Morphophonemics of Yorùbá borrowed nouns in Standard British English

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Abstract
The contact between Yoruba and English has resulted in lexical and post lexical exchanges between the two languages, with such contact-induced changes as code-switching, and borrowing, among others. This paper investigates how Yoruba words have been borrowed into Standard British English (SBE). It discusses the nature of the borrowings, in relation to their forms, structures, and morphophonemic characteristics. The paper also identifies the phonological rules that trigger them, and their adaptation strategies. The theoretical analytical tools adopted for the study was Generative Phonology. Findings of the study reveal that the most active phonological processes for lexical adaptation are place assimilation and laryngeal assimilation. At the post-lexical level, morphophonemic analysis reveals that [-s] plural allomorphs are realised as either [s] or [z], depending on its phonological environment. Borrowed items are adapted through the activation of assimilation rule, deletion rule, as well as bleeding and feeding rule ordering relationships. The paper concludes that Yorùbá borrowings in English are real, manifest in both lexical and post-lexical forms, and have come to stay. Finally, this study recommends that a similar,

but cross-linguistic study be carried out on borrowing forms from other African languages into English and other European languages.

Keywords: Morphophonemics, Standard British English, Yoruba language, borrowing, assimilation.

Introduction

Morphophonemics is a regular phenomenon in human language. It is the relationship and interconnectedness of morphological and phonological elements in a language such that one element influences or is influenced by the other element. Therefore, morphophonemics relates to sound alternation in words, such as the regular alternations of the English [-s] morpheme (Adetugbo, 1993), either at the lexical level as allomorphs of the [-s] plural morpheme marker in *boys*/'bɔɪz*, taps* /tæps/*,* and *judges*/'dʒʌdʒɪz/; s-ending personal names in *Keats* /kiːts/*, Jones*/dʒəʊnz/, *Euripides* /jʊəˈrɪp.ɪ.diːz/, and [-s] third-person singular present tense marker in *says* /sez/*, keeps* /kiːps/*,* and *punches* /ˈpʌntʃɪz/.

However, it can also operate at post-lexical level as in the [-s] genitive marker in *the boy's bag* /ðə ˈbɔɪz bæg/, *boys' room* /ˈbɔɪz ruːm/, *Jack's shirt* /dʒæksʃɜːt/ or such as in the determiner-noun relations, where the choice of determiner pronunciation is contingent on phonological environment of the initial phoneme of the adjacent word, resulting in a schwa /ə/ or a tense high oral vowel /iː/. The cases cited attest to strong activation of both local and non-local voicing assimilation rules. The examples also demonstrate that although morphophonology is usually a lexical feature, it also manifests at post-lexical level.

This study investigates how this phenomenon manifests in borrowings from the Yorùbá language into Standard British English (SBE). The purpose of this study is three-fold. The first is to find out the nature of morphophonemics in Yorùbá borrowings in SBE; the second is to identify the phonological rules that trigger them. Third, the study will confirm that morphophonemics is another proof that Yorùbá borrowings in English is real and have come to stay.

Methodology
14 items were purposively selected from two novels (C*hronicles from the land of the happiest people on* earth, by Soyinka, 2020; Scented *debris* by Igunare, 2017), two poetry (*The complete poetry of Aimé Césair* by Arnold and Eshleman, 2013; *The eye of the earth*, by Osundare, 1986); three journals (Adeeko, 2001; Barber, 1995; Blier, 2012) an encyclopedia (*Britannica Concise Encyclopedia,* 2006), three standard dictionaries (*Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary 18th Edition*, CEPD, 2004; *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary Of Current English*, OALD; *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2020 *The Definitive Record of the English Language,* OED, 2020); a dissertation (Catalai, 2006), and Geteloma (2005) in the handbook of *Yoruba religious textiles*. The data were analysed according to their morphological and morphophonemic properties and the rules that define them. Attention was also paid to the effects of syntax on morphology.

