

## Language Contact and Linguistic Borrowing in Igbo Legislative Domain

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines language contact and linguistic borrowing in legislative domain. Any given language has a limited stock of morphemes available and at the same time, it is an acknowledged fact that the number of concepts requiring expression continues to increase everyday with the explosive growth of human knowledge. This is the basis and motivation of this research. It seeks to identify legislative borrowed terms and its sound and examine the equivalent in English as a result of language contact. The data for the study is selected from the Quadrilingual Glossary of Legislative Terms using a purposive sampling method. Findings have shown the taking over of words from another language. Igbo language, of course, borrowed terms from English language. That is to say all borrowed words have their sounding similar to the meaning they signify and often the meaning of such words can be easily guessed. Every language has its sets of sounds and the usefulness of those sounds, but the sounds are borrowed words. Furthermore, phonetic modification occurs in borrowing of foreign words. In conclusion, there is room for Igbo to coin words to suit certain term and translation equivalent to boost their richness in vocabulary. Borrowing is a translation technique; it shows legislative terms in Igbo all having their sound absolutely motivated from English.

**Keywords:** *Quadrilingual, Borrowing, Translation Technique, Linguistic, Language Contact*

### **Introduction**

This paper examines language contact and linguistic borrowing in legislative domain. How do languages affect each other when they are in contact? Languages are not "rigid" in that they are not affected by the presence of other languages around them. When two languages come into contact, one or both of them may change. When multiple languages come into contact, the result may be an entirely new language. We will look at the various relationships which may hold between languages in contact. By "languages coming into contact" we mean, of course, that the speakers of those languages come into contact in some way. Note that the speakers do not have to be physically in contact- writing is a means by which authors share language with their readers. Example: Classical Latin has heavily influenced English, but there have probably never been any speakers of Classical Latin at all, much less any in physical contact with speakers of English. The only "contact" has been through writings. Languages in contact often exhibit borrowing. The simplest (and therefore most common) borrowings are lexical borrowings (i.e., vocabulary borrowings - called loanwords). There do not have to be much interaction between two populations for a lexical item to be borrowed Example: English speakers have not had much intense contact with speakers of Arabic, but have borrowed some of their words - giraffe, algebra, lute.

A more complex form of lexical borrowing is loan translation or calque formation. A calque is a literal morpheme-for-morpheme translation of an idiom or other phrase from one language into another. Examples: It goes without saying (from French) Worldview (from Weltanschauung). Another possible form of borrowing is phonological borrowing. This occurs when a language adopts new sounds or changes already present sounds under the influence of another language it is in contact with. Examples: New York [x] from Yiddish [zh] from French. Morphological borrowing: able/ible (French), hyper- (Greek). The "deepest" form of borrowing is syntactic borrowing. Here we find syntactic features such as word order imported from nearby languages. This requires much more contact than other forms of borrowing, requiring as it does that there be considerable numbers of bilingual speakers who know the syntax of both languages. Examples Bulgarian has created a postposed definite article under the influence of Rumanian. When two groups of people come into contact there are various relationships which can hold between them. These relationships are frequently reflected linguistically. If both groups are of equal prestige (neither is dominant over the other), then the languages enter into a similarly egalitarian relationship (called an adstratal relationship) in which borrowing occurs both ways. Example: English and Norse (Old English period). If one group is dominant over the other, then the language of the dominant group is the superstratum language and that of the dominated group of the substratum language. Borrowing is uneven, with the substratum language borrowing much more from the superstratum than vice-versa. Example: After the Norman Invasion, French was the superstratum language while English was the substratum language. When English came to be spoken again by the upper classes again several hundred years later, it was very different from the English spoken before the French came,

having absorbed huge amounts of French vocabulary and many syntactic, phonological and morphological features from French.

