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A STUDY OF ENGLISH LOANWORDS IN CONTEMPORARY POETRY IN IGBO LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Relationships among living things could be parasitic, symbiotic, mutual, cordial, domineering or subversive. Languages in contact rub off on each other in various ways. Though scientifically no language is superior or inferior to the other, human experience has shown that certain languages due mainly to extra-linguistic factors grow to play various roles such as official language, language of instruction, national language or international language. Languages could also be said to be developed or developing, well documented or poorly documented, written or unwritten. Politically, the language of the master is often projected to be superior and more prestigious than that of the ruled. Hence a language that was once the language of the master could for a long time enjoy an accelerated development to the detriment of the language of the ruled. Borrowing is a perennial feature of languages in contact due to multiplicity of cultures. There does not yet exist a living language that has a written tradition that is void of borrowed words or loanwords. Contemporary African literature is expressed in African and non-African languages. The objective of this study is to study the nature of English loanwords in Igbo poetry written in Igbo language.

Keywords: Poetry, Igbo, , English, Loanwords, intercultural communication , literary language.

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INTRODUCTION

Languages in contact continue to attract interdisciplinary investigations. Africa's colonial experience gave birth to a number of linguistic and non-linguistic issues that cannot be neglected even today. Presently some parts of Africa are described as Anglophone; others as Francophone, or Lusophone. The above tags show that English, French and Portuguese have continued to play enviable roles in 21st Century Africa. The language for expressing African literature has for long been the object of scholarly discussions as seen in Povey (27), and Nwahunanya (70-80). Though the debate is

still on, African literature has continued to be expressed in African and non-African languages. This paper sets out to study the features of English loanwords in Igbo poetry written in Igbo language.

Nnabuihe (vi) points out that poetry written in Igbo language was first published in 1975 when Ekechukwu edited an Igbo Anthology *Akpà Uchè*. Our choice of poetry in Igbo language as a domain for our study of English loanwords emanates from the fact that poetry is an integral part of the Igbo traditional society as depicted in the words 'abu', 'uri', 'mbem', 'ngugo' (Uzochukwu, 8). Since poetry is not a borrowed phenomenon in Igbo worldview or

“environ-mental perception” (Okonkwo, 17), the study seeks to investigate how contact with English language has affected contemporary poetry in Igbo with a focus on English words that occur in randomly selected poems published in Igbo.

English Loanwords in Igbo poems written in Igbo Language.

English and Igbo are poles apart typologically and in their literary history. It is noteworthy that Shakespeare’s Song ‘Winter’ was published before his death in 1616 (Perrine, 520) whereas *Akpà Uchè*, the first collection of poems written in Igbo was published in 1975. The close

physical contact between English and African languages, which started in colonial Africa, has continued to blossom especially in Anglophone Africa where English remains the first official language and language of education. Since English remains the language of instruction in Nigerian Secondary and Tertiary Institutions, English has become a second language to literate Nigerians. In the context of this study, Igbo is the mother tongue or ‘onu nne’ (Achebe, 27) of the poets, while English is their second language. Presented below is Table 1 which shows the loanwords that would serve as our data for the study.

