
A study of French loanwords in the Mundang language

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Abstract

This study examines French loanwords in Mundang. The Mundang language is spoken in Western Chad, Extreme Northern Cameroon and North Eastern Nigeria and to be specific the language is spoken in Adamawa state of Nigeria. Mundang belongs to Niger-Congo classification (Bender, 1989). The techniques of data collection used were oral interview and field observation. Accordingly twelve informants selected from Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad were interviewed. Thirty two (32) loanwords were identified and categorized into the following domains: education, religion, technology and transport and then health and medical. It was identified that some of the words are direct importation into the Mundang language, while others have undergone some phonological modifications. The non-radical elements were found to have the following characteristics: sonorization, velarization, fricavitation, consonant and vowel insertion and deletion, and vowel harmony. With regards to number of loanwords it is observed that technology and transport has the highest number of loanwords followed by education next is religion and lastly health and medical domains.

Key words: French, Mundang, Loanwords, Borrowing

Introduction

The early contact between Mundang and other languages like French, Arabic, Fulfulde and Hausa had brought borrowing and adaptation of lexical words into Mundang language. This study looks at the various domains and the changes found in the loanwords. The Mundang language can be said to be one of the less studied languages. It is among the least mentioned in the currently available literature. For example, W. E. Welmers, whose work deals with many of the best documented African languages, writes (Welmers, 1973:197) ‘Languages of the Adamawa-Eastern branch of the Niger-Congo family are not considered in any detail here, for lack of anything but the most minimal personal experiences with them’. It seems to us that Mundang language can contribute not only to our knowledge of African languages structures, since it exhibits some interesting characteristics but also to several issues in linguistic theory.

Our objectives in this paper are to classify the loanwords in the language and analyse the linguistic processes involved in adapting the loanwords in the language. The term Mundang refers both to people and the language. The Mundang language belongs to Niger-Congo classification. Bender (1989) classifies the Mundang in group six of Adamawa Ubangi which he refers to as Mbum. The Mundang language is spoken in Southern Chad, Extreme Northern Cameroon and to lesser extent North Eastern Nigeria. In Nigeria, the language is spoken in Numan, Demsa, Yola North and South, Mubi North and South Local Government Areas of Adamawa state. The Mundang economic activities include: fishing, rearing of animals, poultry farming, weaving, farming, trading, blacksmithing, and other activities. According to Elders (2000) Mundang language has three dialects. Mundang Kaélé dialect spoken in Cameroon, Mundang Léré dialect

considered to be the central form (standard), is spoken in Chad specifically in Mayo-kebbi in the Sub-prefecture Léré in the Eastern region of Chad. Moreover, there is Mundang Torrok which is spoken in the Sub-prefecture of Pala, Mayo-kebbi of Eastern region of Chad and Mundang-Kaélé which is spoken in Northern part of Cameroon, and to be specific in Sub-prefecture of Kaélé in Cameroon. We in this study investigated the Mundang Léré dialect.

French is the official language of Chad. It shares linguistic region with non-standard Arabic, Banana, Baya, Kaba, Kablai, Kana, Kim, Laka, Lele, Marba, Mbum, Misme, Mundang, Ngambai, Nkari, Sara, Suma, Tari and Tupuri, Fulfulde and Hausa. French is the language of education. It is taught from the elementary level to tertiary institutions. Despite the role, indigenous languages remain omnipresent in people's day to day communication, even in the offices, in the parliament and predominantly in the rural areas.

The French language exercises great influence over other languages because of status as an official language of republic of Chad. This study looks at the French loanwords, in the Mundang language. (Etienne, 2019)

Model of Approach

This study adopts Haugen's (1950) *The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing* as its theoretical approach. Haugen (1950 and 1956) provides comprehensive taxonomies of borrowings based on the analysis of the speech of Norwegian immigrants into the United States. The main assumption of Haugen's theory considers word borrowing from joint action of two mechanisms, i.e., importation and substitution. The importation type of borrowing occurs when a foreign word is reproduced in a language so that it can be

unmistakably tracked back to its original language. Substitution, on the other hand, involves the replacement of some morphemes in the source language word by recipient language, in an attempt to integrate it into the structures of the receiving language.

