Review Article

Borrowing and Relexicalisation in NGWO

Julius A. Eyoh[1*]

[1]ENS Yaounde (DLCC)

*Corresponding author: Julius A. Eyoh
ENS Yaounde (DLCC)

Abstract

Since the creation of the world, to the rising and falling of empires and kingdoms, the development and evolution of civilisations from one generation to another, from the movement of explorers to the days of colonisation, no country has ever existed as an island. Languages and cultures around the world have constantly influenced and impacted one another in different ways through the exchange of linguistic and cultural practices, and the world has increasingly remained a global village of diversities and similarities. Languages and cultures have consistently borrowed from one another and continue to do so. This article therefore, studies how the Ngwo language has borrowed and continues to borrow from other languages to enrich its linguistic repertoire. Sources, domains and modifications employed in the reception of lexical items into the Ngwo language system are discussed. The process of borrowing changes over time as discussed in new generation borrowing. The article shares opinion on the merits and demerits of the process to the Ngwo language. Relexicalisation is discussed as a negative aspect of borrowing as it can apply to other Cameroonian languages in particular and African languages in general.

Keywords: Lexical, Donor, Adaptation, Relexicalisation.

INTRODUCTION

We live in a global world that has evolved through the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods with languages and cultures coming in contact. Today we say the world is a global village, meaning that languages and cultures do not exist in isolation. It is normal to find traces of some languages and cultures in others depending on the influence exerted one on the other. The Ngwo language like other Cameroonian and African languages has borrowed from other languages either in Cameroon, Africa or from the western world through the influence of colonisation and other forms of exchanges (such as trade and globalisation). This article tries to take stock of common borrowed lexical items into the Ngwo language, to see the strategies used by this linguistic community to accommodate words from other languages in anticipation of a better management of the expansion of lexical repertoire within the Ngwo language revitalisation program. Eyoh (2023) in Lexical Update in Ngwo discusses the strategies that were used by the community (especially language development personnel) to create lexical items for neo-exotic concepts in the domain of bible translation, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and geographical features that did not exist in the language before the moment of creation, but had to be created to overcome challenges in the revitalisation program, especially in the domain of bible translation. This is unlike this article on borrowing in which we analyse a sample list from an unlimited number of borrowed words that have existed in the language for sometime and are currently used, to see the modifications that are employed in the entire process.

Some Word Creation Processes in Ngwo

Borrowing is one of several word creation processes. Eyoh (2015) notes that, apart from basic nouns in the Ngwo language, there are many other nouns derived through different processes. Some of such processes include affixation, (derivation of words from other lexical categories through the insertion of an affix (prefix or suffix), borrowing, reduplication, compounding, use of sex gender morphmes and eponymy. Apart from the afore mentioned processes attested in the Ngwo language, it should be noted that other languages use other word formation processes such as superfixation, acronym or abbreviations, clipping, blending, conversion, synonymy, polysemy, retronymy and semantic extension (Ezigha 2022).

Statement of the Problem

When languages and cultures come in contact for commercial, social or other purposes or through the process of globalisation, there is bound to be exchange

Citation: Julius A. Eyoh (2025). Borrowing and Relexicalisation in NGWO. *Sch Int J Linguist Lit, 8*(11): 260-267.

260

of ideas, products and practices, which go along with their linguistic identity. New ideas, new products and new practices from other languages and cultures are introduced or exchanged with their names or ways of expressing them. The recipient language either creates a name for the new idea, product or practice or simply borrows the name from the donor culture and adapts it into their linguistic system, hence, expanding their linguistic repertoire to match up with the changing times. New words from other languages are therefore introduced into the recipient language directly or with modifications. There are many words that were not originally known in the Ngwo language and culture. As the Ngwo people came in contact with new things, ideas and practices from other languages and cultures, the main stategy they used in naming them was by borrowing. Yet, other things that were named are renamed with the influence of the donor language and culture. Though many of these things have lasted in the Ngwo linguistic and cultural setting for a while, their names have remained the names borrowed from other languages. What are the sources and domains from which Ngwo has borrowed and what strategies are used to accomodate foreign words into the Ngwo language system?