Earlier studies in Yorùbá-English contact
Studies on the contact between the Yorùbá language and the English language (Ajolore, 1982; Archangeli and Pulleyblank, 1989;

Arokoyo and Oyinloye, 2020; Awobuluyi, 1967; Bamgbose, 1967; Lamidi, 2017; Ojo, 1977; Salami, 1982; Ufomata, 1991; Banjo, 1996; Bamgbose, 2014; Orie, 2018) have often focused on codeswitching as in (1), English loanwords in Yoruba as in (2), but not on Yoruba borrowing in English as in (3).

1. Adé fẹ́ kí a *pray*

  Ade want PRS.3SG.DEM 3.PL pray
  Ade wants us to pray

2. Mo fẹ́ lọ ra aṣọ   ní   *ṣọ́ọ̀bù*.

   PRS.2SG. want PREP. go CON. buy clothes PREP.   shop
   I want to go and buy clothes in the shop

3. Some people believe that creatures with magical powers live in *irokos*.

   QUANT. people believe CONJ. Creature-PL PREP. Magical power-PL live LOC *iroko*-PL

All (1) to (3) are instances of lexical insertions. (1) and (2) are English lexical items within Yorùbá grammatical frame; (2) and (3) are borrowings or loanwords; (1) is code-switching; (3) is a case of Yorùbá borrowing or loanword in English. The thought has often been that the English language has always loaned to or interfered with the Yorùbá language. Other scholars (Adegbija, 1994; Bamiro, 1994) investigated lexico-semantic influence of Nigerian indigenous languages, including Yorùbá on English. Bolaji, (2013) investigated the morphophonemics of Yoruba speakers of English, with a focus on the influence of the Yoruba language. None of these scholars investigated Yoruba borrowings in English let alone the

morphophonology of Yoruba borrowings in English. It is this obvious gap in knowledge that this study intend to fill.

The present study
This section begins with what is meant by borrowings in this study. The terms borrowings and borrowing are not synonymous. Borrowings refer to forms of borrowing, the *product*; borrowing refers to the *practice* of borrowing itself, that is, the *process*. Whereas the former is count; the latter is mass. However, in literature, both terms have been used interchangeably, without this primary distinction made clear. In this study then, borrowing is a linguistic process, in which a language takes up, among other things, both lexical materials, such as content words, as well as other structural linguistic patterns of morphology, grammar, phonology (and phonetics) characteristic of both languages to realise well-formed structures (Matras, 2015). Chomsky (2011) observes that the study of the grammar of any language consists of four parts, which he listed as:

> a syntactic statement giving permitted arrangements of morphemes in sentences; a morphemic constituency statement giving permitted arrangements of morphophonemes in morphemes; a series of morphological and morphophonemic statements transforming any grammatical sequence of morphemes into a sequence of phonemes, and phonemic statement (p.4).

Observe that morphemes, morphophonemes, and morphophonemics run through all four. This suggests that the study of morphophonemics is at the heart of any serious study of language. It equally means that morphology is connected with syntax,

grammar, morphology and phonology of a language. About the vital place of morphophonemics in language study, Bolaji (2013) explains "Morphophonemics wears a linguistic cap, with phonological factors on the inside and grammatical factors on the outside" (p. 500). Such morphophonological desiderata for language study are also true of lexical and post-lexical borrowings, with the formal referring to lexical units, and the latter referring to phrasal units. The present study analyses the two sets of data. The analysis shows the interactions and interconnectedness that hold between borrowed words and the unmixed native words in the borrowing language. The analysis begins with lexical borrowing; then post-lexical follows.

The data
The data analysed in this study subdivides into lexical borrowing data, and post-borrowing data.

1. Lexical borrowing

Lexical borrowings are also called loanwords. In the analysis of lexical borrowings that follow, two types of morphophonemic alternations are identified. Both belong to a single phonological process of assimilation. First is place assimilation and second is laryngeal assimilation. Both are guided by different phonological rules. In the final analysis, both manifest one interesting phonological feature, complementary distribution. The analysed data are listed:

1. baba →babas /'bɑː.bɑː , -bə / →/-z/,/-əz/
2. orisha → orishas/→ /-z/
3. buka → búkàs ./'buːkɑː/. ./'buːkɑːz/. →/-z/
4. babaláwo → babalawos /-z/

5.   bukateria → bukaterias ./ˌbuːkəˈtɪərɪə/. ./ˌbuːkəˈtɪərɪə/. →/-z/

Each of (1) to (5) has a plural form. Observe that each [-s] plural morpheme is preceded by a vowel. Vowels are always voiced (+voi). The morphophonemic convention for [-s] plural morphemic allomorph, according to Adetugbo (2003) is that whenever there is a preceding voiceless segments such as consonants, except sibilants, the English [-s] morpheme is phonologically realized as a voiceless /s/; when there is a voiced segment, apart from sibilants, it is realized as a voiced /z/; whenever there are sibilants, it is realized as /iz/. The analysis that follows confirms this prediction. The data are divided into two: (1) to (4), and (5).