Haugen postulates that speakers are in rough way carrying an operation of linguistic comparison between the two languages which the output of the borrowed word can be viewed from the following:

- i. Any likeness between them is importation, while any difference between them is regarded as substitution of native material.
- ii. Substitutions means that the imitation of the foreign model is less than perfect, but it also means that it has become more familiar to those who speak the native language.

Depending on the ways in which importation and substitutions are combined in the borrowing process, the outcomes of this process can range on a form – meaning continuum from foreign forms being borrowed together with their meanings, to meanings entering of borrowing includes two main categories-loanwords and loan-shifts-each of these containing other sub-categories.

Thus, loanwords are divided into pure loanwords (unassimilated, partly assimilated and wholly assimilated) and loan-blends (derivative and compound). Loan-shifts, in their turn, comprise extensions or semantic loans, and creations.

This approach can also manifest its relevance in the French-Mundang language contact based on the pilot study during data collection as you can see below:

	French	Mundang	Gloss
Importation:	Mardi Plafon	Mardi Plafon	Tuesday Ceilling
Substitution:	Diriger Boutique	Dirije Butik	To direct Shop

Research instruments

The two instruments scheduled for gathering data are interview and observation. The informants that were used for interview includes both males and females of the age bracket of between 35 and 70 years, four each from study are that is Nigeria, Cameroon and Republic of Chad. Tape recorder was used in the course of the interview for verification and validation of data. As for observation participant, observation method was used, where the researchers worked hand in hand with the informants in generating data for the research.

Concept of Loan Words

The term “loanword” is used in this study (in line with Sa’id, 1967, Romaine, 1989 and Ennaji, M.(2000) to refer to more-or-less spontaneously transferred items that show no morphemic substitution and that may be adapted to the phonological and morphological pattern of the recipient language (RL). Haugen (1950, p.212) postulates that every speaker “attempts to reproduce previously learned linguistic patterns” in contexts different from “the language in which he learned them” and defines “borrowing” as “the attempted reproduction in one language of patterns previously found in another”. On the other hand, Weinreich (1963)

discusses borrowing as the transfer or introduction of foreign elements from one language into another resulting in the rearrangement of the patterns of the RL.

According to Smeaton (1973, p.83), a loanword undergoes modification of morphological structure to achieve harmony with the established predominant pattern and root system. He further states that loanwords undergo syllabic omission, either to facilitate pronunciation or in the direction of the Arabic tri- or quadri-consonantal root structure ‘trimming away consonants and syllables but representative portion of the original term is left’

Most loanwords are perceived and/or rendered differently by native speakers of the RL. The term “loan” itself is only used idiomatically as neither does the lender consent to the loan, nor is the borrower under any obligation to repay the loan (Haugen, 1950, p. 211). In addition, Haugen (1969, p.3) states that there are the stages in the process of phonological adaptation.

First, a bilingual introduces a new word in a phonetic form close to the model. Without direct access to the model produced by native speakers of the SL, monolinguals can only rely on the pronunciation of bilinguals whose degree of “bilingualism” may vary, here the possibility of an accent; next, the individual monolingual speakers of the RL each hear the word, in their recognition each approximating the non-native sound patterns to native ones, then each attempting a proximate pronunciation of that, thus leading to different renditions of the same word. With repeated use in the community, the word becomes an established loan exchanged by monolinguals, but varying from one dialect to another due to geographical separation as well as other factors leading to dialectal differences, until systematized use in all aspects of life.

According to Vervaet (2007) a 'loanword' or 'lexical borrowing' is "a word that at some point in the history of language entered its lexicon as a result of borrowing". The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines a 'loanword' as "A word adopted from a foreign language with a little or no modification". A typology of loanwords is created based on the retention or loss of certain original features.