TABLE 1: English Loanwords in Poems Written In Igbo Language

S/NO	LOANWORD	POET	TITLE OF POEM	SOURCE	YEAR
1	Hill	Obienyem, J.C.	Miliken Hill	Ekechukwu, R.M (ed.). <i>Akpa Uche</i> .p.20	1979
2	Puem	Ogbalu, F.C.	Ayoro	Ogbalu, F.C. <i>Ayoro</i> . Puem maka Ụmụaka	1982
3	Vóòtù	Okafor, S.A	N’lchụ Ntá Vóòtù	Emenanjo, E.N.(ed.). <i>Nkemakolam</i> , p.27.	1983
4	Gqomènti	Okafor, S.A	N’lchụ Ntá Vóòtù	.Emenanjo, E.N(ed.). <i>Nkemakolam</i> , p.28	
5	Steèti	Okafor, S.A	N’lchụ Ntá Vóòtù	.Emenanjo, E.N (ed.), <i>Nkemakolam</i> , p.28	
6	Pleshq	Chukudile	Ìbèrín Ụmụ nwaànyị	Emenanjo, E. N (ed.), <i>Utara Nti</i> , p.16	n.d
7	Èletiriikì	Chukudile	Ìbèrín Um*** nwaànyị	Emenanjo, E. N (ed.). <i>Utara Nti</i> , p.16	n.d
8	tìlapja	Emenanjo	Ilu	Emenanjo, E.N (ed.). <i>Utara Nti</i> , p.31	n.d.
9	ebōnì	Madubuike, Ihechukwu.	Ugomma	Emenanjo, E. N. (ed.). <i>Utara Nti</i> , p.37	n.d.
10	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike Inno Uzoma	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike, I. U. <i>Nri Uche</i> , pp.104-105	1990
11	Bredj	Nwadike Inno Uzoma	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike, I U. <i>Nri Uche</i> , pp.104-105	1990
12	Taya moto	Nwadike Inno Uzoma	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike, I. U. <i>Nri Uche</i> . pp.104-105	1990
13	Faktrj	Nwadike Inno Uzoma	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike, I. U. <i>Nri Uche</i> , pp.104-105	1990
14	Indqstri	Nwadike Inno Uzoma	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike, I. U. <i>Nri Uche</i> , pp.104-105	1990
15	tqjlet rol	Nwadike Inno Uzoma	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike, I. U.. <i>Nri Uche</i> , pp.104-105	1990
16	Wqta pruuvu	Nwadike Inno Uzoma	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike, I. U. <i>Nri Uche</i> , pp.104-105	1990

17	Gomentị	Nwadike Inno Uzoma	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike, I. U. <i>Nri Uche</i> , pp.104-105	1990
18	Billion	Nwadike Inno Uzoma	Qstariti Meshq	Nwadike, I. U. <i>Nri Uche</i> , pp.104-105	1990
19	Keresimesi	Uba-Mgbemena	Keresimesi	Uba-Mgbemena, A. <i>Echiche</i> , p.7	1990
20	Tempul	Uba-Mgbemena, Asonye	Keresimesi	Uba-Mgbemena, A. <i>Echiche</i> , p.8	1990
21	Bishoppu	Uba-Mgbemena, Asonye	Bishooppu Okoye	Uba-Mgbemena, A. <i>Echiche</i> , p.13	1990
22	Kruudu na koolu	Ihejirika, Okechukwu	Ala Igbo	Ihejirika, O. <i>Aka Tijie</i> , p.19	2000
23	ECOMOG	Ihejirika.	Ndi Ekwemogu	Ihejirika, O. <i>Aka Tijie</i> , p.43	2000
24	Uenuenu	Obakhena, Regina	Uenuenu Ndo // Uenuenu Ndo	Obakhena, R. (ed). <i>Olisa Amaka...</i> , pp.24-25	2001
25	Enemi Pulenu	Obakhena, Regina	Enemi Pulenu / Enemy Plane	Obakhena, Regina (ed). <i>Olisa Amaka...</i> , p.58	2001
26	Sofa, Asorị	Egwuonwu Onyeoma's recitation	Titi	Uzochukwu, S. <i>Traditional Funeral Poetry of the Igbo</i> , p.176.	2001
27	Pajreti	Okediadi, Nkechi	Mahadum	Okediadi, N. <i>Ije Uwa.</i> , p.6	2003
28	Disemba, Febuari	Okediadi, Nkechi	Uguru	Okediadi, N. <i>Ije Uwa.</i> , p.13	2003
29	Iatiriki	Okediadi, Nkechi.	Oku Latị riki	Okediadi, N. <i>Ije Uwa.</i> , p.15	2003
30	Politikisi	Okediadi, Nkechi.	Politikisi	Okediadi, N. <i>Ije Uwa</i> , p. 46	2003
31	Suturajiki	Okediadi, Nkechi.	Suturajiki (Abubu oru)	Okediadi, N. <i>Ije Uwa.</i> , pp.56-57	2003
32	Penshionu	Okediadi, Nkechi.	Suturajiki (Abubu oru)	Okediadi, N. <i>Ije Uwa.</i> , pp.56-57	2003
33	Steeti	Okediadi, Nkechi.	Suturajiki (Abubu oru)	Okediadi, N. <i>Ije Uwa</i> , pp.56-57	2003
34	Akauntị	Okediadi, Nkechi	Uloaku	Okediadi N. <i>Ije Uwa</i> , pp.69-70)	2003
35	Korota	Ezeuko, R.O.& Anowai J.I	Ndorondoro	Ezeuko, R.O.& Anowai J.I <i>Echiche (Igbo poems)</i> , p.6	2004
36	Eletriki	Ezeuko, R.O. & Anowai J.I	Ndorondoro	Ezeuko, R.O.& Anowai J.I <i>Echiche (Igbo poems)</i> , p.6	2004
37	takisi	Ezeuko, R.O. & Anowai J.I	Ndorondoro	Ezeuko, R.O.& Anowai J.I <i>Echiche (Igbo poems)</i> , p.6	2004

