



doi 10.5281/zenodo.7086802

Vol. 05 Issue 09 Sept - 2022

Manuscript ID: #0706

ENGLISH LOANWORD IN KOLOKUMA

OKOTORI, EBIKILA BETTY

GENENAL STUDIES UNIT, INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TOURISM
AND HOSPITALITY, ELEBELE, BAYELSA STATE. 08063302696; ebikilaangese@gmail.com

Corresponding author. *OKOTORI, EBIKILA BETTY
Email: ebikilaangese@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the phonology of Kolokuma-English loanwords. Kolokuma is a Norh-Central Ijoid-Lect, within the Niger Congo Phylum. It is spoken in the Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The objective of this study is to investigate and examine how loanwords from English are adapted in Kolokuma using the Optimality Theory. The study showed that the language does not allow consonant clusters in the onset or coda positions. It also showed that closed syllables are prohibited in the language. It was further demonstrated that open syllables, simplex and voice assimilation are achieved through coda adjustment, cluster simplification and neutralization strategies, using the markedness and faithfulness constraint interactions in Optimality Theory.

KEYWORDS

Loanwords, Optimality Theory, Consonant Cluster, Coda Adjustment and Markedness.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.

Introduction

Loanwords are words that are borrowed from one language into another. Such loanwords are borrowed as a result of speakers of one language coming into direct or indirect contact with those of neighboring or culturally dominant languages, the contact may be friendly or hostile, it could be as a result of trade, religion, inter-tribal marriage, war or political dominance. Whenever speakers of distinct speech communities come in contact for whatever reason, be it friendly or hostile, there is some level of linguistic exchange leading to the transfer of lexical items from one language to the other.

Linguistic borrowing helps to enrich or develop the lexicon of the target language and fill lexical gaps where the target language lacks words or ways of expressing certain concepts.

Some Nigerian languages along the Atlantic coast borrowed words from the Portuguese with whom they had trade relations, particularly in the area of new plants, animals and artefacts introduced by the Portuguese.

Examples:

Portuguese	Borrowed Language	Borrowed Word	English
Arroz	Kalabari	árusúun.	'Rice'
Oporco	Ijo	óporco	'pig'
Asno	ijo	ásu	'donkey'
Laranja	Obolo	Uláájá	'orange'
Vela	Ijo	Vala	'sail'

Ifode (2008: 120)

1.1 Phonology

Phonology is that part of linguistics that studies the organization of speech sounds of natural languages. It is the study of the sound systems of languages. It concerns itself with the way sounds are organized and used, and also explains the differences that occur in languages. (Crystal, 1991; Ifode, 2008; & Ejele, 2014)

1.2 Aspects Of The Phonology Of Kolokuma

In this section, we shall briefly look at some aspects of the phonology of Kolokuma: Consonants, Vowels, Tones, and Syllable Structure.

There are Thirty (30) distinct sounds (Phonemes) in Kolokuma; Twenty One (21) Consonants and Nine (9) Vowels.

1.2.1 Consonant Sounds In Kolokuma

The consonants sounds in Kolokuma are:

b d f g gb gh h k kp l m n
 ng p r s t v w y z

1.2.2 Vowel Sounds In Kolokuma

There are nine (9) vowel sounds in Kolokuma. The vowels fall into two sets: wide vowels: e i o u and narrow vowels: e i o u. There is vowel harmony in the language thus, vowels of the two sets cannot co-occur in a simple word. /æ/ is neutral and can be used by both sets of vowels. Orthographically, long vowels are written double and the narrow vowels are written with a sub dot.

Examples of Wide Vowels:

	Word	Gloss
/e/	bení	water

	Erí	he
/i/	ofoni	bird / chicken
	Fini	open
/o/	bólou	inside
	bo	come
/u/	ukú	heavy
	Tórúú	chew

Examples of Narrow Vowels:

	Word	Gloss
/e/	éí	see
	efere	plate
/i/	fíyá	food
	fini	fire
/o/	bóló	first
	tolo	pick
/u/	tórú	eye, river
	buu	self

1.3 Tone in Kolokuma

Tone refers to differences in the rate of vibration of the vocal folds that results in a difference in meaning. Aronoff and Fudeman (2008, p.242). Kolokuma, like most African languages, is a tone language.

According to Williamson and Timitimi (1993, p. xxvii), 'Izon has two tones, high and low. The low tone is always left without any mark'. The diacritic mark (´) indicates high tone.

Examples:

Word	Gloss	
Aká	teeth, corn	LH
Tíbí	head	HH
Odi	name of a village In kolokuma	LL
Ári	you	HL

1.4 THE SYLLABLE

Simply put, a syllable is a combination of phonemes that is smaller than a word, but larger than a segment. There are strings that are permissible in every language, in phonology, these strings can be combined in different ways, depending on the phonotactics of the language; it could be CV, CVC, CCVC, CCVCC, VCV etc. Some languages like English permit as much as three to four consonants while others may allow two, yet others, do not allow consonant clusters (Crystal 1991; Jackson 2007; Ifode 2008, & Ejele 2014).