Muysken (2000) cited in Vervaet (2007) borrowing can be defined as 'the incorporation of foreign linguistic features into another language as the result of contact'. These features can take the shape of single words, idioms, and expressions, syntactic features, etc. The borrowing of grammatical structures is referred to as structural borrowing, whereas the adoption of words is called 'lexical borrowing'.

Works on loanwords

Dikwa (1988) observes that the Kanuri language had benefited from many examples offered by the Arabic language during their long period of interaction. Kanuri language borrowed and will continue to borrow words notable from Arabic and French to enrich its vocabulary. Until relatively recently, the phenomenon of linguistic borrowing has been the exclusive preserve of historical linguistics (Holden, 1976:3). The reason for this state of affairs according to Holden is that for the historical linguists, the study of Loanwords has provided the diachronic evidence required to draw conclusion and make pronouncements on matters related to the questions of dating features such as sound changes in both the donor and the receiving language.

However, the position has changed tremendously. Now linguists of all persuasions have come to realize and consequently, accept the role of linguistic borrowing "as an important source of

evidence for various proposals concerning the synchronic state of the target language’’ (Holden, 1972: 4). He further states that linguistic borrowing, as an on-going and dynamic process, permeates all aspects of linguistic studies.

Kidda (1979) observes that loan of whatever kind may be analyzed and described in terms of the extent to which they are modified. (As the borrowing group usually has no word for the terms in its own language, it is only natural for them to also borrow words for the items from the source language). Borrowing of words is the simplest kind of influence that one language may exert on another. When there is cultural borrowing there is always the likelihood that the associate words may be borrowed. Loan of any kind may be analyzed and described in terms of the extent of their modification, the borrowing group usually lack word for the term(s) in its language, and it’s natural to borrow from the source language.

Salim (1981) discusses on adoption and adaptation, where he explains adoption is an attempt by borrowers to reproduce sounds based on the sounds of the source language, while adaptation represents those attempts by borrowers to reproduce sounds based on sound patterns which obtain in the target language.

Baldi (1995) explains the adaptation of Arabic phonemes into Yoruba established the dropping without replacement of consonant which does not exist in Yoruba, the substitution of Arabic word phonemes by the nearest Yoruba phonemes, the breaking of consonant clusters absent in Yoruba by vowel insertion, replacement of an Arabic diphthong with vowels, he concluded that this situation of Arabic influence on Yoruba was mainly through Hausa.

Muhammad (1987) states that, the phenomenon of linguistic borrowing is as old as social contacts amongst people of different linguistic communities, social and economic interaction amongst people of diverse linguistic backgrounds, it has inevitably led to the incidence of linguistic borrowing.

Bagari (1985) expresses that the process of borrowed words adaptation is first, a word contains a sound which is foreign to the borrowing language; the sound must be adopted into the inventory of the borrowing language by approximating it to the closely related phonetic unit in the inventory. This is a first stage in the process of adaptation. In the second stage, the whole word is then considered as an underlying form and all applicable phonological rules of borrowing language will then operate on it to produce the surface phonetic form of words which will then look and sound the same as any native word of the language. He looked at the phenomenon of phonological adaptation of Hausa borrowed item that is how the phonological properties of a language determine the phonological shape of borrowed words, before drawing his conclusion. This is done through, the insertion of an epenthetic vowel to break the phonetic constraint dispense certain, examples

- *Bread* = *biredi (burodi)*
- *Trousers* = *turoza*
- *Tray* = *tire*

Abubakar (2015), states that loanwords are referred to words that are introduced into a language through borrowing from another language with some transformation of their linguistic structure. This transformation, sometimes are adopted directly to fit the sounds pattern of the borrowing language. As the language is not always stable, fewer changes take place when the borrowed word undergoes adaptation processes in the new linguistic

environment of the receiving language which it may lead to preserve or not preserve its original pronunciation.

Abanga, et al (2018) in their study of loanwords of Arabic and Kanuri in Bagurmi language affirm that cultural economic as well as the intensity and length of contact with Kanuri and via religion with Arabic are the major factors influencing the loanwords from these language into Bagurmi. It is found that sonorization, realization syncopation, vowel deletion, consonant insertion, voicing, vowel harmony etc. have been observed in the borrowed words.

