

English Loans in Yorùbá language: Linguistic Empowerment or Disenfranchisement?

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Abstract

Many of Nigeria's indigenous languages have developed an intrinsic affinity with the English language, and this has resulted in crossing of forms and elements; and intermixing of linguistic features through loans especially. This paper examines this phenomenon in the Yorùbá language with a view to ascertaining its effect on the language. Using the Lexicalists' theory of Generative Morphology, the paper analyzes the structures of some selected loan words in Yorùbá. It conjectures that the English language, serving as a veritable communication bridge, boosts the Yorùbá lexicon with words for notions and ideas that are alien to the Yorùbá culture. Conversely, the Yorùbá language has been suffering consistent and systematic lexical percolation through the substitution of native words with English equivalents. On these grounds, it is observed that the system or patterning of loaning in this case comes in three basic ways: domestication, integration and code-mixing.

1. Introduction

Loaning is a linguistic phenomenon that is prevalent in a bilingual and multilingual environment, especially where an indigenous language is confronted with another language that derives its legitimacy from recommendations by any of official, religious and commercial source. Such is the case with the Yorùbá language which is an indigenous language in South-west Nigeria and the English language which is the official language of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The speakers of the Yorùbá language, over time, began to include English words in the usage of their indigenous language for linguistic economy when they appear shorter or more precise in capturing an idea or notion. More often, the ideas or notions are foreign. The other reason is the seeming prestige in being seen to be a user of the English language which is more identified with the elite class. The Nigeria elite have been guiltiest of what Owolabi (2006:17) describes as *Native Language Prejudice Syndrome* (NALPS) in reaction to the editorial comment of Sunday Sun, a Nigeria national newspaper which reads as follows:

If anything, our local languages are constrained in a number of ways. Most of them are not developed enough to accommodate the intricacies and inflections that a dynamic language should have. New ways of doing things especially in the areas of science and technology as well as information technology can hardly be captured by the lexis and structure of our indigenous languages (Editorial comment of SUNDAY SUN of March 28, 2004, p.2), (Owólabí, 2006:17).

The same elite, though not numerically stronger than the masses, but intellectually superior and influential have been at helm of policy making and implementation. This group has continually put spanners in the implementation of the National Policy of Education which states that a child should be taught in the language of the immediate environment in the first three years of elementary education (Federal Government of Nigeria 2004:5, 10, 11&14). Therefore, the lexicon of the Yorùbá language has been influenced by the English language to the extent that the ordinary user is not spared, but not without soaking English words in the dye of Yorùbá structure and meaning perception. The efforts of linguists and other similar stakeholders in modernizing the Yorùbá language to meet contemporary challenges through deliberate, conscious and purposeful strategies still involve some English loans, even if it is a strategy of last resort.

This paper intends to explore the structures of some of these English loans and how they have been adapted to meet the communicative challenges of the Yorùbá language users. It also investigates the influences of English on Yorùbá language today.

2. The Yorùbá Language

Yorùbá language is one of the three major languages of Nigeria. The other two are Hausa and Ìgbò. It is the mother tongue of a substantial number of speakers in South-West Nigeria and outside Nigeria, e.g. in the Republics of Benin, Togo and Ghana. Yorùbá language is also visible in the oral literatures of Yorùbá descendants now domiciled in Brazil, Cuba and parts of West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago. The speakers are contiguously located in southwest Nigeria (Adétugbo 1967). By the 2006 census, the population of the speakers within Nigeria could be put at thirty million (30,000,000), close to one-fifth of the population of Nigeria.

Yorùbá, along with Hausa and Ìgbò, has the status of a national language. It was so legislated by the National Assembly in Section 55 of the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria. Also, along with Hausa and Ìgbò, Yorùbá was prescribed in the National Policy on Education (2004:5, 10, 11 & 14) as a language to be used as a medium of instruction in lower primary schools. Yorùbá language has been exposed to rigorous academic research. Several oral genres such as prose, poetry and drama have been documented in the Yorùbá language. Textbooks, newspapers, journals, magazines and general books in the Yorùbá language are a major boost to the publishing industry in Nigeria today.