S/NO	LOANWORD	POET	TITLE OF POEM	SOURCE	YEAR
38	Kemistrị	Ezeuko, R.O. & Anowai, J.I.	Ụra na Ụmụ Akw ụkwọ	Ezeuko, R.O.& Anowai J.I <i>Echiche (Igbo poems)</i> , p.30	2004
39	Bayọlọjị	Ezeuko, R.O. & Anowai, J.I.	Ụra na Ụmụ Akw ụkwọ	Echiche (Igbo poems), p.30	2004
40	Histịrị	Ezeuko, R.O. & Anowai, J.I.	Ụra na Ụmụ Akw ụkwọ	Ezeuko, R.O.& Anowai J.I <i>Echiche (Igbo poems)</i> , p.30	2004
41	Kọfị	Ezeuko, R.O. & Anowai, J.I.	Ụra na Ụmụ Akw ụkwọ	Ezeuko, R.O.& Anowai J.I <i>Echiche (Igbo poems)</i> , p.30	2004
42	Sọfà	Egwuonwu Onyeoma's recitation	Titi	Uzochukwu, S. <i>Abu Akwamozu</i> , pp.47, 67-68.	2005
43	Àsọrị	Egwuonwu Onyeoma's recitation	Titi	Uzochukwu, S. <i>Abu Akwamozu</i> , pp.47, 67-68.	2005
44	GSM	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	Ekwentị	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , pp.68-69	2007
45	Kọmputa	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	Ekwentị	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.68	2007
46	Kọmpakịtị disiki	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	Ekwentị	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.68	2007
47	Vishualụ kọmapakiti	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	Ekwentị	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.68	2007
48	Disiki	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	Redio	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.109	2007
49	Redio	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	I Gawa Itu Vóòtù	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.127	2007
50	Vootu	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	Oria SARS Agbaala	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.136-137	2007
51	SARS	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	Oria SARS Agbaala	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.136-137	2007
52	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	Oria SARS Agbaala	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.138	2007
52	Flu	Anozie Christian Chukwudị	Oria SARS Agbaala	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.138	2007

53	Ashjma	Anozie Christian Chukwudj	Oria SARS Agbaala	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.138	2007
54	Prof.	Anozie Christian Chukwudj	Oria SARS Agbaala	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.138	2007
55	Minista	Anozie Christian Chukwudj	Oria SARS Agbaala	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.138	2007
56	Dkt..	Anozie Christian Chukwudj	Dkt. Fab Onaa Agaala Amerika	Anozie, C. <i>Uche Bu Akpa</i> , p.150.	2007

Discussion

Our discussion of the loanwords in Table 1 above would be based on their form or structure and content or meaning. Structurally these loanwords could be divided into three categories, namely Direct or non-adapted loanwords, partially adapted loanwords and fully adapted loanwords. Direct or non-adapted loanwords retain their original English form and meaning in Igbo language, while partially adapted loanwords retain their English meaning but shed off some of their English structure and acquire some of the structures of Igbo language. The fully adapted loanwords conform fully to the CVC structure of Igbo. Table 2 below shows these three structural categories of the loanwords studied.

