

A Sociolinguistic Perspective on Hausa Loanwords in the Kɛlba Language

Mohammed Hamman Barka*

Abstract

Linguistic borrowing is seen as a significant source of language development and enrichment. This study examines Hausa loanwords borrowed into the Chadic language of Kɛlba, which is spoken in Gombi, Hong, Maiha, Mubi North, and Mubi South local government areas of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The lingua franca in most of northern Nigeria is Hausa, one of the indigenous national languages of the region. The primary sources of data for the study were entries in the Dictionary of Kɛlba Language and recorded interviews with twenty-five (25) native Kɛlba speakers from Adamawa State, Nigeria's Gombi, Hong, Maiha, Mubi North, and Mubi South local government districts. The phonological repair techniques that Kɛlba native speakers intentionally or unintentionally utilize to incorporate Hausa loanwords into their vocabulary are the main subject of the analysis. Segmental substitutions, vowel deletion (epenthesis), tone changes, final vowel shortening, and vowel substitution are some examples of Kɛlba loan adaptation. Phonological restrictions and the requirement to preserve language coherence within Kɛlba are the driving forces behind these modifications. The interaction between Hausa and Kɛlba is highlighted in this study, providing insight into the sociolinguistic processes and cross-cultural interactions that affect language acquisition. Additionally, it highlights how Kɛlba speakers are flexible in incorporating loanwords, which enhances and evolves the language while maintaining its distinct phonological structure.

Keywords: Hausa loanwords, cross-cultural interactions, linguistic borrowing, phonological repair, sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Languages, like all living organisms, exhibit adaptability through various enrichment and development methods. Linguistic borrowing refers to the transfer of linguistic elements phonological, morphological, syntactic, or semantic from a donor language (source language) to a recipient language (receptor language) due to contact between different language-speaking communities [1]. This process is not limited to lexical items, it encompasses any linguistic material, including sound systems, phonological rules, grammatical categories, syntactic patterns, semantic associations, and discourse strategies, originating from another language. Borrowed lexicons are present in all living languages. The phenomenon exhibits significant linguistic relevance, as linguistic borrowing contributes to the

survival of the receptor language [2]. The capacity of a language to borrow is a critical factor in its continued survival, given the dynamic nature of the world, which necessitates the incorporation of innovations from various languages with extensive vocabularies.

Borrowed words/phonemes are usually remodelled to fit into the phonological, morphological as well as the syntactic structure of the recipient language. Certain sounds in borrowed lexicons may be unfamiliar to speakers of the

*Author for Correspondence

Mohammed Hamman Barka
E-mail: tanimubarka97@yahoo.com

Research Scholar, Department of Language, College of Education Waka-Biu, Borno State, Nigeria

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receiving language, and as a result of phonetic or mother tongue interference, the foreign sounds are altered to match the pattern of native sounds. For instance, all English loans that contain the sound /p/ are changed to /f/ in Hausa, making pencil, passport, and gasoline in English become *fensir*, *fasfo*, and *fetur* in Hausa. This procedure is known as phoneme substitution or adaptation.

In addition, non-phonological patterns are also subjected to accommodation. In this instance, the loanwords that don't meet the target language's phonological patterns are changed to match those that are allowed. This procedure is typically carried out to conform to the target language's structure; for instance, Hausa morphology forbids a cluster of consonants on the same syllable. For example, Arabic loanword in Hausa such as *Bayyan* (explanation), *Dunya* (universe) is pronounced as *bayani*, *duniya* where the consonant cluster is broken by vowel epenthesis to the phonological rules of Hausa [3].

The degree of bilingualism, the duration and intensity of language contact i.e., the type of interaction between speakers of two languages can affect the results of borrowing [4]. With borrowed words that contain these new phonemes, the aforementioned circumstances may result in the introduction of new phonemes into the target language's phonemic inventory. Another name for this technique of loan domestication is called direct phonological dissemination. The acceptance of loanwords that do not follow native patterns in more close language contact can also change a language's phonological patterns. Hausa language phonology permits loanwords to end with consonants, such as *fam* (pound) from English, *kalanzir* (kerosene), and *Bahr/Bahar* (sea/ocean) from Arabic, despite the fact that the majority of Hausa words do not. This is because of close contact and extensive borrowings from Arabic and English [5].

MODEL OF APPROACH

Kaka studied looked at the linguistic aspects of loanwords in Kanuri. He examines the borrowing techniques in Kanuri with particular attention to Arabic, English and Hausa [6]. The linguistic techniques used are deletion, sonorization, insertion; vowel epenthesis, extra syllabic vowel, etc., are some of the tools that he observed in the loanwords in Kanuri.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are two different approaches or strategies for studying loanwords, according to Miyamoto (1990) [7]. One is to examine the semantic field, or how borrowed words are categorized based on the cultural categories to which they belong. For example, if the source language introduced a religion, the recipient must acquire a large vocabulary related to that religion. For instance, the Arabic language is the source of all Hausa loan terms, as the Islamic faith was initially brought to the Hausa people by Arab traders in the fourteenth century.