Data presentation and analysis

This section focuses on the presentation and analysis of data which were collected through oral interview with the speakers of the language. The loanwords from the data are categorized and presented based on the different domains that include such as education, religion, technology and transport, health and medical for easy analysis and discussion in order to bring out linguistic processes involved in adapting French words in Mundang language.

Loanwords in Education

The data in education domain had collected lexical items which are concerned with academics. These items are all nouns. Below are the loanwords in education domain

French	Mundang	Gloss
1. école [ecɔl]	<i>lekol</i> [lɛkɔl]	school
2. maître [mɛtr]	<i>metər</i> [mètər]	master
3. directeur [dirɛktœr]	<i>direter</i> [dirètèr]	head-teacher

4. classe [klas]	<i>kəlas</i> [kəlas]	class
5. tableau [tablo]	<i>tabəlo</i> [tábə̀lò]	board
6. table [tabl]	<i>tabəl</i> [tábə̀l]	table
7. craie [krɛ]	<i>kəre</i> [kəré]	chalk
8. bic [bik]	<i>bik</i> [bik]	biro
9. cahier [kaje]	<i>kaye</i> [kayé]	exercise-book

From the above items, Mundang like any other languages borrowed words that are in open class especially noun in education domain. It is observed that there are substitutions in the Mundang version of the borrowed words as it is seen in école (school), observation shows that alveolar lateral /l/ is added at the word initial position of the Mundang version of the word as a result of determiner /l'/ in French. It is also found that the acute accent of the mid front /e/ is not observed in Mundang version of the word. There is also a substitution of consonant /c/ with velar plosive /k/ in the second syllable of the word. Observation also shows that the mid central /e/ in the final position is deleted. The next item on the list is *maître* (master). It is found that the diphthong /ai/ in the first syllable changes to mid front /e/ and /re/ in the final syllable becomes /ər/ in Mundang version of the word.

Another word on the list is *directeur* (director). Looking at the very word in the recipient's language, there is a change in the second syllable in which closed syllable #CVC# shape changed into open syllable #CV# to realize *direter* and there is deletion of high back /u/ from the donor's language. Next on the list is *classe* (class) which is referred to as *kəlas* in Mundang involving consonants change on the first syllable where /c/ becomes velar plosive /k/ and insertion of schwa /ə/ in the first syllable in Mundang. It is also found that the /se/ in the final position of the word is deleted. Another word on the list is *tableau* (board) in

French becomes *tabəlo* in Mundang. Observing that, the schwa sound /ə/ has been inserted in the medial position of the word to break the consonant cluster. It is also found that there is substitution of mid front /e/ and deletion of /au/ in the final position of the word in the target language. The next word is *table* forms *tabəl* in recipient's language (Mundang). Observation shows that there is an insertion of schwa /ə/ in the second syllable and deletion of mid front /e/ in the final position of the word in Mundang version of word.

Another word on the list is *bic* (pen) becomes *bik* in Mundang implying that there is a consonant change in the final position of the word where /c/ changes to velar plosive /k/ in the final position of the Mundang version of the word. Next on the list is *cahier* (exercise book) in French becomes *kaye* in Mundang. Observation shows that there substitution of consonant sound /c/ in the first syllable of the donor language by velar plosive /k/, while /h/ is elided and /-ier/ becomes /-ye/ in the target language (Mundang). Despite the changes in the roots of the words above, the words class and their semantic content remain same in the target language Mundang.