Language convergence comes about when languages in long-term adstratal relationships become more and more like each other through centuries of mutual borrowing. Example: Balkan Sprachbund. Language shift/language death- when speakers abandon their language for another, more prestigious one there is language shift. When all speakers of a language do so, there is language death. Different linguistic backgrounds necessitated the study of language contact resulting to borrowing. Sadly, we do not have studies in linguistic borrowing in a legislative domain. We do not know the type of borrowing (loan word, loan blend and loan shift) or whether the sounds of the Igbo legislative terms were also borrowed. This paper set out to examine language contact and linguistic borrowing in a legislative domain with the aim of achieving the following objectives: (i) Identify borrowed Igbo legislative terms (ii) Identify borrowed Igbo legislative sounds (iii) Ascertain the equivalents in English Language.

This work contributes greatly not only in easy communication among the users, thus, alleviating the burden associated with the use of foreign language and also enriching our own national heritage. Hence, this would help students, teachers and law makers to understand borrowing of Igbo legislative terms as a result of language contact.

### **Literature Review: Empirical Studies**

Mackey and Ornstein (1979) assert that, language contact is essentially a social phenomenon resulting from the meeting of peoples speaking different languages. The notion of language contact continues Mackey and Ornstein include the dominance of certain languages and their social functions, the location of language communities and their demographic, political, and economic importance, and the motives which push peoples to master another language in addition to their mother tongue. They argue that language contact varies according to the distribution of the languages, their stability and their social functions.

Agbedo (2007) notes that, language contact occur when people from different linguistic backgrounds converge at a particular place for whatever reason or reasons to interact. According to Wikipedia (2009), language contact occurs when speakers of distinct speech varieties interact. When this happens, it is typical for their languages to influence each other. Emenanjo (2005) notes that man has an unending quest to relate, interact, conquer or dominate in spheres of life such as business, interpersonal relationships, politics, religion or education. Such meeting or coming in contact with people by implication is the coming together or the presence of two or more languages in a particular geographical environment, community or nation. Rene and Muysken (1987) describe language contact in relation to what the dominant language contact situations in recent history are and the scenarios for grammatical borrowing. Rene and Pieter (1987) describe language contact in relation to five scenarios with which grammatical borrowing could potentially take place. The five scenarios include: convergence, cultural influence and lexical borrowing, second language learning, relexification, and imitation of prestige pattern. Language contact is one of the important external factors of language change. First two scholars who have made great contributions in this field are: Einar Haugen and Uriel Weinreich. Two other scholars, Joshua Fishman and Wallace Lambert, trying to explain social patterns in terms of attitudes and conflicts arising in language contact situations, also made great contributions to sociolinguistic theory.

In Haugen's own periodization of his work, the years from 1938 to 1953 are years of active fieldwork among Norwegian-Americans. The book, *The Norwegian Language in America: A study in bilingual behavior* (1953), has two important viewpoints that linguistic borrowing is an adjustment to the host culture facilitating the retention of the immigrant language, and therefore, a natural and healthy response to cultural dislocation, and that linguistic divergences result from isolation, convergence result from contact, and the study of bilingual system is the key to convergence. Weinreich is seen as the founder of the theory of language contact. He publishes his book *Language in Contact* (1953) in the same year of Haugen's influential book. Following the publishing of Weinreich's book, Haugen writes a reviewer of it (1954). The purpose of his book is to set up a framework of theory which will enable the linguists to speak more precisely and clearly concerning contact problems, and its basic theme is to show the effects of bilingualism on the languages involved. The emphasis is on the meaning of language contact to the individual who experiences it, rather than on the historical results of such contact.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Thomason's (2001) borrowing scale and Lanstyāk (2006) subtypes of borrowing are few theories on borrowing which this study adopted. Thomason (2001) discusses language contact from various aspects, providing an elaborated framework on the linguistic and social factors, mechanisms, and outcomes of contact induced language change. For the explanation of the different results of change, she develops a modified version of the earlier framework in Thomason and Kaufman (1988). Thomason (2001:70-71) distinguishes between four stages in her borrowing scale where phases are defined on the basis of social factors, especially intensity of contact between speakers of the source and the recipient language (each later stage also includes linguistic results of the earlier stages):

- i. Casual Contact: only lexical borrowing (in non-basic vocabulary) of mostly nouns (verbs, adjectives, and adverbs also); no structural borrowing.
- ii. Slightly More Intense Contact: function words and slightly structural borrowing.
- iii. More Intense Contact: non-basic vocabulary is also borrowed, and the degree of the structural borrowing is moderate.
- iv. Intense Contact: heavy borrowing in lexicon and in structure as well, even if it changes the typological characteristics of the recipient language.

