

Borrowing Devices in Yorùbá Terminography

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Abstract

In the existing literatures on Yorùbá terminography, not all the devices of borrowing are adequately accounted for inspite of the fact that these devices are exploited. Not only that, the borrowing devices recognized are not systematically and uniformly classified. For instance, Bamgbose (1984) recognises dialect borrowing and loanwords while Awobuluyi (1994) discusses loan translation in addition to dialect and external borrowing. Owolabi (2004, 2006) describes only loanwords. Olubode-Sawe (2010) discusses intralingual borrowing, borrowing, loan translation and loan blend. With data collected from some main Yorùbá terminology works viz., Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (1980), Bamgbose (1984), Awobuluyi (1990), NERDC (1991), Odetayo (1993), and Olubode-Sawe (2010), and language users the current work gives a systematic and detailed description of the borrowing devices as applied in Yorùbá terminography.

Introduction

Borrowing is a very important source of developing the vocabularies and terminologies of a language. Existing literatures on borrowing designate it variously as “borrowing”, “adoption”, “loaning” etc and restrict the term to a situation whereby a particular language incorporates in its lexicon words from another language or dialect of that language. For instance, Greenberg (1957: 69), as cited by Abdul (1987: 87) defines borrowing as “the acceptance in one language of a form, in both its sound and its meaning aspects, from another language; though usually with both phonetic and semantic modifications”. Abdul (1987: 87) refers to words or items involved in the process as borrowings, loanwords, loanforms, loans, or adoption.

Borrowing has its root in two or more cultures coming into contact. This is the view of Anderson *et al* (1973: 95). According to them, “when cultures come into contact with one another, borrowing takes place primarily in the realm of lexical item”. The words borrowed are however made to conform to the morphological and phonological structure of the recipient language. In some cases borrowing do bring about minor changes to the phonological structure of the borrowing language. For instance Awobuluyi (1994: 39) notes that the effects of borrowing now make Yorùbá to feature the voiceless bilabial plosive [p] as in *pépá* ‘paper’, *péńsúrù* ‘pencil’, the occurrence of high vowel initial words (e.g. *álọ́mù* “alum”), consonant sound cluster and consonant ending a word (*onibrèèd* “bread seller”) which are not known in Yorùbá. Aziza (2007: 303) describing the morphology of Urhobo points out that “all nouns in Urhobo begin with vowels and all syllables end with vowels. Any loanword that does not conform with these elements of structure is ‘repaired’ either by introducing epenthetic vowel or by consonant deletion”.

Various reasons have been given for the imperativeness of borrowing. Awobuluyi (1994: 38) cites impossibility of finding or creating a transparent indigenous term for a foreign concept or when borrowing “is considered to be of pedagogical value to preserve as much as possible the original form of the foreign term concerned”.

Olubode-Sawe (2010: 74) echoes Awobuluyi’s views and adds that “people borrow words either because they have forgotten or not learnt appropriate indigenous terms, or because there is some status attached to being able to use the source language, no matter how imperfectly or because the ‘technology’ is believed better discussed in a ‘technological language’”

Cabré (1999: 88) classifies borrowing into three types based on the code from which the borrowed units come from, viz.

- a. loan words from Greek or Latin, often called neoclassical borrowings
- b. loan words from another, contemporary language, i.e. true borrowings
- c. loan words from other geographic or social dialects, or other subject fields from the same language, which are usually not considered borrowings.

Using data from English, Cabré (1999) describes three forms of neoclassical borrowing. First, form in which the neoclassical words consist of formatives from both Latin and Greek. The following are examples: *bigamy*, *pluviometer*, *tripod*, *mammography*. Second, form in which there is combination of a neoclassical formative with an English formative: *infrared*, *lumpectomy*, *microwave*. Third, form in which the blending of English first syllable of one term and the final syllable of another is used to create terms that sound neoclassical as in

ballute (**balloon** + **parachute**)

electrocute (**electro**+ **execute**)

tangelo (**tangerine** + **pomelo**)

Cabré claims that international terminology standards explicitly places much value on the use neoclassical stems and affixes to form new terms in order to encourage the nature of designations. The recommendation, according to Cabré, is not always followed.

Cabré describes true borrowings as lexical units that come from a foreign language system which have been incorporated into a language either consciously or not. She cites the following English terms as being widely used in other languages: *camping*, *cash flow*, *compact disc*, *mouse*.