The second method is phonological, which asks what characteristics borrowed words have in relation to the destination language's grammatical structure. In order to determine how the Kɛlba language incorporates foreign vocabulary into its internal grammar and phonology, this research focuses on the second approach. There must be communication between the languages in question for lexical borrowing to occur. The Hausas are traditionally reputed to be hardened travellers and seasoned traders. In this way the Hausas succeeded in establishing their language as a commercial language and *lingua franca*. As a result, many minority languages like Kɛlba have adopted Hausa as a *lingua franca*, this has resulted in Kɛlba borrowing many Hausa. This study identified several forms of borrowing that includes:

- Direct borrowing is a form of borrowing in which a lexical item from the source language is adopted and integrated into the target language's system in both form and meaning.
- Loan translation, also known as *calques*, is the process of using a foreign word's form and meaning as a model for native invention rather than transferring it into the target language. Here, each morpheme from the source language is replaced with the semantically equivalent morpheme in the target language, it is subsequently put together according to its own local word-formation principles [8].

- In a loan blend, the borrower imports portions of the model and substitutes them with pre-existing content in the targeted language.
- Semantic extension incorporates a foreign idea into a language by altering the semantic range of a native-language item with a comparable meaning.

For a variety of reasons, including the following, languages borrow from one another:

1. *Prestige motive*: One of the justifications for borrowing is prestige. He contends that in this instance, people are supposed to imitate those they find admirable. "Wanting" to be accepted by the majority, such as the Hausa language in northern Nigeria, is another type of prestige. The source language may be the language spoken by the majority or by individuals in positions of power.
2. *The need-filling motive*: This is the process by which languages borrow words to describe novel things, ideas, and locations. According to some linguist, it is simpler to use an already-existing phrase than to coin one.

List (2019) looks at the lexical classes that are available for borrowing as examples of linguistic objects that are likely to be borrowed [9]. In contrast to the 'closed classes' (pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions), he notes that the 'opening classes' (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) are easier to borrow. Since most borrowed words are names for new products and materials, he notes that nouns are the most borrowed class globally.

The lexical classes accessible for borrowing as well as the linguistic objects most likely to be borrowed. He finds that the "opened classes"—nouns, verbs, and adjectives—are usually more easily borrowed than the "closed classes"—pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions. Because most borrowed words are names of new materials and objects, he concludes that nouns are the most borrowed class worldwide [9].

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

About three hours of audio recordings of twenty-five (25) Kɛlba native speakers from five local government areas in Adamawa State, representing a range of ages, genders, educational backgrounds, and residences, served as the basis for part of this study. These local governments were singled out due to the fact that they lived in semi-urban areas and that their daily lives revolved around urban activities, such as riding tricycles (Keke Napep) to work, shopping for groceries, and taking their kids to and from school every day. Given that they need to speak more than one language for everyday conversation, it was assumed that there would be a significant inclination to borrow given this type of everyday urban activities. All of the respondents spoke both Hausa and Kɛlba, making them multilingual. The participants were not aware that the Hausa loanwords were the primary focus of the interviews. The respondents were interviewed informally in their homes and while they were resolving personal issues. The objective is to obtain a speech sample about them from their everyday conversations. This aims to extract a sample of speech about them that is a part of their regular discourse.

SOURCES OF DATA

The data for this study were extracted from Dictionary of the Kɛlba Language and Kɛlba textbooks which provide the source of secondary data. The primary data were derived from interview of native Kɛlba speakers. The pronunciation of the loanwords gathered from these sources was then confirmed by native Kɛlba speakers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

When determining the direction of borrowing, the sociolinguistic circumstances of the two languages are crucial. Borrowing typically occurs from more prominent to less prestigious languages [10]. Sometimes lexical elements that have been borrowed into another language need to have their sounds fixed, so they fit the receptor language's sound system. Therefore, some of the original pronunciation may or may not be retained when new linguistic concepts are adopted into another language.

Phonological Adaptation Process of Loanwords

Radical loans (zero suffix): Radical loans are loanwords that don't affect their sound in any way. Consider these examples shown in Table 1.

Non-radical loans: Non radicals as loanwords that do alter in structure and form when incorporating loans from another language. Among the steps in the process are tone modulation, lengthening, shortening, insertion, deletion, and sound replacement. In Vowel-affecting process, there is no phonemic center schwa vowel / ə / in Hausa. Any component of the vowels that are eligible for word medial position in Hausa, such as /a/, /i/, or /o/, is translated as *kɛlba* /ə/. Consider these examples shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Examples of radical loanwords.