The main criterion for the differentiation between the stages is the source language proficiency of the members of the borrowing community. In the first stage, borrowers are not inevitably fluent in the source language, and bilinguals need not be involved in the borrowing process. In the next phase, borrowers are bilinguals; however, the majority in the community is still monolingual. The third stage presents a state when borrowing is favoured by different factors and the number of bilinguals increases. In the final stage, bilingualism is extensive among speakers of the recipient language and borrowing is favoured.

Lanstyāk (2006) employed an elaborate typology of lexical borrowings. He employed subtypes of borrowings and constructs a more complex system with several categories of primary loan words which are:

- i. The direct loans in the stricter sense (Lanstyāk 2006:38) are loan words that exist, and the form and the meaning of the two words are identified, or at least similar to each other.
- ii. Formal loans (Lanstyāk 2006:39), on the other hand, are loan words that exist with similar forms and similar or identical meanings, but clear to the variant.
- iii. Hybrid stems (Lanstyāk 2006:40) are loan words that have equivalents which are similar in form but neither of them are exactly the same.
- iv. Hybrid calques correspond to the loan blend category in Haugen's system where homogenous calques and semantic loans are merged under the label loan shift.
- v. A stylistic loan, in Lanstyāk's (2006) typology, is a loan word that has an equivalent in SL and in TL as well, but the TL form is closer to the SL form as regards its stylistic characteristics.

### Summary of the Literature Review

The emerging field of contact linguistics or language contact owes its existence primarily to the work of all these pioneers. These previous studies, whether theory or practice, have laid a solid foundation for our further studies on linguistic borrowing induced language contact. All of these have promoted the theoretical study of language contact, although theoretical agreement has not reached and it is unlikely to be reached in the near future. Unfortunately, all the language studies resulting to borrowing, do not have studies in linguistic borrowing in a legislative domain. Not to talk of the borrowed legislative term from Igbo. Therefore, this study will objectively identify the borrowed Igbo legislative terms, their sounds and ascertain the equivalents in English language.

### Methodology

This paper's source data is the Quadrilingual Glossary of Legislative Terms. The data is selected using a purposive sampling method. A descriptive approach was employed in this paper. For the differentiation between the different types of lexical borrowing, I use Haugen's System. According to Haugen (1950), the three main types of borrowing are loan words, loan blends, (or hybrids) and loan shifts (loan translation and semantic loans). The major criteria according to which he differentiates between the three groups are morphemic importation and morphemic substitution. Haugen's typology is represented below:

Morphemic Importation	Morphemic Substitution
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Loan words	+	-
Loan blends	+	+
Loan shifts	-	+

**Table 1. Haugen’s typology**

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

On the basis of an importation-substitution distinction, Haugen (1950: 214f.) distinguishes three basic groups of borrowings: “(1) Loanwords show morphemic importation without substitution.... (2) Loanblends show morphemic substitution as well as importation.... (3) Loanshifts show morphemic substitution without importation”. Haugen later refined (1956) his model in a review of Gneuss’s (1955) book on Old English loan coinages, whose classification, in turn, is the one by Betz (1949) again.

In loan blends only “a part of the phonemic shape of the word has been imported, while a native portion has been substituted for the rest” (Haugen 1950:214). In hybrids (loan blends), it is usually the second part which is not borrowed, because preserving the L<sub>1</sub> part as the second (ie the inflected) part of the word makes morphological adaptation easier. The category of loan shifts can be divided into two subgroups on the basis of the morphological make-up of the word. If the borrowed element consists of two stems, ie it is compound; it is then a calque according to Haugen’s terminology. Whereas, if the word is morphologically simple, it is considered to be a semantic loan or semantic calque, and then “no formal structural element whatever has been imported, only a meaning” (Haugen, 1950:214). So the types of borrowing can be divided along morphological lines and on the basis of the degree of morphemic importation.