OBJECTIVE/PURPOSE
The aim of this article is

- To bring to consciousness the strategies used to facilitate word creation or lexical expansion within the Ngwo language revitalisation program through borrowing,
- To ease the task of lexical expansion for the Ngwo language committee, bible translators and all the other personnel working in different projects within the Ngwo language revitalisation program,
- To share the Ngwo experience with other linguistic communities and language researchers to better understand some of the modifications that take place within the process of borrowing,
- To also caution on the danger of overborrowing (relexicalisation).

Some Key Terms
Key words that apply to this article are lexical, donor, adaptation, relexicalisation and revitalisation.

The term lexical refers to independent words as opposed to phrases and sentences. This implies that the data used here are basically lexical items to analyse lexical borrowing in the Ngwo language. The use of the word donor is to make reference to the source language (donor language) from which a word is taken before being used in Ngwo. Adaptation refers to any modifications made to the borrowed words before being used in the receiving Ngwo language. Relexicalisation is a situation where a word exists in the receiving language,

yet another word with the same meaning is borrowed and used, thereby abandoning the previous word. Revitalisation refers to all actions taken in a language development process in order to reverse the course of its endangerment. Borrowing is here discussed within the context of Ngwo language revitalisation.

METHODOLOGY
This has to do with data collection and method of analysis. The analysis is both qualitative and quantitative. We discuss how we got to collect borrowed words to illustrate the process in the language. We also discuss our perspective of analysis with the presentation of examples.

Data Collection
Some of the words that make up the data for analysis of borrowed words in Ngwo were collected among other lexical items in a holistic process of word collection for phonological analysis. More words were collected through semantic domains for the compilation of a lexicon in the language (see Eyoh 2011). From the bulk of words collected, borrowed words were then sorted out as we also identified basic words, compound words and reduplicated words. More words were added by consulting other authors who have also identified borrowed words in their works on other Cameroonian languages.

Data Analysis and Presentation
Our approach to the analysis and presentation of borrowed words in this article is both quantitative and qualitative. We first present the borrowed words according to domains based on the data that was collected for this purpose. This is to give a view of these words and a quantitative appraisal of the different domains. Inasmuch as we examine the levels of the different domains and donor languages from which Ngwo has borrowed, we equally analyse the different modifications (adaptation) through which these borrowed words have been subjected to, before being used in the language. We have borrowed words which have not been modified, those modified through the adaptation of sounds, adaptation of syllables, the insertion of a noun class affix, among other modifications. We then present the concepts of new generation borrowing and relexicalisation before concluding on the article.

Same Available Related Literature
Works on borrowing in Cameroon are aften studied from two dimensions. Some focus on the contribution of Cameroon indigenous languages to enrich official languages, whereas others like the case of this present study focus on the enrichment of indigenous languages by official languages and other languages. Some available literature on borrowing from Cameroonian indigenous languages include Bobda (1983), Echu (2003), Kouega (1998), Ubanako (2000) and Wolf (2001). On the other hand, there are works that

are in line with the present study and have focussed on borrowing into Cameroonian languages from both official languages and other languages. Ezigha (2023) and Fokou (2021) have focussed on how colonial languages have impacted Cameroon indigenous languages in the area of borrowing. Nkongho (2019) examines the phonology of loanwords in Ejagham same as Atechi (2017), who focusses on the pronunciation of loanwords in Awing. Both Kouega (2017) and Fossi (2012) are concerned with cultural preservation of words and hybridization between Cameroon indigenous languages and the offical languages. This present work focusses on how Ngwo – a Cameroonian language has borrowed from colonial official English, French and other languages, and analyses the phonological changes that have taken place within the loanwords. Though the article appreciates the contribution of other languages to enrich Engwo, it also highlights the disadvantages of overborrowing with exemplification of cases of relexicalisation in the language.

Domains of Borrowing

From a random collection of borrowed words commonly used in the Ngwo language, a total of 124 words were collected. From observation, these words cut across different domains including food items (and drinks), fruit trees, clothing, household objects, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), calendar months of the year, professions, names of people and places, cash crops, animals, common house (building) materials and equipment, vehicles, institutions (administrative, financial and academic), measurements, local administration, games and music, christian related terms, among others. On a global note, Ezigha (2022) writing on lexical expansion in some Cameroonian languages notes that languages borrow scientific, economic, political and religious terminology.