3. Theoretical Assumptions

The Lexicalist theory of Generative Morphology adequately suits the analysis of our data. There are two versions of this theory: lax and tense. The lax version allows transformational approach to the derivation of some words and also allows the existence of words with idiomatic or lexical meaning in the lexicon. Our data includes words that have idiomatic meaning and those that have phrasal. Proponents of this are Baker (1988), Lieber (1992). The strict version disallows syntactic solution to the nature of words, claiming that all words are lexically derived. Sympathy for this position can be found in works of Chomsky (1970), Halle (1973), Jackendoff (1975), Lieber (1980), Selkirk (1982) and Di Sciullo & Williams (1987). English loans that are derived will be analyzed generatively while those that are mono-morphemic will be in the lexicon. So, the lax version is more suitable to analyze our data. For example:

- 1.(a) *dòtí* (v) ‘dirty’(adj)----lexicon
(b) *ìdòtí* (n)-----transformationally derived
2. (a) *fòtò* (n) ‘photo/photography’(n)—lexicon
(b) *onífòtò* (n)-----transformationally derived

Those that have dual meaning consequent upon integration and domestication will be separate words with distinct meanings in the lexicon as follows:

3. (a) *lọyà* (n) ‘lawyer’—by integration
(b) *lọyà* (v) ‘unnecessary argument’---by domestication
4. (a) *písíṣì* (n) ‘pieces’---by integration
(b) *písîṣì* (v) ‘dismantle’—by domestication

4. Patterns of English Loans

Four patterns of English loans are recognized within their usage in the Yorùbá language. They are: integrated, domesticated, dual integrated and domesticated, and derived code-mix. We shall provide three examples in each category.

4.1 Integrated loan: This is a situation where a word in the source language (SL) is used in the same sense in the target language (TL).

5. **Kòndó** ‘conductor’: This refers to bus conductor. The meaning subsists in spite of the clipping. For economy of pronunciation, speakers engage in frequent clipping of English words but they are cautious enough to retain meanings or near-meanings. Similar examples are **gólí** for ‘goalkeeper’, **fòga** for ‘vulcanizer’, **tẹ̀lì** for ‘television’ and **fòtò** for ‘photograph’.

6. **Dìónà:** ‘the owner’ is integrated loaning from the English language. It is used to refer to the person who owns a motor vehicle especially when he gives it out to a driver for commercial purpose. It is not used for ownership of other forms of property like house, land and other machinery. Its usage is limited to ownership – motor vehicle – driver relationship, where the owner is called **dìónà**.
7. **Sìgá:** ‘Cigarette’. This word is acceptable generally among the speakers of Yorùbá language. It is also a clipped term with no iota of ambiguity.

4.2 Domesticated loan: This is when a word is used in the target language (TL) in a sense different from its original sense in the source language (SL).

8. **Ànkóò fáwẹ̀lì** (lit: ‘and co’ adapted from company name such as ‘Ayò Yusuff and Co’) ‘Co’ is the short form of ‘company’. It connotes others and not necessarily equality among members on the board of a corporate establishment. In coining this term, the feature of a common membership of a company is used to refer to the co-occurrence of vowels in some languages. Igbò language parades this phonological feature.
9. **Jáàmù:** ‘crash or involved in an accident’ derives its origin from the English **Jam** which means any of ‘to bruise or crush between two solid objects’, ‘to force or push or wedge’, ‘difficult or unpleasant situation’. Another meaning but which is remote is ‘edible paste from fruit and sugar’. This word has been domesticated by the non-literates to mean ‘crash’ or ‘vehicle involved in an accident’. Witness the expression: ‘òkò tí àwọn olè náà gbà ti jáàmù’ (The vehicle which the robbers snatched has crashed)
10. **Kónsẹ̀tì** ‘corset’: This is used to mean ‘ladies’ underwear’ mostly made with very light fabric, sometimes with embroidery taping as base. It is loosely worn covering the chest down to the knees. ‘Corset’ in the source language is a tight fitting undergarment stiffened for figure shaping and control. One wonders why the non-literate users borrow words only to narrow the meaning or even attach related meaning to them. One obvious reason is that they rush to acquire lexical items in English language because of their modest educational attainment but they are not patient enough to know the precise meaning.

4.3 Dual integrated and domesticated loan: This situation explains the exhibition of both integrated and domesticated in one English loan word. Both forms are individual words in the lexicon of the Yorùbá language, which is the target language (TL).

11. **Písìsì** ‘pieces’: The integrated meaning of this term is simply parts of things like cloth, wood and paper but when domesticated, it is used to mean, “dismantle”. This domesticated use is more rampant among artisans who are non-literates or at best semi-literates. Most specifically, it is traceable to motor mechanics from whom we are likely to hear utterances such as ‘È lọ **písìsì** ẹnjìn òkò yẹn’-Go and dismantle the engine of that vehicle.