Set 1: *Laryngeal Assimilation rule*
This rule is formalized thus:

$$
\begin{bmatrix} +\text{cor} \\ -\text{voi} \\ +\text{ant} \\ -\text{cont} \end{bmatrix} \mapsto [\alpha \text{ place}]/- \begin{bmatrix} +\text{cor} \\ +\text{voi} \\ -\text{cont} \\ \alpha \text{ place} \end{bmatrix} -\#
$$

The rule states that a voiceless consonant sound with the features plus coronal, plus anterior, and minus continuant with a different alpha place feature, retains its status as a consonant and non-continuant phoneme, but becomes voiced in the environment of a voiced sound word finally, as it assimilates into the laryngeal status of this contiguous sound.
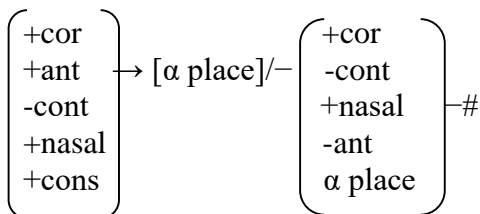
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This is a clear case of laryngeal assimilation affecting the [-s] plural morpheme. Since the preceding sound to the [-s] is a vowel with the phonological feature [+voi] in each case, there is a corresponding voicing assimilation of the voiceless obstruents with the feature, coronal (+cor), voiceless (-voi), anterior (+ant), and non-continuant (-cont). The phonological rule also implies an evidence of complementary distribution between /s/ and /z/; two allophones of the same phoneme which are mutually exclusive. Other analyses below support this claim. Finally, the schemata indicates that the [-s] morpheme does not share the same alpha place with the oral vowel preceding it in each case.

Therefore, after the assimilation has taken place, the [-s] in all four set of words (baba →babas; orisa/orisha → orishas/orisas; buka → búkàs; babaláwo → babalawos), although undergoes laryngeal assimilation, does not becomes assimilated into the alpha place of the adjacent vowel. It is thus an example of preservative /progressive assimilation. Etymologically, both *babaláwo* (from Yoruba *bàbá* 'father' + *oní* 'owner of' + *awo* 'secrete or mystery'), and *bukateria* (from Yoruba *buka* + *-teria* 'in cafeteria'] are compounds. The former is derived through the insertion of Yoruba nominaliser, the infix *oni*, which changes first to *oli* [*baba + oli + awo*] resulting in the ungrammatical [*babaoliawo*], through the process of denasalization; then to *ala* [*baba + ala + awo*] to realise the surface form [*babaláwo*] through the process of assimilation. The latter is derived is derived first through the process of deletion of the English *–teria* from *cafeteria*, merging it with the Yoruba noun *buka* 'food vendor's shed' to realise the surface form, the hybridised blend *bukateria*. Thus, they also belong to the post-lexical borrowing forms.

Set 2: *Place assimilation*
This is captured by the schemata below.

$$
\begin{bmatrix} +\text{cor} \\ +\text{ant} \\ -\text{cont} \\ +\text{nasal} \\ +\text{cons} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow [\alpha \text{ place}]/\text{—} \begin{bmatrix} +\text{cor} \\ -\text{cont} \\ +\text{nasal} \\ -\text{ant} \\ \alpha \text{ place} \end{bmatrix} \text{—\#}
$$

The rule states that a non-continuant, anterior, nasal, coronal consonant sound with a different alpha place feature, becomes assimilated into the alpha place of a neighboring anterior sound at syllable boundary, in the environment of a voiced sound word finally, as it assimilates into the alpha place of this contiguous sound.