Donor Languages

From the data collected, the donor languages from which Ngwo has borrowed can be put into four main groups including
  (i) Cameroon Official languages (English and French)
  (ii) Pidgin-English
  (iii) Cameroon National Languages (Grassfield and Coastal)
  (iv) Nigerian Languages (Igbo and Yoruba)

The most prominent donor language to the Ngwo language is the colonial English language with a total of 104 words out of the 124 collected for analysis, also observed in Ejagham (Nkongho 2017). These words come from a diversified range of domains. Only two words were seen to have come from the French language, which are gendarme (jandam) and bonbon (bɔŋbɔŋ). This is obvious from the fact that Ngwo is located in the English speaking part of Cameroon that was under the British colonial rule for more than four decades as a trusteeship territory administered together with Nigeria. So, the official language used in the Ngwo area is basically English. Eyoh (2015) says that French is used at a low degree by those who have studied it in school or by those who have lived in the francophone part of Cameroon. Whereas English is used basically as a medium of instruction and communication, French serves only as a school subject. However, it is also normal that as the dorminant official language of Cameroon with its distinct French cultural background, words from this language can also spill over into the Ngwo language in the English speaking part of the country. Apart from the fact that Ngwo and the rest of Anglophone Cameroon has a historical / colonial attachment to Britain, English has impacted the rest of the world and continues to do so. Afsaneh (2013) cites Warschauser (2000) who presents three critical areas that contribute to the spread of English: (i) globalisation, (ii) academic and employment trend, (iii) information and communication technology.

Pidgin-English is the language of wider communication in the whole of the Anglophone part of Cameroon. it is but normal for Ngwo to also borrow from Pidgin-English. A total of 5 words are recorded to have come from Pidgin-English into the Ngwo language.

Not much has been borrowed from other Cameroonian national languages as compared to the English language. When we talk of Cameroon national languages, we are thinking of Coastal languages (Duala, Kenyang, others in the South West Region) and Grassfield languages (Bafut and Bamileke languages). The domains of words borrowed from Cameroon national languages are basically food (achu, kumkum, eru, ekwang, miondo, etc) and clothing (kaba and sanja).

The last group of languages that has donated words to the Ngwo language based on the data collected is Nigerian languages (Igbo and Yoruba) from which Ngwo has borrowed the name of some food item (garri), the profession of shepherd (ganako') and the words for a male gown (abuba and agbada). In the following table, we present the donor languages from which Ngwo has borrowed in the context of the data collected for this article.

Donor Languages of Ngwo Borrowed Words

Donor Language	No. of Words (124)	% donated	Domain
English	104	83.87%	Diversified
French	02	01.61%	Profession and food
Pidgin-English	05	04.03%	Food, clothing, animal and cash crop
Cameroon coastal languages (Duala,	07	05.65%	Food and clothing

Kenyang, others in the SW Region)			
Cameroon grassfield languages (Bafut, Bamileke languages)	02	01.61%	Food
Nigeria (Igbo)	01	00.81%	Food
Nigeria (Yoruba)	03	02.42%	Profession and clothing

Curiously enough, the data does not provide some borrowed words from Ngwo immediate neighbouring languages (Atong, meta', Mundum, Menka, Ngie, Ngishe, Manta, Ihatum, Caka, Batomo, and Beba'). Eyoh (2015) confirms this when he says that it is uncommon for Ngwo speakers to borrow from neighbouring languages.

It is important to note here that the list of donnor languages presented above is not exhaustive. Lexical expansion through borrowing is a dynamic or continuous process and is opened to world languages and cultures as they come in contact through the process of globalisation. Western languages have a long history of written development and the culture of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). As long as the world remains a global village, exchange of linguistic and cultural practices is obvious and borrowing will remain a continuous process. When borrowing takes place, the recipient language is enriched lexically, semantically and culturally. Ezigha (2022) however alerts that borrowing can be positive as it can also be negative.