TABLE 2: Structural Categorization of the Loanwords

Direct or Non-Adapted Loanwords	Partially Adapted Loanwords	Fully Adapted loanwords.
Billion ECOMOG Hill (Miliken Hill) Toilet Prof. SARS Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome	bɔl Dkt. rol Tempul	Asorj Bishoppu Enemi Pulenu Korota Kruudu na koolu Qstariti Mesho Politikisi Sofa Taya moto, Wota pruvu

If language must fulfill its primary role of being a medium for interpersonal communication, the encoder and the decoder must have a common code. Members of a given linguistic community often possess enough vocabulary to express the happenings in their immediate environment. However, when two or more languages come into contact, this gives rise to new communication needs as new ideas and new concepts would have to be expressed leading to what we would describe as gap-filling borrowings or loanwords. Gunner's study on Izibonga of the Zulu indicates that loanwords such as "Ugamthri" (Gunner, 188) that is, Gum tree, and 'nyepenselle', that is, a pencil (Gunner, 200) fill lexical gaps. Apart from the apparent need that emerges due to new concepts and ideas, if any of the languages in contact is considered to be more prestigious than the other, this could also lead to casual borrowings or loanwords. For instance, the loanword 'puem' that appears in Ogbalu's title of his Igbo Anthology *Ayoro (Puem maka umuaka)* is merely casual as it fills no lexical gap since 'Abu' or 'Mbem' which means 'song', 'poem' or 'poetry' is an intrinsic part of Igbo culture and did not come into Igbo through its contact with English. Table 3 that follows gives examples of these two types of English loanwords in the selected poems in Igbo.

Table 3: Gap-filling and Casual Loanwords.

GAP-FILLING LOANWORDS	CASUAL OR FANCY LOANWORDS
Akauntj Bayolaji Bishoppu Bɔl Disemba	Asorj Enemi Pulenu Febuarj Futu Moto

ECOMOG	Qstariti Mesho
Ekonomksi	Politikisi
Eletriki,	Puem
Histiri	Sofa
Kemistri	Suturajiki
kofi	Takisi
Korota	
Kruudu na koolu	
Pajreti	
Penshionu	
Politikisi	
Steeti	
Taya	
Tempul	
Toilet rol	
Uenuenu	
wota pruuu	

It is noteworthy that whereas the gap-filling loanwords help to express new concepts in Igbo language and culture, the casual loanwords are rather unnecessary and detrimental to the growth of Igbo language since these words exist in Igbo language. For instance, Ezeuko and Anowai's title "Ndorondoro" (6) which means 'politics' contributes more to the development of Igbo terminology than Okediadi's title 'politikisi' (46).

Conclusion

Languages continue to be in contact from generation to generation due to several reasons including tourism, marriage, trade, politics, education and religion. Linguistic borrowing is one of the products of languages in contact. A language could be spoken for centuries without having a literary tradition. Whereas English has a long literary tradition, literature in Igbo which emerged in the second half of the 20th Century is growing and developing. Poetry written in Igbo language is also growing in spite of the worry about its limited readership when compared with the colossal readership of Igbo literature written in English. Our study of English loanwords in poetry written in Igbo language stems out of a desire to acknowledge and evaluate in a little measure the efforts being made by certain Igbo poets towards the growth of Igbo as a literary language.

In the first instance, the study indicates that English and Igbo are living languages in that English

loanwords exist in Igbo poems written in Igbo as expected since all the poets are Ndi Igbo and they all speak English as a second language. Secondly, the loanwords explain the gap-filling role of loanwords in intercultural communication as well as casual resort to loanwords. To conclude, we would say that while English loanwords that fill lexical gaps should be encouraged to help Igbo language cope with demands of contemporary ICT and other communication needs, the casual loanwords should be discouraged as it is a sign of negligence and laxity on the part of Igbo speakers.

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