12. **Lọyà** ‘lawyer’

In the sentence:

Lọyà	ti	dé	“the lawyer has arrived”
Lawyer	perf.asp.	arrive	

This integrated form has **agbejòrò** ‘one who argues a case on behalf of someone else’ as a synonym. They are used interchangeably, as in: **agbejòrò ti dé** ‘the lawyer has arrived’.

It is not so for the domesticated form: **Lọyà** ‘lawyer’ in the sentence:

Ma	lọyà	mi	‘do not engage me in a technical interrogation’
NegImp.	lawyer	me	

Notice that the word ‘lawyer’ is a noun in the source language which is English. It has changed to a verb when domesticated in the target language which is Yorùbá.

13. **Kannkéré** ‘concrete’: This term is borrowed from the English language. It has been subjected to the phonological structure of Yorùbá language. It is ear-loaned. This term depicts the meaning from the source language, that is, mixture of sand, gravel and cement, either in the wet form or in the dry form. It has been perfectly integrated into the Yorùbá language. It has a domesticated form in the sense of **gari** (dry cassava granules) and beans mixture which incidentally is mostly consumed by bricklayers who mix the real concrete. The origin of the term is traceable to the bricklayers because it relates to their vocation.

4.4 Derived code-mix loan: This is a blend of English and Yorùbá words, having a meaning derivable from elements from both languages. Resultant meaning could be either integrated or domesticated.

14. **Bọ + sí + kọ̀nà**, (lit:go into corner) with last segment being a loaned word from the English language. It has a synonym in **bọ̀síkọ̀rọ̀** (lit: go into hiding) = ‘used dress’ The two terms are simultaneously used to describe used dresses. The Yorùbá people regard the acquisition of used dresses as a reflection of poverty. It is therefore done secretly. They purchase new wears in the open. Because these used wears are usually already sewn, the buyer would need to try it on to confirm fitness. These trials are mostly done in hiding. Consider this expression ‘**Bọ̀ sí kọ̀rọ̀, kó o yẹ́ ẹ̀ wò**’ Go into a corner

and confirm its suitability' which is commonly expressed by the sellers as a form of advert to attract the attention of prospective buyers.

15. **Ajẹbòtá** [a-je-bòtá (butter)] (lit: butter-eater) '**a sophisticated child**'. The image painted here is that consumption of butter or margarine used to be the sole preserve of the elite especially immediately after Nigeria's independence in 1960 when it was imported from England. Although butter is now largely and commonly consumed across societal levels, those who are not exposed to hardship still retain the cognomen, connoting the sense of 'well-to-do' persons as compared to poor peasants, jobless graduates e.t.c who still abound in Nigeria.
16. **Ìdòtí** 'dirt': This term is a derived word through prefixing - a known morphological process in the formation of indigenous words in Yorùbá language (cf Ogunkeye 2002). The root **dòtí** 'dirty' (adjective) is a loaned and integrated word from the English language. The derived word is a noun in the target language which is Yorùbá. One can even go further to add {oní-} to **ìdòtí** by prefixation to yield to **oní ìdòtí** 'dirty fellow'.

5 Analyses

5.1 Linguistic Treatment of English Loans

The English loans are subjected to the linguistic structures and processes of the Yorùbá language. I shall utilize the existing internal linguistic mechanisms within Yorùbá language which the native speaker exploits to involve English loans in their communicative sustenance. I shall limit the discussion of this segment to only sounds and words.

5.1.1 Phonological Features

Since speakers of a language intuitively know the sound system of their language, words loaned into the language are subjected to the rules guiding it. It has been observed that words engaged as English loans necessarily obey the rules of the phonological system of Yorùbá. Segmental sounds that are non-existent in the phonetic inventory of the source language are either omitted or substituted with existing but related sounds in Yorùbá. For example:

17. Church [tʃə:rtʃ] → **şòòşì** [ʃɔʃi]: The voiceless palato-alveolar affricate [tʃ] is substituted with the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ]. This occurs in borrowing.
18. Video [vɪdi:ou] → **fidíò** [fidio]: The voiced labio-dental fricative [v] is substituted with the voiceless counterpart [f].
19. Street [stri:t] → **títì** [titi]: The consonant cluster is broken by the insertion of [i] and deletion of [s] and [r]. The consonant final [t] is followed by a vowel [i] because the features of closed syllable is not allowed in Yorùbá phonology.