Sections of Data Analysis and/or Presentation
We analyse and/or present our data in four main sections:
- Presentation of Domains of Borrowed Words
- Modification / Adaptation of Borrowed Words
- Evolution into New Generation Borrowing
- Relexicalisation

Presentation of Domains of Borrowed Words
The words that were collected for this analysis are regrouped into 14 different domains which include: the 12 calendar months of the year, food and drinks, fruits and vegetables, cash crops, clothing and body care, names of people and places, religion, professions, animals, house parts and materials, vehicles and institutions as well as some verbs. The 12 calendar months of the year used in Ngwo are borrowed from the English language as follows

Calendar Months of the Year
Janu	"January"
Febli	"February"
Machi	"March"
Epli	"April"
Mee	"May"
Junu	"June"
Juli	"July"
Agushi	"August"
Tɛmba	"September"
Toba	"October"
Vɛmba	"Noveɛmber"
Zɛmba	"December"

Apart from the 12 calendar months of the year, we present examples of borrowed words in different domains and the source languages for a quantitative appreciation.

Food and Drinks
Most of the food items are borrowed from Cameroon and Nigeria with little from the west (English and French). The names [byέὲ] "beer," [mílîk] "milk," [àpòpôb] "puff puff," [álíshì] "rice," and [flǎwà] "flour" are borrowed from English, whereas [mìyɔ́ndɔ́] "miondo," [bɔ̀bɔ̀lò] "bobolo," [kɔ̀kí] "koki," and [màkàrà] "makara," are borrowed from Duala. The name àchú' "achu," [ērò] "eru," and [kùmkùm] "kumkum," are foods borrowed from Bafut-Nguemeba, Kenyang, and Bamileke cultures respectively. As for [gàrí] "garri," it is borrowed from Igbo-Nigeria and [bɔ̀ŋmbɔ̂ŋ] "bonbon," come from French.

Fruits and Vegetables
For almost all the names of the fruit trees and vegetables to be borrowed from English is indicative of the fact that they were not known to the native speakers before, but were introduced by the British explorers, missionaries and colonisers. These fruits and vegetables include [pánāpò] "pine apple," [kábájì] "cabbage," [ngwǎbà] "guava," [lɛ́mɔ̀n] "lemon," [mángòrò] "mango," [érǒnjì] "orange," [àpɔ̀pɔ́] "paw paw," [èpyê] "avocado (pear)," and [tòmátò] "tomato." The vegetable [âkɔ̀rɔ̀] "okra," is borrowed from Pidgin-English.

Cash crops
Cash crops were introduced by the colonial masters from the west for their own consumption as reported in some history books (See Victor Julius Ngoh 1996). The cash crops are basically [kɔ̀fǐ] "coffee," [lábà] "rubber," borrowed from English and [àkàká] "cocoa," taken from Pidgin-English.

Food Spices
They are both local and foereign. Only two food spices were attested in our data of loanwords: [ènjàngà] "njanga (crayfish)," borrowed from Camroon coastal languages and [shúgà] "sugar," borrowed from English.

Clothing and Body Care
Much of the culture of clothing and body care has been adopted from the west and English dominates as the colonial culture at the time. However, few names from Yoruba – Nigeria, Duala – Cameroon and Pidgin-English have also shown up. Words in this domain borrowed from English include [pílò] "pillow," [àblàngè] "blanket," [ánkànchû] "handkerchief," [jákêd] "jacket," [àtɔ̀rɔ́sà jîn] "jean trousers," [àtɔ̀rɔ́sà]

"trousers," [àkàkí] "kaki," [pɔ́kɛ́d] "pocket," [páwdà] "powder," [pɔ́sà] "purse," [àndàwérè] "underwear (singlet)," [shwátà] "sweater," [táwèrè] "towel," [yɛ́rɛ́fùm] "uniform." The words [àkèrèkà'] "Okreka," and [kùchá'] "kuncha (sponge)," are borrowed fro Pidgin-English whereas [àgbádá] "agbada," and [àbùbá] "buba," are taken from Yoruba. The name [àkàbà] "kaba," comes from Duala Cameroon.