This paper analyzes the corpus using the borrowed words and etymological meanings. For the English terms, the source of the etymological information is adapted from Skeat (1963) Etymological Dictionary of the English Language. For Igbo terms, Echeruo (2001) Igbo-English Dictionary gave attention to possible dialectal differences.

**Table 2: Igbo Terms, Legislative Sense and Literal Meaning**

<b>Igbo Terms</b>	<b>Legislative Sense (Equivalent English Legislative)</b>	<b>Gloss (Literal Meaning)</b>
Baà	Bar	Bar (Borrowed)
Biili	Bill	Bill (Borrowed)
Kômìtì	Committee	Committee (Borrowed)
Jónálù	Journal	Journal (Borrowed)
Minitì	Minutes	Minutes (Borrowed)
Moshòñ	Motion	Motion (Borrowed)
Rèfèrèndùm	Referendum	Referendum (Borrowed)
Senèèti	Senate	Senate (Borrowed)
Spikà	Speaker	Speaker (Borrowed)
Vitò	Veto	Veto (Borrowed)
Bojeti	Budget	Budget (Borrowed)

Bill is a "Written statement," mid-14c., from Anglo-L. *billa* "list," from M.L. *bulla* "decree, seal, sealed document," in classical L. "bubble, boss, stud, amulet for the neck" (hence "seal"). Sense of "account, invoice" first recorded c.1400; that of "order to pay" (technically bill of exchange) is from 1570s; that of "paper money" is from 1660s. Meaning "draft of an act of Parliament" is from 1510s. The verb meaning "to send someone a bill of charge" is from 1867. Biili derived from the English Term Bill.

Referendum 1847, "submitting a question to the voters as a whole" (originally chiefly in reference to Switzerland), from French or German, from L. *referendum* "that which must be referred," lit. "Thing brought back," from neut. gerundive of *referre* "to bring or take back". As a gerundive, it has no plural in Latin; referendums is preferred in English. Rèfèrèndùm is borrowed from English meaning “Referendum”.

Senate c.1200, "legal and administrative body of ancient Rome," from O.Fr. *senat* or L. *senatus* "highest council of the state in ancient Rome," lit. "council of elders," from *senex* (gen. *senis*) "old man, old". Attested from late 14c. in reference to governing bodies of free cities in Europe; of national governing bodies from 1550s; specific sense of upper house of U.S. legislature is recorded from 1775. Senèèti is borrowed from English meaning “Senate”.

Speaker c.1300, "one who speaks," agent noun from *speak*. First applied to "person who presides over an assembly" c.1400, from Anglo-French (late 14c.). In reference to the English Parliament, Sir Thomas de Hungerford apparently was the first. Spikà is borrowed from English word speaker.

Veto 1629, from L. veto, lit. "I forbid," first person singular present indicative of vetare "forbid," of unknown origin. Its used by Roman tribunes who opposed measures of the Senate or magistrates. The verb is recorded from 1706. Vitò is borrowed from English meaning Veto.

Bar Late 12C., "stake or rod of inn used to fasten a door or gate," from O. Fr. Barre (12C.) "beam, bar gate, bainer," from V.L. barra "bar, bainer." This projects sense of "to obstruct, prevent" is recorded by 1570s. baà a borrowed word from English, meaning Bar.

Committee 1620s, from committee, or else a rural of Anglo- fr. Commite, PP. of committee "to commit," from L. committere. Originally "person to whom something is committed (late 15C), the 17C. Sense was a body of such people. kômiti is borrowed from English word; "committee".

Journal Mid-14C., "book of church services," from Anglo- Fr. Journal "a day" from O. Fr. Journal, originally "daily" (ad.), from L.L. diurnalis "daily". Sense of "daily record of transactions" first recorded 1560s; that of "personal diary" is C. 1600, from a sense found in French. Jônàlù is borrowed from English word meaning Journal.