20. Student [stu:d'nt] → túlẹ̀ [tulɛ̀]: The initial consonant cluster [st-] is broken by the deletion of the initial [s]. The following long vowel [u:] replaced with its short counterpart [u]. The all-alveolar last syllable is replaced with a sequence of an alveolar lateral and a mid-low front vowel [ɛ] for ease of pronunciation.
21. Teacher [ti:tʃər] → Tíṣà [tɪʃa]: The long vowel [i:] in the first syllable is substituted with the short form. In the second syllable, the initial voiceless palato-alveolar affricate [tʃ] is replaced with the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ]. The final schwa and tap [-ər] is simply replaced with [a].

5.2 Morphological Features

Morphology is concerned with word formation in Language, as well as the rules that guide such a phenomenon (Crystal, D. 1995:90). Also word formation in Yorùbá is essentially derivational. Yorùbá nouns and verbs are never inflected for number and tense respectively. Yorùbá is therefore not inflectional. It is agglutinating. Morphological processes attested in the Yorùbá language appropriately reflect in the formation of the English loan words. I shall start by looking at affixation, as a process of word formation in this regard.

5.2.1 Affixation

In traditional Yorùbá word-formation, affixation is limited to only prefixation and interfixation.

Suffixation hardly exists in the Yorùbá language. The new words under study contain some of the prefixes already identified in the Yorùbá language. For example:

22. ì + dọ̀tí → ìdọ̀tí
pre dirty dirt
23. oní + fọ̀tò → onífọ̀tò
pre photograph photographer

Interfixes are used in generating new words as they are in existing words.

For example:

24. fọ̀ga + kí + fọ̀ga → fọ̀gakífọ̀ga
vulcanizer infix vulcanizer any /bad vulcanizer

'Fọ̀ga = vulca'; fọ̀ganáísà = vulcanizer'. - *naisa* gets deleted in the loaned form, its lexical category of noun is retained. Whereas, in English (SL), the suffix - er derives a noun from the verb root 'to vulcanize (a tyre)'.

5.2.2 Compounding

25. sẹ kònà → sẹkònà

turn corner ‘breakthrough’ (Idiomatic)

Literally, ‘corner’ is the meeting of two straight lines, one perpendicular, the other horizontal. Again, ‘corner’ on a road is truly a curve hiding a straight stretch of the road from the passerby.

5.2.3 Reduplication

26. lóbì → lílóbì

lobbying (political discourse) (literal)/pleading for recognition (idiomatic)

5.2.4 Composition

27. orí kan bọ̀dì → oríkanbọ̀dì (declarative)

head touch body (roof of a lorry) (Eng .Loan) “ a very tall person”
(NB: hyperbole is involved).

5.3 Theoretical Application

The second part of the analysis of samples of data collected with the Lexicalists’ Hypothesis adopting in particular my favoured Lax version is as follows.

All monomorphemic words, in their loaned forms will wholesomely reside in the lexicon regardless of their English forms. Consider the following examples in this connection:

28. i. yarîni ‘ear-ring’,
- ii. diónà ‘the owner’,
- iii. rélùwèè ‘train’
- iv. kannkéré ‘concrete’,
- v. fikù ‘vehicle’ for ‘vehicle licence’.

Derived words will be transformationally analysed as follows:

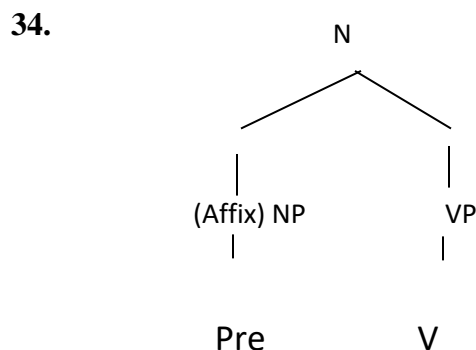
29. Fírîi ‘free’ → ì + fírîi ‘freedom’ being free from apprenticeship
 Pre free
 (fírídòòmù is not as common as ìfírîi)
30. Eépìnnì ‘half penny’ by ear-loaning :
 oní + eépìnnì → eléépìnnì
 pre(value) half penny half penny worth
31. Sìgá ‘cigarette’ by clipping
 oní + sìgá → onísìgá
 seller/owner cigarette cigarette seller/smoker
32. Fòtò ‘photograph’ by clipping
 a + ya + fòtò → ayafòtò
 pre(agent) take photograph photographer

5.3.1 Transformationally Derived Words

Items are transformationally derived because their morpheme collocations reflect and are synonymous with their conceptual meaning. Deep structures are postulated for the words before transformational rules are applied to yield relevant surface structures.