Names of People and Places

Most of the names of people found in our data are borrowed from the Bible of an English background, introduced by English speaking missionaries and from other sources. These names borrowed from English are [èyɔ́ɔ̀] "John," [jámân] "German," [yàkɔ̂b] "Jacob," [jêm] "Jem," [yèrèmyɛ̂] "Jeremiah," [yɔ̀sɛ̂b] "Joseph," [yɔ̀ɔ̀nà] "Jonah," [júdìd] "Judith," [màráyɛ̀] "Mary," [màtyɛ̂] "Mathias," [mǒsê] "Moses," [pààlò] "Paul," [pétòró] "Peter," [shímùn] "Simon," and [áfrĭkà] "Afrika."

Religion

Religion here is basically Christianity from an English speaking background. Few words are noted in this domain which are [yěsô krĭstò] "Jesus Christ," [bǎsèrè] "Basel (mission)," [bǎblì] "bible," and [klĭshì] "christmas (feast)."

Professions

Apart from the Yoruba word [gàràkɔ̀'] "ganakoh (shepherd)," and the French name [jàndâm] "gendarme" imported into the Ngwo language, all the other professions attested in the data are borrowed from the English language. These include [kábándà] "carpenter," [dótà] "doctor," [páshítò] "pastor," and [pùrúshì] "police."

Animals

Only two examples of animals were attested in our data of loanwords since most of the animals have original names in Ngwo. There is [drágɔ̀n] "dragon," borrowed from English and [pùshí] "pussy (cat)," borrowed from Pidgin-English.

House Parts, Materials and Equipment

The colonial English culture and technology dominates also in the domain of house parts, building materials and house equipment as all the names here are borrowed from English. The names regrouped in this domain include [bɛ́nchì] "bench," [bɔ̀b] "bulb," [swich] "switch," [shìmên] "cement," [glǎshì] "glass," [èkî] "key," [kíchìn] "kitchen," [èlɔ̂k] "lock," [mátà] "mat," [màntrǎ] "mattress," [fótò] "photo," [plâŋ] "plank," [wíndò] "window," [wáyè] "wire," [zîŋ] "zinc," [plĕpân] "plate," and [tɔ́shìlâm] "torch."

Vehicles

Vehicles are adopted from the English culture and technology. Three words were found in our data for this domain including [mótò] "motor car," [shîp] "ship,"

and [trěn] "train."

Institutions (Administrative, educational, financial), social affairs and others

All the words in this domain are borrowed from English, especially through colonial contact. These include [bâŋ] "bank," [kɔ́ɔrɔ̂] "college," [kánsèrè] "council," [gɔ̂mèn] "government," [ámblɔ̀m] "envelope," [pépà] "paper," [pwɔ́róshì] "punish/punishment," [sān] "sign (signature)," [sɔ́mɔ́shì] "summon," [sɔ́mɔ̀n] "summon (to)," [bɔ́ɔrɔ̂] "ball," [brŏns] "bronze," [kâm] "camp," [krĕdìd] "credit (communication)," [dĕblì] "devil," [frǎŋ] "franc," [àgìtá'] "guitar," [àkàràshîm] "kerosene," [kílò] "kilogramme," [lítà] "litre," and [petro] "petrol."

Verbs

From the words presented above in domains, though we notice that most of the words borrowed are mostly nouns, the language has also borrowed words in other lexical categories. We can cite some verbs borrowed basically from English to describe different actions not initially known to the Ngwo culture: These include [bāwnsī] "bounce," [drɔ̀] "draw," [kīsī] "kiss," [pēntī] "paint," [wēldā] "weld," [gɔ̄m] "glue (gum)," and [plē] "play.

It is important to note that the data for borrowed words as presented above is inexhaustive since borrowing is a dynamic language process. The data used therefore in this article is simply indicative . It is an open data since many more borrowed words can be added to the different domains. It is for this reason that we remain reserve from a quantitative perpective, to lay emphasis on percentages of words borrowed from each domain.

Modification / Adaptation of Borrowed Words

The main method of borrowing is by importing the exotic word and adapting its pronunciation to the Ngwo sound system. Among the modifications done with these borrowed names is the modification of some sounds within the word, the insertion of a class prefix, and the adaptation of the syllable system. Below are some of the words borrowed into the Ngwo language and adapted or modified to suit the Ngwo sound system.