Loanwords in Religion

In religion words loaned from French into Mundang are basically nouns. These are illustrated in the list below:

French	Mundang	Gloss
1. Église [egliz]	<i>igəlis</i> [igəlis]	church
2. Bible [bibl]	<i>Bibel</i> [bibél]	Bible
3. Pasteur [pastœr]	<i>paster</i> [paster]	pastor
4. Catéchiste [katefst]	<i>karsit</i> [karsit]	catechist

5. Choral [kɔral]	<i>koral</i> [kɔral]	choral, Choir
6. Mariage [marʒaʒ]	<i>mariyajə</i> [mariyàjə]	marriage

Looking at the above items, they are all open class words and all have experienced changes in the cause of borrowing. The first word on the list is *église* (church) experiences changes which become *igəlis*. The aspirated mid front sound /é/ in the initial position of the word is substituted with high front sound /i/. There is also a change in the medial position of the word in which closed syllable #CVC# shape changes into open syllable #CV#. In essence there is an insertion of schwa /ə/ in the medial position of the word and deletion of mid front /e/ in the final position of the word in recipient's language (Mundang).

Next on the list is *Bible* (Bible) in French becomes *Bibel* in Mundang with insertion of mid front /e/ to break the consonant cluster. Also, there is a deletion of /e/ in the final syllable of the word. Meanwhile, *Pasteur* (Pastor) in French becomes *paster* in Mundang with substitution of mid front /e/ with /a:/ and deletion of high back /u/ on the last syllable to change its phonological value in Mundang. *catéchiste* (catechist) in French expressed in Mundang as *karsit*. Here there is a substitution of consonant /c/ with velar plosive /k/ in the first syllable of the word this is because the consonant 'C' in Mundang is pronounced /tʃ/ and the nearest sound is velar plosive /k/. There are also an insertion of alveolar trill /r/ and substitution of the two syllables [téchiste] in the medial and final position of the word with [sit] in Mundang.

Consonants change also observed in the word *choral* (choir) in French becomes *koral* in Mundang. The initial /ch/ in the first syllable of the word changes to velar plosive /k/ in the target language. Meanwhile, *mariage* (marriage) in French experienced its change in the medial position of where the half vowel /y/ is

inserted, the velar plosive /g/ changes to palatal /j/ while the mid front /e/ becomes schwa /ə/ to realize *mariyajə* in Mundang.

Loanwords in Technology and Transport

It is characteristic in the domain of technology and transport to realize transfer of words at different levels from one language to another especially when we get involved with languages that have gone regional or on global stage (international) specifically talking about loanwords from French to into another language especially Mundang, the issue of ample lexical items cannot be over emphasized. The list below illustrates such words from French into Mundang as follows:

	French	Mundang	Gloss
1.	fer [fɛr]	<i>fer</i> [fér]	iron
2.	frigo [frigo]	<i>frigo</i> [frigò]	fridge
3.	bidon [bidɔ]	<i>bidon</i> [bidō]	can, drum
4.	télé [tele]	<i>tele</i> [tèle]	television
5.	vélo [velɔ]	<i>velo</i> [velo]	bicycle
6.	brouette[bruɛt]	<i>burwet</i> [bùwet]	wheelbarrow
7.	moteur[mtœr]	<i>moter</i> [mòter]	engine
8.	charrette[ʃarɛt]	<i>syere</i> [syére]	cart
9.	appareil[aparej]	<i>apare</i> [aparé]	apparatus
10.	ampoule [ãpul]	<i>ampul</i> [ãpùl]	bulb
11.	lampe [lãp]	<i>lampə</i> [lãmpə]	oil lamp
12.	machine[mafɛn]	<i>masyin</i> [masyin]	machine

The above items explicitly show us that the first five words under this category of field have been imported into Mundang. This implies that there are no changes with these words phonologically or semantically likewise syntactically. The remaining seven words are processed to attain a slight difference of change of vowel or consonants letters or sounds in Mundang, considered in this study as the recipient language. *Brouette* (wheelbarrow) in French becomes *burwet* in Mundang. It is observed clearly here that there is a deletion of alveolar trill /r/ and mid back /o/ in the first syllable and substitution of /et/ with /rw/ in the medial position and deletion of mid front /e/ in the final position of the Mundang version of the word. *Moteur* (engine) becomes *moter* in Mundang. There is a deletion of high back /u/ in the second syllable of the word to realize *moter* in target language. Next on the list is *charrette* (cart) in French is expressed in Mundang as *syere*. Here is a complete change lexeme to a different form in target language. Meanwhile *appareil* (apparatus) in French changes to *apare* in target language (Mundang).