33. ìfírîi ‘freedom’

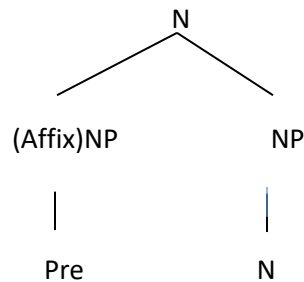
The verb **fírîi** ‘to gain freedom’ will be entered in the lexicon as a loan-word (verb). A nominalization transformation is required to add the prefix {ì-} to the root ‘fírîi’ the verb. The underlying structure of (33) above will look like (34) below.



35. onífòtò ‘photographer’

The noun ‘fòtò’ (photo) will be entered in the lexicon as loan-word(noun). A nominalization transformation is required to add the prefix {oní-} to the root ‘fòtò’. The underlying structure of (35) above will be something like (36) below.

36.



6 Empowerment

6.1 Lexical Addition

The lexicon of the Yorùbá language is empowered by the addition of words formed to express foreign notions and ideas formulated through intra-language processes. The motivation for this effort is the challenge of expressing these non- indigenous senses which are basically English words in the Yorùbá language without hurried resort to loaning. These words have been formulated through processes such as semantic extension and composition among others. They are only known to the linguists and perhaps the media practitioners. They are therefore not in the lexicon of the other users of the Yorùbá language.

6.2 Semantic Extension

This is a situation whereby the meaning of an indigenous Yorùbá word is broadened to capture the sense in a new idea or notion. For example:

Àpólà (lit: ‘split wood’) ‘**phrase**’ The meaning of split wood is extended to the ‘phrase’ which is a constituent of the sentence.

Àtẹ (lit.: ‘raffia tray’) ‘**chart**’. The meaning of raffia tray used for display of wares for sale is extended to language materials in display on charts, e.g. vowels on a vowel chart.

6.3 Composition

These are coinages that come in form of description. For example:

Afèjìtèpè: A-fi-èjì-ètè-pè: (lit: that which is produced with two lips) = ‘a bilabial’ coined in this way “to describe a consonant which is produced with the two lips.” Such organs of speech are called articulators by phoneticians. This term replaces ‘afètèpè’ which was proposed in Metallanguage Volume I (Bamgbose(Ed.)1992), when it was discovered

that it was not precise enough. The two lips indicated by ‘bi –’ in bilabial was not reflected in the term.

Aṣẹ̀gbẹ̀fábo: A-ṣe-ẹ̀gbè-fún-abo: (lit: he who supports the female) = ‘feminist’, coined in this way most probably by the media to describe an international phenomenon which is foreign to the average Yorùbá but needed to be broadcast to all speakers, especially the non-literates.

6.1.2 Precision and Economy

Another source of empowerment of the Yorùbá lexicon is the direct loaning of English words to express foreign notions and ideas to achieve precision and economy. Indeed, these words have been totally integrated into the Yorùbá language so much so that many non-literate speakers would argue that they are indigenous to the language. Examples abound, but suffices to mention a few.

Rìwáyà ‘rewire’ auto-electrician: This term is ear-loaned from English language. The prefix {re-} means ‘to replace’ or ‘to repeat. Because a vehicle must have been wired before being acquired, the electrician can only replace or repair the system. The term is therefore appropriately formulated, even though it does not tally with the correct English usage; which has to do with the replacement of the wiring system of a building. The job of a ‘rewire’ is the repair or servicing of all the electrical parts of a motor-vehicle.

Bárékè ‘barrack’ (for military personnel): This term is ear-loaned from English-language and fully integrated into the Yorùbá language. ‘Barrack’ is a modern institution which came with western military system. It is therefore an addition to the Yorùbá contemporary lexicon, along with the terms for other accompany things such as **búùtù** ‘boot’ **púrùntù** ‘recruit’ and **kòbùrù** ‘corporal’.