Modification or adaptation of some sounds

Word final fricatives and africates in English are realised in Ngwo with a final vowel [i] as in the following examples

Borrowed word Source word

Borrowed word	Source word	
alish<u>i</u>	[rai<u>s</u>]	"rice"
eronj<u>i</u>	[ɒrən<u>dʒ</u>]	"orange"
kabaj<u>i</u>	[kæbɪ<u>dʒ</u>]	"cabbage"
glash<u>i</u>	[glæ<u>s</u>]	"glass"
purush<u>i</u>	[pəli:<u>s</u>]	"police"

Consonant Cluster Relaxation

Consonant clusters such as [sl] and [tr] which are not attested in the Ngwo phonological system are relaxed with a CVCV structure as in the following examples

Borrowed word Source word

èshírípá'	"slippers"
àtɔ̀rɔ́sà	"trousers"

The English root initial consonant [r] is realised as [l] in Ngwo since Ngwo does not use [r] at root initial position. For instance

álíshì	"rice"
lábà	"rubber"

Diphthongs and triphthongs in English words are simplified to single vowels, two syllables with a CVCV structure or are glided (palatalised or labialised) as in the examples below

àtɔ̀rɔ́sà	"trousers"
pánapò	"pineapple"
ngwǎbà	"guava"
wáyὲ	"wire"
táyà	"tyre"

Some dipthongs are realised as long vowels as in the example below

tɔ́ɔshìn	"thousand"

The Insertion of a Class Prefix

This prefix identifies the borrowed noun with a noun class (cl.). Most of these nouns are assigned a class prefix which groups the noun in one of the Ngwo noun classes.

The following are borrowed nouns assigned to class 1 through the insertion of a prefix

è-pyê	"pear"
á-líshì	"rice"

Some borrowed nouns are inserted a prefix that assigns them to class 7 as in the examples below

à-blànge	"blanket"
à-pòpôb	"puffpuff"
à-pòpó	"pawpaw"
à-tɔ̀rɔ́sà	"trousers"
à-njanga	"crayfish"

The above borrowed nouns form their plurals in class 2 by taking a low tone vowel prefix (è-) as in the examples below

è-blànge	"blankets"
è-pòpôb	"puffpuffs"
è-pòpó	"pawpaws"
è-tɔ̀rɔ́sà	"trousers"
è-njanga	"crayfish (pl)"

For borrowed singular nouns that are not assigned a class prefix, the prefix is considered to be zero (Ø-). Such nouns agree with modifiers of Noun class 9 in Ngwo. Below are examples

Ø- mata	"mat"
Ø- wayɛ	"wire"
Ø- taya	"tyre"
Ø- mangoro	"mango"
Ø- laba	"rubber"
Ø- ngwaba	"guava"
Ø- glashi	"glass"
Ø- tɔɔshin	"thousand"

If the noun refers to a human being, it is assigned to class 1 and will form its plural in class 2. for instance

Ø- purushi	"police"

The above nouns of class 9 take a plural prefix (è-) and agree with modifiers of nouns of class 10 as in the following plural forms of borrowed nouns

è- mata	"mats"
è- wayɛ	"wires"
è- taya	"tyres"
è- mangoro	"mangoes"
è- laba	"rubbers"
è- ngwaba	"guavas"
è- glashi	"glasses"

Some borrowed nouns are generally used in their plural forms and so carry the plural prefix which assigns them already to class 10 as in the case of

è-shírípá'	"slippers."

Adaptation of the Syllable System

Sound modification and the insertion of a class prefix contribute in the modification of the number of syllables in the borrowed words. Number of syllables are often increased with modifications to capture sounds like diphthongs, triphthongs, fricatives, affricates or others to adapt to the Ngwo sound and syllable systems.

