its original meaning. Okra for instance is an Igbo word for "ọkwụrụ", borrowed from Igbo language and adapted into English language. Since the number of people speaking English (recipient language) are more than those that use Igbo (donor language), the word ọkwụrụ is now mainly known as okra with variation okro in pronunciation.Again, the English language words like king and queen are of English origin while sovereign, crown, state and government are of French origin. In this study also, it is observed that borrowing is a general term used to refer to the process of adapting a word from one language to another language. Similarly, this research also shows that, despite the fact that they are implications as regards to borrowing yet, there are no processes that are more preferable than borrowing for the expansion of languages vocabularies. Again, borrowing or loanword is discovered to be of great importance without much damage to the both languages and it is thereby encouraged.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, borrowing as a socio-linguistic process should be accepted by all languages and communities. However, intra-lingual borrowing should be encouraged more, thus borrowing within the very language dialect, but when there are no other equivalences in the said language and its dialect, that is where and when inter-lingual borrowing comes in. This is because some countries like French that have

language academy usually attempted to keeping their language pure by prohibiting borrowing failed automatically. This shows that even the laws cannot stop linguistics borrowing. Again, more researches should be carried on so as to find out the best ways words can be borrowed without any negative implications to both the donor and recipient languages.

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