S.N.	Hausa	Kɛlba	English
1	a'a	a'a	negation
2	ádúwá	ádúwá	desert
3	àzùrfá	àzùrfá	silver
4	àkú	àkú	parrot
5	àlfádàrí	àlfádàrí	mule
6	àlkámà	àlkámà	wheat
7	fítílà	fítílà	lamp, lantern
8	gádá	gádá	bridge
9	gálúrá	gálúrá	red dye
10	kílíshì	kílíshì	thin strips of dried meat
11	làrdí	làrdí	district
12	màjàlìsà	màjàlìsà	traditional court of law
13	máasà	másà	a round cake made from grain
14	shàntúu	shàntúu	a long narrow gourd
15	Táfàrnúwà	táfàrnúwà	garlic
16	tàkwàràa	tàkwàràa	a namesake
17	tálàkà	tálàkà	destitute
18	tásháa	tásháa	a station
19	wàinàa	wàinàa	a round cake made from grain
20	yáalóo	yáalóo	garden egg
21	zábúuràa	zábúuràa	psalm
22	túutà	túutà	flag
23	shàrì'á	shàrì'á	justice, law
24	màkúli	makulli	key
25	sóosóo	sósó	sponge
26	bàrkà	bàrkà	blessing
27	dúbúu	dúbúu	thousand

Table 2. Phonological processes in non-radical loanwords.

S.N.	Hausa	Kɛlba	English
1	mél	məl	mile
2	máalàm	màləm	scholar/teacher
3	téebúri	təbùr	Table
4	bíndígà	bəndəkà	Gun
5	sáabúlù	sábəl	Soap
6	súrki	səlku	in-law

Ablaut: Ablaut as vowel alternations in the same root, suffix or infix. It alters a vowel's quality within a root or stem for purely grammatical reasons; the vowel alternation is typically the only instance of grammatical distinction. Consider these examples shown in Table 3.

Transmutation: Refers to the change or conversion of a sound into another sound within a word as shown in Table 4.

Tone modification/Vowel shortening: Tone modification refers to the change or alternation of the pitch or tone pattern of a syllable or word in a language. This process affects the way a syllable or word is pronounced. While vowel shortening is a phonological process in which a long vowel is reduced to a short vowel sound. Consider these examples shown in Table 5.

Table 3. Examples of Ablaut showing vowel alternations for grammatical distinctions.

S.N.	Hausa	Kɔlba	English
1	àtàmfià	átàmpè	coloured wrapper
2	àlgàità	álgétà	a reed wind instrument
3	jàkàa	jìkà	Bag
4	záartò	zártú	Saw
5	kwábò	kwàbá	Penny
6	Sháagù	shágù	Shop
7	mángwàrò	mángwàrá	Mango
8	kiífi	kɔlfi	Fish
9	kèekèe	kèkì	Bicycle
10	kóosái	kwàsi	bean cake
11	bángóo	bángù	Wall
12	góorò	gwàr	kola-nut

Table 4. Examples of sound transmutation in words.

S.N.	Hausa	Kɔlba	English
1	jírgii	Jírki	canoe, train, aeroplane
2	láhàdì	Kádí	Sunday
3	máatáa	Mwàlà	woman
4	bárgóo	Bàrkwa	blanket
5	mái	Mál	oil

Table 5. Examples of tone modification/vowel shortening.

S.N.	Hausa	Kɔlba	English
1	àlkáalii	likáli	judge
2	àkwaati	Àkwati	box
3	àlbaashii	àlbashi	salary/wages
4	àmmáa	àmmá	but
5	áníiní	áníní	penny
6	cáacaá	cácá	gambling
7	fáadà	fádà	Chief's chamber palace
8	gárwáa	gárwà	a large kerosene tin
9	Kàtiifà	kátifá	Mattress
10	làadàn	ládàn	mu'azzin
11	láayà	láyaà	a charm
12	tàláatà	tàlátà	Tuesday
13	zàrgiìnà	zàrgìnà	washing blue
14	Shàa'ì	sha'ì	Tea
15	àgwàagáa	àgwàgwá	Duck

Table 6. Examples of vowel lengthening with geminate sound.

S.N.	Hausa	Kɛlba	English
1	cittáa	citaà	ginger
2	áccà	ácàa	Cereal

Table 7. Examples showing distinction between the trilled (ʀ) and flapped (ɾ) in standard Hausa.

S.N.	Hausa	Kɛlba	English
1	Mákárántáa	mákárántá	school
2	Gòorúbà	gwárvà	dum-palm
3	ráaríiyáa	ráríyá	Siever
4	rákèè	rèkéké	Sugarcane

Degemination: A geminate is neutralized or reduced to a single sound by a phonological process. The compensatory vowel lengthening that happens with the geminate sound is an effect in which the deletion of one segment is accompanied by an increase in the length of another, usually near it, so that the syllable weight is maintained [11]. Consider these examples shown in Table 6.

Derhotacization: There are two types of R^S in standard Hausa, the trilled /ʀ/ and the flapped /ɾ/. The flapped /ɾ/ is used to distinguish from the trilled /ʀ/. Examples are shown in Table 7.

CONCLUSION

The Hausa loanwords in the Kɛlba language are described in this study. In order to adapt some Hausa lexicons into Kɛlba, native Kɛlba consciously or subconsciously uses phonological corrections, according to the study. There are two types of loanwords: radical and non-radical. Loanwords that don't modify their sound are known as radical loans. Non-radicals are loanwords that do alter in structure and form when they accept loans from other people. Vowels, ablauts, transmutations, tone changes, degemination, and derhotacization are all impacted by the non-radical repair process. This study is expected to contribute to the diversity of Hausa loanwords present in certain Nigerian languages.

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