Budget Early 15c., "leather pouch," from M.Fr. bougette, dim. of O.Fr. bouge "leather bag, wallet, pouch," from L. bulga "leather bag," of Gaulish origin (cf. O.Ir. bolg "bag," Bret. bolc'h "flax pod"). Modern financial meaning (1733) is from notion of treasury minister keeping his fiscal plans in a wallet. The verb in this sense is from 1884. Another 18c. transferred sense was to "a bundle of news," hence the use of the word as the title of some newspapers. Bøjeti is borrowed from English (budget).

Motion Late 14c., from O.Fr. motion (13c.), from L. motionem (nom. motio) "a moving, an emotion," from motus, pp. of movere "to move". The verb sense in parliamentary procedure first recorded 1747; with meaning, "to guide or direct by a sign, gesture, movement" it is attested from 1787. Related: Motioned; motioning. Moshòñ is derived from the English term "Motion".

Minutes "Record of proceedings," c.1710, perhaps from L. minuta scriptura "rough notes," lit. "Small writing"(adj.). Miniti is derived from the English term "Minutes".

**Table 3: Borrowed Sounds in English Terms**

English Terms	Pronunciation	Igbo Terms
Bar	/ba:(r)/	Baà
Bill	/bɪl/	Biili
Committee	/kə'miti/	Kômiti
Journal	/dʒ:nl/	Jônàlù
Minutes	/minit/	Miniti
Motion	/mou'n/	Moshòñ
Referendum	/refə'rendəm/	Rèfèrèndùm
Senate	/senət/	Senèèti
Speaker	/spi:kə(r)/	Spikà
Veto	/vi:təu/	Vitò
Budget	/bʌdʒɪt/	Bøjeti

The above tables show a similarity in sound production between the two languages. The act of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, often with reference to some standard of correctness or acceptability was depicted in the table. It is an expression from a language which has the same meaning as, or can be used in a similar context to, one from another language, and can therefore be used to translate it. Every language has its sets of sounds and the usefulness of those sounds. Some sound are bound to change to borrowed English words in languages around the world as seen in Kwamiti for committee, Kwanaa for corner, Sukundireebaa for screwdriver in Hausa (a West Chadic Language); Baafu for bath, Faaloo for parlor and Sitadiomu for stadium in Yoruba (a West African Language). English speakers make sounds just as languages borrow sounds. A few sounds of English were borrowed from French, such as "ZH" we use in words like treasurer, leisure. But the sounds are borrowed words. Phonetic modification occurs in borrowing of foreign words.

### Summary of Findings

The analysis of the terms was possible using Haugen's System of lexical borrowing. It is observed that the terms cannot be loan blend (which have both morphemic importation and substitution) or loan shifts (which

is the morphological make-up of the word, consisting of two stems). In Haugen's typology, loan words do not have morphemic substitution. Substitution is an error in which the learner substitutes a form from one language (usually the learner's first language) for a form in the target language. Rather we see the existence of morphemic importation showing that a word has been taken from one language and used in another language.

When a borrowing is a single word, it is called a loan word. Sometimes, speakers try to pronounce borrowings as they are pronounced in the original language. However, if a borrowed word or phrase is widely used, most speakers will pronounce it according to the sound system of their own language (cf Richard, 2000:57). For example in English /ba:(r)/ bar has become in Igbo baà, though Igbo keeps something like the English Pronunciation.

One can strongly conclude that, the findings shows terms in Igbo all having their sounds absolutely motivated from English. That is to say, all loan words have their sounding similar to the meaning they signify and often the meaning of such words can be easily guessed.

### Conclusion

This study depicts borrowing as a translation technique; showing legislative terms in Igbo all having their sound absolutely motivated from English. But the sounds are borrowed words. In other words, phonetic modification occurs in borrowing of foreign words. Linguists believe that when words from two or more separate languages share similarities in sound and meaning as a result of contact, it is a sign of borrowing or common origin. Sounds are constituents of words, and words are special in that only words are sequence of sounds.

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