Kòkó ‘cocoa’: This is a common cash crop in South-West Nigeria. Most of the farmers are Yorùbá. This plant is not indigenous to Yorùbá land. It was imported from South America. Before the discovery of crude oil, the economy of Nigeria depended partly on export proceeds from cocoa. Because it is not indigenous, there is no known Yorùbá word for it. ‘Kòkó’ is therefore ear-loaned and integrated from its native name ‘cocoa’. The lexicon of the Yorùbá language is swelled with the name of plants which are foreign but now widely cultivated among the Yorùbá. Among them are **kajú** ‘cashew’, **kòfi** ‘coffee’ and **gbẹ̀rẹ̀fúùtù** ‘breadfruit’.

Ganmọ̀le ‘Gammallin20’: This is the name of the commonest cocoa plant disinfectant. Cocoa trees are usually infected by certain insects which make farmers to have low yield in quantity and in quality. Most of cocoa farmers procure it and keep in their homes. It is poisonous to human beings if consumed. There were rampant cases of farmers who committed suicide because of poor crop yields by consuming ‘Gammallin20’.

Éèdì ‘AIDS’, an acronym of ‘Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome’: This term is loaned from the English acronym and integrated into the Yorùbá language. The last letter ‘s’ is left out of the loaning. It is also called ‘**àisàn kògbòògùn**’ incurable disease’. Incidentally, **èèdì** ‘curse’ close to **éèdì** in pronunciation, already exist in the Yorùbá lexicon. The two words **éèdì** ‘AIDS’ and **èèdì** ‘curse’ are both dreaded. But in a recent study, in order to douse the stigma attached to the carriers, an appropriate term that depicts the real nature of the disease has been coined. It is **isòdòlẹ̀ àjẹsára**-(lit. disabling the power of immunity) (Yusuff et al. 2017).

7 Disenfranchisement

As new words come in, some words become endangered because items, ideas and notions which they describe are either moribund or are substituted with modern ones. Such endangered words eventually get out of common use by contemporary speakers of the Yorùbá language, and consequently become lexically percolated. Consider the following in this connection: ‘But a word is lost by the act of inattention – nobody thinks of it; nobody uses it; and it fades out of the language.’ (Fromkin, V & R. Rodman 1978:313).

I disagree with the above view because a lost lexical item may be irrecoverable. If reference could be made to it, then, it is not lost. Rather, it percolates. Its frequency of usage is only reduced to a level which can be described as old or archaic. Surely, some words are more frequently used than others in every language.

Contact with the English loans has made certain groups of words moribund and percolated. Their use has reduced partly as a result of the fact that the modern educated speaker emphasizes the English equivalents. Also, some of the items which these words describe are no longer in common use. When they are, which is rare, the English equivalents come handier.

What is said to be moribund is something which is near death or about to collapse. (Lorimer, 1995:650). Such words contribute to the development of the Yorùbá language when they are used to describe modern concepts which possess the characteristics of their referents. For instance, **àtẹ̀** ‘raffia tray’ for chart (in Yorùbá Metalanguage). Words which are considered as belonging to this category are actually on the brink of extinction. Their vestiges remain in Yorùbá classical literatures and in rare practices of oral poetry in the Yorùbá countryside. These words are only moribund to the elite native speaker of the Yorùbá language who though are fewer than the grassroot native speakers, are very influential in the modernization efforts of the language. The words are well known to the grassroot native speakers but the extent to which they can sustain their usage beyond the rural speech community is limited because of apparent limitations such as lack of education, lack of exposure to western civilization and modernization. I will provide examples in some of these groups to show that the Yorùbá language has indeed been disenfranchised by the English loans which is providing the enabling environment.

7.1 Names of animals and birds

1. Irò - Gorilla
2. Ìkookò - Hyena
3. Ètà - Civet cat
4. Òfú - Pelican bird
5. Àparò - Partridge/bush fowl

7.2 Names of Plants

1. Ògàn-ó - Benin mahogany
2. Afàrà - Shingle wood
3. Àsùnwòn - Ringworm shrub
4. Iròsun - Camwood
5. Réré - Wild coffee

7.3 Names of traditional costumes

1. Gbéri ọde - Hunters' outfit
2. Gbáiyè - Outing dress
3. Agbádá - Outing dress (flowing gown)
4. Sàpara - Outing dress of a peculiar pattern
5. Òyàlà - Outing dress of a peculiar pattern