From one syllable in English to two syllables in Ngwo

mátà	"mat"
glǎshì	"glass"

Also from one syllable in English (diphthong) to three syllables in Ngwo

álíshì	"rice"

From two syllables in English to three syllables in Ngwo

mángòrò	"mango"
kábájì	"cabbage"
érônjì	"orange"

From two syllables in English to four syllables in Ngwo

èshírípá'	"slippers"
àtɔ̀rɔ́sà	"trousers"

Evolution into New Generation Borrowing

Borrowing and adaptation of words into the Ngwo language is undergoing an evolution from the present typical speakers of the language to the future new generation speakers. The typical speakers of the language would borrow words and adapt them to the Ngwo phonological and morphological system. For instance, clusters such as [fr], [kr] and [br] which are not attested in the Ngwo phonological system are adapted to [fl], [kl], [bl] respectively and a cluster such as [st] is simplified to just [t]. We have examples as follows

Borrowed word	Source word		Cluster change
Aflika	-	Afrika	fr - fl
Klito	-	Christ	klr- kl
Hiblu	-	Hebrews	br - bl
Ablaham	-	Abraham	br - bl
Pato	-	Pastor	st - t

Today, the adulterated speakers of the language here refered to as the new generation borrowers simply import the foreign word into the Ngwo language without any modifications, most often to showcase the pride of their education and mastery of the donor foreign language (basically the English language). Thus, consonant clusters and vowels such as dipthongs are maintained as in the donor language. In the following examples we juxtapose borrowed words from typical speakers with those of new generation speakers to show the differences in the modifications made by the two sets of borrowers

Typical Speakers		New Speakers	Meaning
Aflika	-	Afrika	"Africa"
Klito	-	Kristo	"Christ"
Hiblu	-	Hibrus	"Hebrews"
Ablaham	-	Abraham	"Abraham"
Pato	-	Pasto	"Pastor"
Milik	-	Mɛlk	"milk"
Yɛrɛfum	-	Unifɔm	"uniform"

Relexicalisation (Relexification), the Danger of Borrowing

Acording to Smith Angela and Michael Higgins (2013:71), relexicalisation means to change the lexicon of; to use different words for. Ezigha (2022) prefers the term relexification, which often results from a minority group in a language contact situation undergoing a shift in cultural or ethnic identity. This denotes a process by which the vocabulary of a language is replaced by that of another language, while its grammatical structure (phonology, morphology, syntax, etc) is maintained. (Appel and Muysken,1987:130). Unfortunately, borrowing in Ngwo leads to this process of relexicalisation in which some typical Ngwo words are abandoned in favour of borrowed words from the English language. Below are some examples

Existing	Borrowed	Meaning
esamagwe	tawere	towel
ndifɔɔ	shwata	sweater
ndintimi	yɛrɛfum	uniform
sɔ'agɛ	flawa	flower
aŋwa	pushi	cat (pussy)
atuuru	èlɔk	lock
atuuru	èkî	key
aba	kɔbɔd	cupboard
abwada zeetan	mantra	matress
abwada tɛ'ato	pilo	pillow
nditan	beshid	bedsheet
awuundim	ship	ship
mpɛrɛaka	plepan	plate
etu' ekara	tɔshilamtorchlamp/torchlight
ǹkùm	enjin	engine
ǹgà	dota	doctor

Whereas positive borrowing helps to enrich the recipient language at different levels (such as lexically, semantically and culturally), negative borrowing especially in the context of relexicalisation can contribute to adulterate and destroy the original linguistic system of the language. Sander (2013) clarifies that borrowing words from another language may threaten the existence of the target language as native words may disappear from the vocabulary of the users. Massive lexical borrowing is thus a negative aspect of globalization in multilingual contexts and this sometimes contributes to language impoverishment and death.

CONCLUSION

This article describes the process of borrowing into the Ngwo language from both a quantitative and qualitative approach. This process is an aspect of Ngwo language revitalisation. However, it notes that the quantitative presentation of data is only indicative of the fact that borrowing is a dynamic language process, and so a limited number (sample) of words was used for analysis. The article points out that the Ngwo language has borrowed mainly from the English language with a limited number of words borrowed from some Cameroonian and African languages but not from its immediate neighbours. The domains of borrowed words are diversified. These borrowed words are modified through a change in sounds, number of syllables or the insertion of a class prefix. These modifications are experiencing a reduction with the new generation of speakers of the language who tend to borrow and use words the same as in the donor language. From the sample data, the article cautions against relexicalisation which is a process of replacing existing words in the language with borrowed words, leading to language empowerishment and death. And so it comes to the conclusion that though borrowing is a language enrichment process, it must be handled with caution to avoid relexicalisation, which leads to language empowerishment and death.