The third category of borrowing identified by Cabré as non-borrowing could be rightly described either as interlingual / internal / dialect borrowing (if borrowing involves the use of vocabulary items specific to a regional or social variety of one language in the standard variety of that same language) or what ISO (1999) calls transdisciplinary borrowing (if borrowing involves the use of terms of one discipline in another).

In addition to the three categories of borrowing identified by Cabré (1999: 94) is loan translation. This involves translating the components of a foreign word into the target language. She cites English *wintergreen*, from Dutch *wintergroen*; and Spanish *rascacielos*, from English *skyscraper*

Ndimele (1999: 65-66) classifies borrowing into loanword, loanblend, calque or loan translation. Separating a loan as a form of borrowing is a bit confusing because a linguistic item borrowed from a dialect or another language is a loan. Again, the borrowed linguistic unit in a loan blend or loan translation is also a loan. In other words, in a loan blend or loan translation there is a loan which could be a morpheme or a word.

Borrowing in Existing Yorùbá Works on Terminology

Borrowing into Yorùbá as into any other languages is through auditory and graphological perception (See Owolabi 1989: 149). Bamgbose (1990: 75) identifies English as the major source of borrowing into Yorùbá. Other languages identified are Hausa, Arabic through Hausa, and French. Awobuluyi (2008: 209) opines that it is more advantageous to borrow words into Yorùbá from English. His submission could be as a result of the pre-eminent roles of English in Nigeria i.e. as the official language, language of administration, education, commerce, international relations and politics etc.

The application of borrowing devices in some literatures on Yorùbá terminography is shown in the following table.

Terminology works	Borrowing Devices in Yorùbá			
	Dialect → Standard Yorùbá	Source language → Yorùbá	Adaption of Source language sense of a term in Yorùbá	Combination of source and Yorùbá lexical items
Bamgbose (1984)	Dialect borrowing	Loanword	-----	-----
Awobuluyi (1994)	Dialect borrowing	External borrowing	Loan translation	-----
Owolabi (2004, 2006)	-----	Loanword	-----	-----
Olubode-Sawe (2010)	Intralingua borrowing	Borrowing	Loan translation	Loan blend

From the information presented in the table, borrowing from dialect to Standard Yorùbá (SY) is referred to either as *dialect borrowing* or *intalingua borrowing* while linguistic items borrowed from a foreign language to Yorùbá are called *external borrowing*, *loanword* or *borrowing*. *Loan translation* is used to express a concept that is expressed in the target language Yorùbá through adaptation of the sense of the source language. The term *loan blend* is used to designate a concept that is expressed in Yorùbá through combination of linguistic units of source language and Yorùbá. The researcher's reaction to the information presented in the table is that loanword or borrowing should not be restricted to classify linguistic items got from other languages. Borrowing or loanword is a mother term for borrowing devices. Also, using the term external borrowing seems a bit inappropriate also because there are elements of external linguistic elements in loan translation and loan blend. There are other loan devices that the classification above do not cover.

Borrowing in the Current Work

This work classifies borrowing in Yorùbá into translingual, intralingual and trans-disciplinary borrowing. The categorization makes systematic and insightful categorization of borrowing devices possible.

Translingua Borrowing

Translingual borrowing is a method of expanding a language's lexical resource that involves the use of grammatical materials of a donor or familiar language to designate a concept in the target language and / or the use of combination of the grammatical materials of a donor or familiar language and a target language to designate a concept in the target language. Borrowing devices subsumed under translingual borrowing include direct loan, loan translation, loan shift and loan blend.

Direct loan

In direct loan the source language designation of a concept is used to express that concept in the target language. Direct loan may involve word loan and lexicalization of source language abbreviations in the recipient language. In both cases, the term borrowed is adapted into grammatical structure of the target language. The following are examples:

a. word loan

English source term	Loan in Standard Yorùbá	Reference
asbestos	àsibésítò	FME (1980: 232)
alum	aálómù	FME (1980: 232)
equation	ikuésòn	FME (1980: 224)
theory	tíòrì	FME (1980: 239)
compass	kònnpààsì	NERDC (1991: 57)
condom	kòndò	NERDC (1991: 60)
clone	kílóónù	NERDC (1991: 50)
carbohydrate	kabòháírè	NERDC (1991: 40)
ampere	ámpiyà	Odetayo (1993: 6)
battery	bátírì	Odetayo (1993: 12)

b. Lexicalized abbreviation

Terminological units made up of combination of the initials of a longer terminological units often correspond to the name of an organization, document or process. In many cases source language terminological units that are abbreviations are lexicalized as a simple term in Yorùbá