1.4.1 The Syllable Structure

The structure of the syllable is dependent on the language, that is, it is language specific. Generally, the syllable is made up of the onset, the nucleus, and the coda; the onset and coda are optional, as we can have words that are either without an onset or a coda. The nucleus is the only obligatory part of the syllable.

Examples:

Word	Gloss	
Tóru	eye	[+ onset, - coda]
Berí	ear	[+ onset, - coda]
Éré	woman	[- onset, - coda]
Abáburú	cassava	[- onset, -coda]
Set		[+onset, + coda]
Of		[- onset, +coda]
See		[+ onset, -coda]

When a word ends with a vowel, we say it is an open syllable but when it ends with a coda (consonant), we say it is a closed syllable.

1.6 The Optimality Theory: An Overview

Optimality Theory (OT hereafter) is a theoretical model that was propounded by Allen Prince, and Paul Smolenslay in 1991. It can be applied to phonological, morphological, syntactical and semantic research. OT is a constraint based approach, the constraints are universal and the different rankings in the model reflect the differences in the grammar of natural languages. The theory is hinged on three components, which are:

- Generator (GEN)
- Constraints (CON) and
- Evaluator (EVAL).

1.6.1 The Generator (Gen)

The generator's function is to produce or generate candidates or forms that are different from the input.

1.6.2 The Constraint (Con)

The constraint component refers to the different constraints that are inherent in the grammar of languages which according to OT, are violable. Two fundamental constraint that hold in the theory is; markedness and faithfulness.

The markedness constraint focuses on structural well-formedness. While the faithfulness constraint requires outputs to correspond or be identical to the inputs. This means that all the features in the input should be preserved in the output; changes are not allowed. Constraints are ranked in relation to each other. The highest ranked candidate wins or is optimal.

1.6.3 The Evaluator (Eval)

The Evaluator (EVAL) uses the candidate set from GEN, evaluates, and chooses as output, the winner or optimal candidate based on the markedness and faithfulness constraints.

2. Borrowing

Borrowing is the acquisition and adoption of words from one language to another. It usually occurs when one language comes into contact with another. Every language borrows lexical items to fill lexical gaps and improve or develop their vocabulary. Ndimele (2008, p.67) says borrowing simply means the process of taking words from one or more languages to fit into the vocabulary of another.

According to Crystal (1991, p.416), Borrowing is 'to introduce a word (or some other linguistic feature) from one language or dialect into another vocabulary. Borrowings are usually known as loanwords.'

2.1 Loanword

Ifode (as cited in Ndimele 2008, p.67) says a loanword is a word that a “recipient language has lifted from a donor language to mean the same object and practice to which it originally referred in the donor language.

2.2 Related Studies

In this section, we will look at some studies that have been carried out on loanwords in other languages.

2.2.1 Loanwords In Igbo

Kammelu (2016:195) analyses the phonology of loanwords in Igbo by examining some phonological processes that some of the sounds undergo; like elision, insertion, assimilation, vowel extension etc.

Examples

English	Igbo	Elision Phonemes
a. /ɔltəneɪtə/ alternator/	/ ... tənét... / ótanetó/	/i/
b. /sɪvɪks/ civics/	/sívɪsí/ ‘siviisi/	/k/
c. /ˈgʌvənmənt/ government/	/góómèntí/goomentí/	/v/

Vowel Insertion Process

- a. / ˈwɪɡ/ ‘wig’/ /wiigi/ /i/
- b. / ˈkɒmb/ ‘comb’/ /kómbu/ kombu
- c. / ˈbrɛd/ bread/ /burèédi/bureedi/

Kammelu (2016 : 201-202)

2.2.2 Loanwords in Urhobo

The Urhobo language does not permit consonants in the onset & coda positions, so the language epenthesises by inserting an initial vowel in the onset and a vowel in the coda. Complex codas and onsets are also prohibited in the language.

The table below shows how loanwords in Urhobo are adapted:

Religion/Worship

Urhobo	Cluster	English
Ishoshi	-	Church
Ibaibolo	-	Bible
Ikatikisti	St	Catechist
Ipasto/ipasito	St	Pastor
Ikuaya	-	Choir

Educational/Establishment

Urhubo	Cluster	English
Isukuru	-	School
Iklasi	-	Class
Idishonari	-	Dictionary
Ibolo	-	Ball
Irhegista	St	Register
Idari	-	Diary
Iki	-	Ink

Bolaji (2016, p.214)

2.2.3 Loanwords in Jahai

Syllables in Jahai, an Asian language that is spoken in Malaysia requires that the onset and coda positions are occupied by a consonant. If a word begins with a vowel, a glottal /h/ or /ʔ/ is inserted.

Examples

- /hobiʔ/ from ubi ‘tuber’
- /hajam/ from ayam ‘poultry’
- /hjaj/ from enggang ‘rhinoceros, hornbill’

Words that end with a vowel sound are adapted by adding a glottal final coda, mostly the glottal /ʔ/ and sometimes /h/.

Examples:

- /nasiʔ/ from nasi ‘cooked rice’
- /limeʔ/ from lima ‘five’
- /kritõh/ from kereta ‘car’

Burenhult (2001:11)

3. Loanwords in Kolokuma

In this section, we present and examine how loanwords in Kolokuma are adapted to fit into the phonological processes of the language.