REFERENCES

- AFSANEH, M. (2013) "English as a Global Language: Threat or Opportunity for Minority
- Languages?" In Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences (MJSS). Vol.4, No.11, PP: 33-38. MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy.
- APPEL, R. and MUYSKEN P.(1987) Language Contact and Bilingualism. Institute for General
- Linguistics, University of Amsterdams Edward Arnold.
- ATECHI, Samuel. 2017. Exploring Some Particular Cases of Pronunciation in Cameroon National languages: The Case of Schwa in English Loanwords in Awing. Research Journal of English Language and Literature, Volume 5, number 2.
- BOBDA, Simo Augustine. 1983. Lexical Integration in Cameroon Standard.
- BRETON, R and Fohtung B. (1991) Atlas Administratif des Langues Nationales du Cameroun, Yaounde, CERDOTOLA, CREA – ACCT.
- BRYE, Elizabeth 1999. A Rapid Appraisal Survey of Ngwo [ALCAM 861] Momo Division, North West Province of Camerooon. SIL. Yaounde.
- ECHU, George. 2003. Multilingualism as a Resource: the Lexical Appropriation of Cameroon Indegenous Languages by English and French. Trans. Internet-Zeitschrift fur Kulturwissenschaften.
- EYOH, Julius A. 2023. Lexical Updade in the Revitalisation of Ngwo. Ecole Normal Superieur Yaounde – Cameroon. Unpublished article.
- EYOH, Julius A. 2015. From Description to Revitalisation with Highlights on the Pedagogic Grammar of Endangered Cameroonian Languages: The Case of Engwo. PhD Thesis. The University of Yaounde 1, Department of African Languages and Linguistics, Yaounde-Cameroon.
- EYOH, Julius A. 2011. Engwo Lexicon. Ngwo Language and Cultural Committee (NLACCO), Ngwo, Njikwa, Momo, Northwest Region, Cameroon.
- EZIGHA, M. Mercy (2022). A Discourse on the Impact of Globalisation and/or ICT on Standard English and Some Grassfield Languages in a Multilingual Context. PhD Thesis, University of Yaounde 1 – Cameroon.
- FOKOU, Mukum Sandy F. 2021. Cameroonian Languages and the Trio Force of Colonisation: The Case of Borrowing in the Bantu Phylum. HAL https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-03104827.
- FOSSI, Achille. 2012. Cultural and Linguistic Hybridization in Cameroon English Loanwords in Ngemba. In International Journal of Linguistics. Volume 4, Number 1.
- GORDON, Jr., and Grimes, Barbara. ed. (2005) Ethnologue: Languages of the World. Fifteenth Edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International.
- KOUEGA, Jean Paul. 2017. Borrowing, Translation and Indigenous Knowledge Preservation. American Journal of Humanities and Social Science research.
- NKOGHO, Bakume Magdaline. 2019. The Phonology of Loanwords in the Ejagham Language. In International Journal of Linguistics and Communication. Volume 7, Number 1. pp 40-49.
- KOUEGA, Jean Paul. 1998. Loans from some indegenous languages in Cameroon English. In Azires (revue anglais de la Reunion). pp. 100-111.
- SANDER, Roland Kuitert (2013) English Loanwords in Norwegian. A Loanword Processing Study in Young Speakers of Norwegian. Master Thesis in Linguistics, Department of Modern Foreign Languages. Faculty of Humanities, NTNU
- SMITH Angela and Michael Higgins (2013) The Language of Journalism: A Multi-genre Perspective. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- UBANAKO, Valentine Njende. 2000. Cultural and Institutional Terms in Cameroon English Usage: A Lexico-Semantic Study of Newspaper language, Maitrise dissertation, University of Yaounde 1.
- WOLF, Hans George. 2001. English in Cameroon, Berlin, New York, Mouton de Gruyter.