English source term	Loan in Standard Yorùbá	Reference
B. A.	Bí-Eè	Bamgbose, 1984: 5)
B. Ed.	Bí-Èḗḗḗ	Bamgbose, 1984: 5)
B. Sc.	Bí-Èḗḗḗ	Bamgbose, 1984: 5)
cf	fi wé	Awobuluyi (1990: 4)
et al	àtawon yòókù	Awobuluyi (1990: 9)
i.e	ìyẹn ni pé	Awobuluyi (1990: 11)
FAO	àjọ fáò	Komolafe (forth coming)
BSP	bíḗḗḗḗ	Komolafe (forth coming)
JAMB	Jáńbù	Bamgbose (1984: 17)
WAEC	Wáḗḗḗḗ	Bamgbose (1984: 17)

Loan translation

Loan translation involves literal translation of a source term in the target language. In loan translation, the sense of a source language term is expressed using the words and morphemes of the borrowing language. The following serve as illustrative examples.

English Source term	Loan in Standard Yorùbá	Reference
nominalized sentence	gbólóhùn àṣòdorúkò “ <i>lit. sentence that has been nominalized</i> ”	Awobuluyi (1994: 37)
ambiguous sentence	gbólóhùn onípón-na “ <i>lit. sentence having more than one meaning</i> ”	Awobuluyi (1994: 37)
conditional sentence	gbólóhùn kání “ <i>lit. sentence involving condition</i> ”	Awobuluyi (1994: 37)
affirmative sentence	gbólóhùn ìjéḗḗ “ <i>lit. sentence for replying “yes”</i> ”	Awobuluyi (1994: 37)
magnifying glass	dígi agbìramù “ <i>lit. glass that enlarges</i> ”	FME (1980: 236)
hand lens	awò ọwò “ <i>lit. something that is used to view that is hand held</i> ”	FME (1980: 235)
permanent magnet	olóòfà alálòpé “ <i>lit magnet that can be used for a long period</i> ”	Odetayo (1993: 48)
soft magnet	òòfà rírò “ <i>lit. magnet that is soft</i> ”	Odetayo (1993: 58)
clockwise	ìbágoyí “ <i>rotating like clock</i> ”	Odetayo (1993: 17)

Loan shift

Loan shift involves using an expression not of the target language but of the adjacent / familiar language to render the equivalents source language terms. In the examples given below Yorùbá borrowed Hausa terms to express Arabic designations for *mosque*, *report/ information*, *pair of scissors*, and *blame*

Source language term	Hausa loan/ equivalent of source language term	Hausa loan in Standard Yorùbá	Reference
masjid (Arabic word for <i>mosque</i>)	masallachi (Hausa adaptation of <i>Masjid</i>)	mósálási	Mogaji (2009: 168)
report/ information (English)	laba:rai (borrowed from Arabic’s <i>al-akhba:r</i>)	làbàrè	Mogaji (2009: 169)
blame (English)	laifi (borrowed from Arabic’s <i>al’ayb</i>)	làáfí	Mogaji (2009: 169)
pair of scissors (English)	almakashi (Hausa word for pair of scissors)	àlùmógàjì	Personal communication with Mr. Oladiipo Ishaq, Hausa Lecturer at Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Nigeria

Loan blend

Loan blend involves combining the lexical resources of both the donor language and the recipient language. In the examples given below, the words in boldface are of English origin.

English source term	Loan in Standard Yorùbá	Reference
onomatopoeic ideophone	idiofóónù firósínròóje	Bamgbose (1984:32)
GCE (OL) ⁷⁷	jí-sí-ì onígbbèèsè kííní	Bamgbose (1984:20)
discourse grammar	gírámà ofò	Bamgbose (1984:20)
atomic number	nómbà wóró	Odetayo (1993:10)
gamma rays	fónrán gámà	Odetayo (1993:32)
clinical thermometer	támómétà ilé dògùn	Odetayo (1993:17)
syllable boundary	ààla sílébù	Awobuluyi (1990:4)
hand lens	lẹ̀nsì iléwọ	NERDC (1991:124)
Flexible pipe	páìpù alẹ	NERDC (1991:114)
continuing education center	sẹ̀ntà ifimòkúnmò	NERDC (1991:65)
fluorescent bulb	gílóóbù olópàá	NERDC (1991:115)
cash account	àkántì owó	NERDC (1991:40)
caretaker committee	kọ̀mitì wòsòdèmí	NERDC (1991:40)