As indicated earlier, only one Yoruba *tòkunbọ̀*, a denominalised adjective, phonologically adapted as /tɒˈkʊmbəʊ/, is attested here. In the source language (SL) Yoruba, the word is tone-marked as *tòkunbọ̀*, thus phonetically realized as [tòkũbọ̀], with [ũ] representing the syllabic alveolar nasal [N], and not the bilabial nasal [m]. after it adaptation, a place assimilation occurs this way: the [ũ] underlying representation first deletes with it alveolar place feature and resurfaces as with another alpha place features, bilabial and round in order to assimilate into the alpha place feature of the bilabial nasal, with the feature [+ round]. Thus, three phonological processes take place. First, there is a deletion of offending features; next, there is a change of feature; lastly, there is assimilation through the secondary articulatory process of labialization.

2. Post-lexical assimilation

The second case of morphophonemics in Yoruba borrowings in English concerns post-lexical items. These are phrasal items where a deletion rule conspires with an insertion rule for vowel copying for insertion of segments. The rule is stated thus:

Rule 1: post-lexical assimilation rule

This is represented in a schema below:

$$
\begin{bmatrix} \text{+cor} \\ \text{-voi} \\ \text{+cons} \\ \text{-cont} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow [\alpha \text{ place}]/- \begin{bmatrix} \text{+cor} \\ \pm \text{ voi} \\ \text{-cont} \\ \alpha \text{ place} \end{bmatrix} \#-\#
$$

The rule state that a voiceless, coronal, anterior and non-continuant sound changes its features and alpha place between word boundaries, according to the feature(s) of the adjacent sound.

This is a rule affecting post-lexical constructions. According to this schema, this is a voicing assimilation rule. The borrowing examples that follow show that this is true. In data set 1 (1-3), the [-s] genitive marker retains its voicelessness because the next word has as its voicing feature [-voi]. Conversely, in the second set, the same [-s] genitive marker takes on the feature [+voi] because the contiguous word has an initial sound, a vowel with the feature [+voi]. This is another case of preservative assimilation, but at phrasal level.

Set 1: *[-s] genitive marker voicing assimilation*

  1. father's *sanyan*

                    [s]→/s/~/s/

  2. father's *kijipa*

                    [s]→/s/~/s/

Set 2: *[-s] genitive marker voicing assimilation*
　　1.　father's *òfi*
　　　　　　[s]→/z/~/s/

　　2.　his agbádá → hiz agbádá
　　　　　　[s]→/s/~/a/

As explained above, although in (1) and (2) there is seems to be no visible change in the [-s] morpheme in the first set, a careful observation reveals such a change. Note that the rule at the changing point has the feature [±] with [-] representing absence of a feature, and [+] standing for presence of a feature. Our earlier discussion n on the different phonetic realizations of [-s] also proves that voicelessness is also as a result of assimilation to the voiceless position of a voiceless segment. The case of assimilation in the second set needs no further explanation.

Rule 2: Deletion rule

[+son] → [∅]/− [+son]; [+son] → [+son]/− [+son]

This rule states that a segment with the feature [+son] becomes deleted in the environment of a segment specified for the same feature. Example words are provided below.

Rule ordering relationship

　　1.　Yorùbá *àbàjà*　　[á ~ à]　Yorùbá *àbàjà*　*feeding relationship*

2. *Àdìrẹ eléjò*   [ẹ ~e] → [ẹ] → *Àdìrẹléjò*   bleeding relationship

3. *Àdìrẹ alábẹ́rẹ́*   [ẹ ~a] → [a] → *Àdìralábẹ́rẹ́ feeding relationship*

4. *Àdìrẹ oníko*   [ẹ ~o] → [o] → *Àdìroníko feeding relationship*

5. *Adirẹ ẹlẹ́kọ*   [ẹ ~ẹ] → [ẹ] → *Adirẹlẹ́kọ feeding relationship*

In (1) to (5), two different vowels with different quantity and quality are adjacent to each other at word boundaries. In (1) [á ~ *à*], in (2), [ẹ ~*e*]n in (3) [ẹ ~*e*]m in (4) [ẹ ~*o*], and in [5] [ẹ ~*ẹ*]. Except in (1) and (5) where the two vowels are identical, all other cases have separate vowel phonemes at the underlying representation. To derive the surface forms, two processes are adopted. First, in most cases, deletion of the last vowel of word-one takes place. This is done to avoid vowel hiatus. This is the case with (1) to (4). The second repair strategy to in (1) involves vowel preservation through vowel copying. Whereas nothing more happens after the vowel copying process has taken place in (1), another process comes at the heels of vowel deletion in (2) to (5); this is vowel replacement, where the two vowels are replace by the standing vowel in other to derive the surface form. In (2) to (5) these process is sketched out below:

1. [á ~ *à*]   Yorùbá *àbàjà*
2. [ẹ ~*e*] → [ẹ] → *Àdìrẹléjò*
3. [ẹ ~*a*] → [a] → *Àdìralábẹ́rẹ́*

4. $[ẹ \sim o] \rightarrow [o] \rightarrow$ *Àdìroníko*
5. $[ẹ \sim ẹ] \rightarrow [ẹ] \rightarrow$ *Adirẹlẹ́kọ*

Examples such as (1) – (5) are cases of rule ordering, a situation where rules apply in two orders, feeding relationship and bleeding relationship (Oyebade, 2008). Whereas example (1) is a case of bleeding relationship where deletion is blocked; (2) to (5) are in feeding relationship in which one rule (deletion), creates room for vowel merger and replacement vowels are The two-level surface derivation for each phrase is provided below.

6. Yorùbá *àbàjà* → jorùbá àbàʤà → jorùbáàbàʤà

7. *Àdìrẹ eléjò* → àdìrɛ eléʤò → àdìrɛléʤò

8. *Àdìrẹ alábẹ́rẹ́* → àdìrɛ oníko → àdìroníko

9. *Adirẹ ẹlẹ́kọ* → àdìrɛ ɛlɛ́kọ → àdìrɛlɛ́kọ

Conclusion

This study investigated the morphophonemics of Yoruba borrowings in SBE. The analysis was done at lexical and post-lexical levels. Laryngeal assimilation and place assimilation were attested in Yoruba lexical borrowing in English. Laryngeal assimilation was more productive as lexical items easily assimilated into the laryngeal articulatory feature of the adjacent sound, with the ± binary feature. This was done in mutually exclusive ways, so that the target had freedom of linguistic choice. All lexical cases considered in this study neutralized the voicing opposition in the

binary feature ±, with only one feature [+] represented, as a consequence of [+voice] operating unopposed. Only a single case of labialisation was attested involving the alveolar nasal becoming assimilated into the alpha place of the neighbouring bilabial nasal. Baković (2007) equally observes that local assimilation seems to be a more productive process in American English.

However, the Yoruba data analysed here also have cases of non-local assimilation. At post lexical level, balanced voicing assimilation (see Adetugbo, 2003; Awonusi, Ademola-Adeoye & Adedeji 2015 for more discussion on assimilation as a phonological process) is identified. Across word boundaries, non-local voicing assimilation with fully attested [±] alternation was discussed. Segments assimilate according to phonological environments. An interesting phonological strategy identified in this study was the rule ordering relationships. Both manifestations –bleeding relationship and feeding relationship –were observed, with the latter ranking higher. This may indicate that even in borrowing, linguistic items do not always totally shed the SL features in the RL. This is an open field for future study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made. First, hitherto, studies in Yoruba-English contact has usually been mono-direction, with English as the SL, supplying linguistic data, and Yoruba as the RL, accepting and processing received linguistic data from English. It is high time that research was carried out in the opposite direction.

Second, in such paradigm-shift research, attention should be paid not just to the usual lexical borrowing, but also to post-lexical borrowing. Such investigations should focus on both PAT (tern)

borrowing and MAT (ter) borrowing, for a total coverage of borrowing as a contact-induced phenomenon

Third, and finally, it is the case that other African languages have also enriched the lexicon of English. A careful investigation into the phenomenon of borrowing in English or indeed, other European languages will reveal the extent and depth of help African languages have rendered to European languages. Such future borrowing investigations should be cross-linguistic, in order to have more impact in contact, and or theoretical linguistics.

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