3.1 Data for the Study

ENGLISH	IZON
Gold	Golu

Government	Goomenti
Handkerchief	Angesifu
Alternator	Otaneto
Dictionary	Dishonary
Bible	Baibulu
Ruth	Rutu
Biscuit	Biskiti/bisikiti
Church	Sosi
Sweet	Suwiti
Telephone	Telefonu
Tomato	Tomatosu
Crayfish	Carafisi
Milk	Miliki
Slap	Silapu
Black	Blaki
Comb	Combu
School	Sukulu
Small	Sumolu
Swear	Suwee
Table	Tebulu
Kerosene	Karozini
Slippers	Silpasi/silipasi
Trouser	Turaza/traza
Church	Shoshi/sosi
Attachment	Atasmenti
Blouse	Blaazu
Basin	Besini
Watch	Woshu/wosu
Ball	Bolu
Francis	Fransisi
Amos	Emosi
Jesus	Zesu
James	Zemsi

From the data presented above, some of the phonological processes adapted in Kolokuma loanwords become evident. In what follows, we shall examine some of these strategies.

3.2 Coda Adjustment: Epenthesis

/milk/ - [miliki]

No coda >>dep v

Milk	No coda	Dep v
Milk	*!	
Milik	*!	*
Miliki ☞		**

/slap/ -> [silapu]

No coda >> agree lab -v >> dep -v

Slap	No coda	Comp-onset	Agree lab -v	Dep -v
Slap	*!	*		
Silap	*!			*
Silapu ☞				**
Silapi			*	**

From the table above, we can clearly see that no coda is optimally ranked above AGREE LAB-V and DEP-V because, the language prohibits closed syllables and therefore, the coda is adjusted by inserting an epenthetic vowel. The finger symbol shows the winner or optimal candidate. An asterisk indicates a violation of a constraint, while an asterisk and an exclamation mark show a violation of the highest ranked constraint.

3.3 Voice Assimilation: Medial Neutralization

/basin/ -> [bezini]

Harms gent >> idler

Basin	Harms gent	Idler
Basin	*!	*
Basini	*!	*
Bezini ☞		

In Table (14), the winning candidate satisfies harms generalization which allows a voiced consonant next to the peak or nucleus of a syllable but violates ID LAR, a faithfulness constraint that preserves input voicing.

3.4 Cluster Simplification: Complex

The language does not allow clusters, so it epenthesises to adopt loanwords that have clusters either in the coda or onset. The following table shows how clusters are simplified :

/skul/ -> [sukulu]

*comp onset >>no coda>> DEP-V

Skul	Comp onset	Dep-v
Skul	*!	
Sukul		*
Sukulu ☞		**

/gold/ -> [golu]

Comp coda >> dep v

Gold	Comp coda	No coda	Max-10	Dep v
Gold	*!	*		
Goldu	*!			*
Golu ☞			*	*

4. Summary and Conclusion

This paper examined loanwords and how they are nativized or naturalized to fit into the phonological structure of the Kolokuma dialect. The study showed that the language does not allow closed syllables or consonant clusters. Using the optimality theoretical framework of constraints interactions between the markedness and faithfulness constraints, the study demonstrated that complex coda simplification and voice assimilation are achieved through coda adjustment and neutralization strategies. The study also showed that the markedness constraints like no coda, complex onset and complex coda simplification, and harms generalization are ranked higher than the faithfulness constraints like DEP-V, MAX-10, and IDLER.

References

- Aronoff, M. & Fudeman, K. (2008). *What is Morphology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Bolaji, E. T. (2016), 'Constraint interaction in phonology of Urhobo – English loan words? In Odebunmi, Akin et al (eds) *Grammar, applied linguistics and society: A festschrift for Wale Osisanwo*. Ile-Ife: Obafeni Awolowo University. Pp 207 – 221
- Crystal, D. (1991). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ejele, P. (2014). *An introductory Course on language*. Port Harcourt: Gitelle Press Ltd.
- Ifode, S. (2008). *An introduction to language in History and society*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Jackson, H. (2007). *Key terms in linguistics*. Landon: Continuum.
- Katjie, Mahlangu. M.A Thesis. Adoption of Loanwords in Isindebele, faculty of Arts, University of Pretoria
- Kammelu, N.C (2006). The phonology of borrowed words from English to Igbo. In Odebunmi, Akin et al (eds) *Grammar, applied linguistics and society: A festschrift for Wale Osisanwo*. Ile-Ife: Obafeni Awolowo University. Pp 195 – 206
- Matthews, P.H (2007). *Oxford concise dictionary of Linguistics*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ndimele, O-M. (2008). *Morphology and syntax*. Port Harcourt: M & J Grand Orbit Communication Ltd.
- Niclas, B. (2001). Loanword phonology in Jahai. Lund University, Department of Linguistics. Working papers 48. Pp 5-14
- Youngsun, K. (2002). Coda duster simplification and its interactions with other coda processes in Korean. Working Papers of the Cornell Phonetic Laboratory. 14. Pp 82 – 112.