Intralingual borrowing

Internal borrowing is the use of a word or expression of a dialect of a target language to express a source language concept. Internal borrowing is usually resorted to if such items would express foreign terms with greater specificity. Examples:

English source term	Loan in Standard Yorùbá	Yorùbá dialect source	Reference
item	<i>wúnrẹ̀n</i>	Ègbá	Bamgbose, (1984, p xi) Awobuluyi, (1994, p. 37)
speech	<i>ofò</i>	Ọ̀wọ̀	Bamgbose, (1984, p xi) Awobuluyi, (1994, p. 37)
suspended floor	atípá	Ìkálẹ̀	Olubode-Sawe (2010: 168)
pile	tùbẹ̀lẹ̀	Ìkálẹ̀	Olubode-Sawe (2010: 168)
joist	ìnàlé	Ìkálẹ̀	Olubode-Sawe (2010: 168)

Trans-disciplinary borrowing

Trans-disciplinary borrowing can also be referred to as trans-subject field borrowing. In trans-disciplinary borrowing, a term from one discipline is borrowed to designate a new concept in another subject field within the same language. The characteristics that make up the intension of the concepts in the two fields are often comparable by analogy. The term semantic extension is commonly used to describe this phenomenon as a strategy of creating terms in Yorùbá. The term trans-subject field borrowing is favoured over semantic extension for two reasons: semantic extension can convey either a sense of semantic broadening (the process in which the meaning of a word becomes more general or more inclusive or terminologization (the process by which a general language word or expression is transformed into a term designating a concept in a special language ISO, 1999: 30). Here are some examples.

Terminological Unit	Primary subject field	Term designated in the primary subject field	Borrowing subject field	Term designated in the borrowing subject field
oríkì	Oral poetry	An attribute connoting heroism	Linguistics	oríkì “ <i>definition</i> ” Bamgbose (1984: 12)
àfòmó	Agriculture	Air plant	Biology	àfòmó “ <i>parasite</i> ” NERDC (1991:182)
àfòmó	Agriculture	Air plant	Linguistics	àfòmó “ <i>affixes</i> ” Bamgbose (1984:2)
sérikí	Military	Commander of young warriors	Administration	sérikí “ <i>chief administrator in the university</i> ” Owólabí (2004 : 400)
ààrẹ	Military	A warlord	Politics	ààrẹ “ <i>president</i> ” NERDC (1991: 217)
àtẹ	Marketing	Something used to display goods	Phonetics	àtẹ fàwẹ̀lì “ <i>vowel chart</i> ” Bamgbose (1984: 53)
àkà	Agriculture	A barn, store	Semantics	àkà ọ̀rọ̀ “ <i>lexicon</i> ” Bamgbose (1984: 26)
kàà	Building Technology.	An enclosed space or cavity	Phonetics	kàà ọ̀fun “ <i>pharyngeal cavity</i> ” Bamgbose (1984: 34)
òpó	Building Technology.	An upright post supporting the roof	Morphology	òpó “ <i>stem</i> ” Bamgbose (1984: 45)

In the data given above for instance, *oríkì* is a term designating deeds of heroism in the domain of oral poetry in Yorùbá. The term is borrowed into Linguistics as Yorùbá term for *definition*. Again, the Yorùbá term *sérikí*, commander of young warriors, in Yoruba traditional military institution, is borrowed to the domain of tertiary school administration to designate *chief administrator*. The term *àfòmó* is borrowed from the subject field of Agriculture into the subject fields of Biology and Linguistics to designate *parasites* and *affixes* respectively.

Conclusion

The agument pursued in this paper is that devices of borrowing are not restricted to a target language using the lexical resources of another language or that of its dialect to express new concepts. Among other things, the component of meaning of a source language term can be borrowed, a source language lexical item can be combined with the recipient language lexical item to express a new concept in the target language, a word of a familiar language can be borrowed to designate a source language term and a term used in one subject domain can be borrowed to designate a new concept in another subject field.

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