There is a deletion of bilabial plosive /p/ in the first syllable and also /il/ in the final position of the word to realize *apare* in Mundang. *Ampoule* (bulb) in French experiences changes in the word in Mundang, which becomes *ampul*, here there is a deletion of mid back /o/ in the second syllable and also mid central /e/ of the French version of the word. *Lampe* (bulb) in French borrowed into Mundang as *lampə*. It is observed that there is a substitution of mid front /e/ with schwa /ə/ in Mundang version of the word. Meanwhile *machine* (machine) in French loaned in to Mundang as *masyin*. Here it is a case of /ch/ with /sy/ and deletion of mid front /e/ in the final position of the word.

Health and Medical

The list below contains words drawn from health and medical field in French and their equivalent Mundang loaned version.

French	Mundang	Gloss
1. SIDA [sida]	<i>SIDA</i> [sida]	AIDS
2. docteur [dɔktœr]	<i>doktər</i> [dòktər]	doctor
3. carte [kart]	<i>kartə</i> [kàrtə]	card
4. paludisme [palydism]	<i>palu</i> [palu]	malaria
5. bander [bāde]	<i>baŋdər</i> [bàŋdər]	bandage

The first item on the above listed words in French has been imported into Mundang *SIDA* [AIDS] in French. Meanwhile the following words underwent changes: *docteur* (doctor) becomes *doktər* in Mundang with a substitution of consonant sound /c/ with velar plosive /k/ in the first syllable and deletion of high back /u/ in the medial position and also substitution of /eu/ with schwa /ə/ in the final syllable of the word in the target language.

Carte (card) in the source language (French) changes to *kartə* in the target language (Mundang) with a substitution of the consonant sound /c/ with velar plosive /k/ in the initial word position, substitution also occurred in the final position of the word where mid front /e/ changes to schwa /ə/ in the target language. Paludisme (malaria) in French is realized or loaned into Mundang as *palu* here it is clearly seen that the second syllable /disme/ of the source language word is deleted. Bander (bandage) in French is loaned into Mundang with this realization *baŋdər*. Here there is a substitution of alveolar nasal /n/ with velar nasal /ŋ/ in the first syllable it is also observed that the mid front /e/ in the final syllable is substituted by schwa /ə/ in Mundang version of the word.

Discussion of findings

The study reveals that some of the loan words in Mundang are typical cases of importation as they did not undergo any phonological or morphological changes, thus they maintain their forms and structure. While in the case substitution these are types of loan words in Mundang that do not maintain their forms and structures in the process of accommodating the borrowed items in the language. In the process of domesticating these types of borrowed words, Mundang native speakers nativized them to suit their phonological condition for pronunciations and orthography purposes.

From our analysis, the study discovers that the French borrowed words in Mundang went through phonological change in both consonants and vowel based on the available phonemes in the language. The sound substitutions in the borrowed words are due to lack of availability of certain consonants in Mundang sound systems and therefore replaced with the nearest corresponding phoneme shown in our analysis.

Conclusion

This research has attempted to provide a linguistics study of French loanwords in Mundang. We were able to point out how French and Mundang came in contact with Mundang and how it influenced the lexicon of Mundang. In our analysis we were able to discover loanwords from French into Mundang. With regards to the domains of the loanwords, it is found that the domain of technology and transport have the highest number of loanwords than other domains with twelve (12) loanwords in education domain nine (9) loanwords, religion six (6) and it was discovered

that only five (5) lexical items are found in the domain of health and medical.

It can safely said although far from linguistics danger that the survival of Mundang as modern language lies in the ability and will of the Mundang scholars and elite to accept all necessary words for foreign origin that are lacking in the lexicon. The intensive usage of these words in education, media and daily life should be incorporated. Thus, borrowing from international languages specifically French is vehicle to the development of human and material resources in this part of the world.

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