7.4 Agricultural terms

1. **Eésan** – **palm kernel shell** (used as fuel); Also **ògùnşò** or **làgidi** ‘dense palm oil waste’ and **ihá** ‘fluffy palm oil waste’ are used as fuel in making fire to cook.
2. **Egàn** ‘**farmstead**’ : This is a farm located away from the village or town. It is habitable for the purpose of intense farming.
3. **Ebu** ‘**palm oil**’ **producing square**’: This is the arena demarcated for the production of palm oil and its waste products which are all useful. **Èkù** is the shallow well in which boiled palm nuts are mashed for the production of palm oil.
4. **Òwá** ‘**palm leaf spine**’: The full palm leaf is called ‘**imò**’. It is used to build huts especially in farmsteads. **Òwá** is sliced into **ẹfón** ‘sliced palm spine’ to make baskets of various shapes and sizes.
5. **Gògò** ‘**fruit plucker**’: This is a long stick to which end is attached a sharp metal cutter. It is used for the plucking of fruits like oranges, mangoes and pawpaw.

7.5 Numeral System

In respect of numerals, some efforts are documented in NERDC (1990), where the native numeral system has been simplified to ease its understanding and application by deliberately substituting an alternative. In the native numeral system, {**àádò-**} ‘less 10’ for numerals like 50 (60-10) **àádòta** and {**ẹẹdẹ-**} ‘less 100’ for numerals like 500 (600-100) **ẹẹdẹbẹta**. 60 and 600 are **ogòta** (20 x 3) and **Egbẹta** (200 x 3) respectively. From 4000,

counting is in units of 2000, and {èédé-} stands again for ‘less 1000’ for numerals like 11,000 (12,000 – 1,000) **Èédégbàafà**. **Igbàafà** (2000 x 6) is N12,000. There is also the problem of monomorphemic words like **òkẹ́** for 20,000; **irinwó** for 400, **òḍúnrún** for 300 and **okòó** for 20. These perceived problems constitute the main motivation for the simplification of the Yorùbá numeral system. Even this effort has not improved the speakers’ attitude toward the use of Yorùbá numerals. Most speakers still prefer to use the English numerals.

7.6 Time Segmentation

Time segmentation is culture bound. While the English have morning, afternoon, evening and night as segments upon which greetings are calibrated, the Yorùbá calibrate their greetings on the following: ààjìn/òru ‘midnight’, idájí ‘dawn’, àárò ‘morning’, iyálẹ̀ta ‘before noon’, ọ̀sán ‘afternoon’, iròlẹ́ ‘evening’ and alẹ́ ‘night’. Modern civilization encapsulated in English loan expressions has made the Yorùbá time segmentation to be underspecified along the English system. Words like ààjìn, idájí and iyálẹ̀ta are percolated because of lack of direct equivalents in English greetings.

7.7 Other Lexical Underspecification

Some words which specify types within objects which are seemingly similar have been appropriated to the most popular of the range or a generic term. Consider the following examples:

1. Agbádá, Şaprará, Dànşíkí, Ọ̀yàlà, Ẹ̀sikí and Gbáriyẹ̀, which are all types of ceremonial gowns have been appropriated to only Agbádá, which is the most popular among them.
2. Şóóró, Kẹ̀mbẹ̀, Àgbàntara, which are types of trousers have all been appropriated to Şòkòtò ‘trouser’, which is a generic term.
3. Àmù ‘water pot’, Ị̀saasùn ‘soup pot’, Ị̀kòkò ‘multipurpose pot’, which are clay pots, but for specific purposes have been appropriated to only Ị̀kòkò ‘pot’, which is more popular and also generic.

The word economy presented by the English loans has affected the use of these specific words in the Yorùbá language.

8. Conclusion

This paper has explained the level of empowerment that the English loans bestowed on the Yorùbá language. That is, the Yorùbá language has been empowered to the extent of the provision of words for strictly foreign notions and ideas by English loans. It has also shown how the English loans have precipitated and motivated the impoverishment of the Yorùbá language. The speakers however have allowed this opportunity to impoverish a language that has internal capacity to generate new words as has been demonstrated by linguists, media and other lovers of the language because of sheer disloyalty and inferiority

complex propagated and spearheaded by the elites who are though numerically few but are significantly influential in policy formulation and execution.

The only way out to redeeming the Yorùbá language from further endangerment is advocacy. The use of the language at home should be intensified and the educational policies should make compulsory the teaching of Yorùbá language at all levels of education. General Studies (GST) courses at the tertiary level in the southwest Nigeria should include the Yorùbá language. In all, enforcement of these policies should always be at the front burner.

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