PHONOLOGICAL OUTCOMES OF YORUBA AND ENGLISH CONTACT ON URHOBO LOAN WORDS

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Abstract:

The multi-lingual nature of Nigeria has made it typical that speakers of two or more languages have to interact with each other, and this natural phenomenon results in various degrees of linguistic, cultural, and social influences which are dependent on the dominance of the languages in contact. This study looks at one of the linguistic outcomes that result in such contact situations amongst Yoruba, English, and Urhobo in the Urhobo speech communities of Delta State. It also examines the possible implications of these adaptations for language change. Since phonological change is a universal characteristic of languages that may have far-reaching influences, when words are borrowed in the morphology as well as the syntax of languages, this study delimits its scope to examining specifically the phonological outcomes of English and Yoruba on Urhobo using some selected loan words. Data is elicited from interviewing six language consultants, who were also made to produce established loan words to evaluate how they are adapted into the structure of Urhobo. Findings show that phonological features like insertion (prosthesis and paragoge), syllable structure change, phonological substitution, free variation, and deletion are observed as these English loan words are adapted to suit the phonological structure of Urhobo. In contrast, the loan words from Yoruba are assimilated with little change into Urhobo.

Keywords: Contact Linguistics, Phonological change, Loan words, Language change, Urhobo (Nigeria)

1. Introduction

This study examines some phonological outcomes observed when Yoruba and English source words are borrowed in Urhobo. People from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds converge at a particular place to interact for one reason or another, which leads to various levels of contact between languages spoken by these people. Put simply, when speakers of different languages interact closely, it is only natural for their languages to influence each other. Language contact can occur at borders of different linguistic or dialectal area as a result of migration or cultural contact. Socially- and historically-based works done by sociolinguists have given strong theoretical base to some studies that we refer to presently as 'contact linguistics'. In fact, the sociolinguistic perspectives on language contact situation give emphasis on the investigation of the types of socio-historical situations that have given rise to different linguistic outcomes (Winford 2007:10). The goal of contact linguistics is to "uncover the various situations of contact between languages that contribute to the varied phenomena that result, as well as the linguistic and external ecological factors that help to shape them." (Winford 2003:5, 11). This means that contact linguistics focuses on the different structures or nature of influences that emerges from the different relationships that languages in contact share; such structures may be phonological, grammatical or even have sociocultural implications. In Nigeria, as in many countries of Africa, the major languages have always constituted a threat to the minority languages. It is no news that dominant languages often 'threaten' the non-dominant ones to the verge of extinction because of their unequal status of dominance in terms of frequency of use, degree of proficiency, prestige and descriptions/domains of functions (Wolff 2000:330). With this, many minority languages in Nigeria are incessantly under undue pressure (Igboanusi and Peter 2004). The National Language Policy on Education (see, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999; 2004 and among others) has not been so helpful as much attention is given to majority languages and the few times attention has been given to minority language use in Nigeria, practical ways and support for implementation is usually lacking.

Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba have been referred to as major Nigerian languages, because they are essentially multimillion-speaker languages and they function as local lingua francas, language of education as well as regional or state languages in areas where they are spoken; Hausa in Northern Nigeria, Igbo in South Eastern Nigeria and Yoruba in South Western Nigeria. It is estimated that a larger percentage of Nigerians speak these three languages than those referred to as 'minority' languages based on demography (Adegbite

2008: 2-3; Omotoyinbo 2016: 82-83). On the other hand, there are numerous other languages referred to as 'minority languages' which are used in some communities (or states) as mother tongues but hardly as languages of education. Some of these languages have been said to be on the verge of extinction. For emphasis, Urhobo happens to be one of these numerous languages referred to as 'minority languages'and as such, has been under the threat of being dominated by not just these indigenous 'majority languages' but also English (Ugwuoke, 1999). In fact, Roelle (2013:282) considers the Urhobo language as 'highly endangered'. In the south-south, Nigeria; with particular reference to Delta state, (although Edo and Rivers are inclusive) English and Naija (Nigerian Pidgin English), are mostly used as the medium of instruction in most schools and in informal situations in Urhobo speech communities. Many people are often regarded as up-to-date, fashionable or educated when heard communicating mostly in English. This lays the foundation for Sankoff's (2001) argument that, when a common second language is learned and used by a group of people, they often find themselves introducing second-language lexical items into conversations with fellow bilinguals in their original first language, which leads to the adoption of loan words. loan words are one of the most "easily observable results of intercultural contact" Hoffer (2005: 1). Also loan words are words which entered into the lexicon of a language as a result of borrowing, transfer or copying, at some point in the history of a language (Haspelmath, 2009: 36). The adoption of loan words come with levels of changes, alterations or adjustments in the phonology (and other linguistic levels) of the recipient language. Such alterations may include processes that apply not only to foreign-origin vocabulary, but may also spread to native vocabulary; which prompts the objectives of this study.

There have been a lot of sociolinguistic-based studies on the linguistic processes involved in the phenomenon of language contact which includes explaining how linguistic items are loaned or how borrowed words that arise as a result of different contact situations are evaluated (c.f. Emowverha 2005, Aziza and Utulu 2006, Ugorgi 2013, Utulu 2019). Some other scholars have probed into the problems and threats of endangerment of ethnic minority languages having deep linguistic and cultural root as a result of the strong influence of a majority national language especially in colonial context (Igboanusi and Peter 2004). Also, studies on language contact (especially bilingual situations) in Nigeria have concentrated on either the contrastive analyses of English and Nigerian languages in the areas of phonology, syntax and usage, or the interference features of the indigenous languages found in the varieties of English used by Nigerians. Largely, the major point of interest have always been the English language, and the methodological orientation has

always been influenced by pedagogical implications (c.f. Dawulung 1999; Kuju 1999; Schaefer & Egbokhare 1999; Haruna 2003, Nwaozuzu, Agbedo and Ugwuona 2013; Obiegbu 2016).

There have also been a number of related studies carried out on Nigerian endangered languages with reference made to Urhobo like: Aziza and Utulu (2006), Onose (2009), Rolle (2013), Ugorji (2013), Tonukari, Ejobee, Aleh and Orjinta (2014), Mowarin (2014) and Oduaran (2017), Utulu (2019) and Ajiboye (2020) among others. Other studies on Urhobo border on the area of curriculum development for Primary 1 to JSS 3 by the Urhobo Studies Association and Delta State Univeristy in collaboration with Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC). Looking through previous studies, this study affirms that the outcomes of language or dialect contact depends on both the linguistic relationship between the languages/varieties and the social conditions underlying the contact. Therefore, this study builds on previous studies on Urhobo loan words to investigate the adaptation of loan words from Yoruba and English into Urhobo and the possible implication for language change. Again, the study delimits its scope specifically, to the phonological outcomes of the contact between a foreign language; (English) which is also used as a lingua franca and an indigenous language and (Yoruba) which shares close geographical ties with Urhobo (the language being assessed in this study). This study contributes to on-going discussions on different perspectives/investigations into contact languages and areas of Urhobo language studies.

2. A brief on Urhobo language studies

Urhobo is a South Western Edoid language of the Niger-Congo family, spoken in Delta State, Nigeria. Roelle (2013) claims that there is no exact figure published regarding the population of Urhobo native speakers owing to a number of problems: one, distinguishing Urhobo speakers from the number of other ethnic group speakers living in urban centers of Urhobo native land, two, the fact that many young speakers speak Naija (Nigerian Pidgin English) and then the fact that they have a significant number of speakers who live abroad. However, from what have been reported so far, the population of Urhobo native speakers is estimated to be between 500,000 and 1.5 million (Mowarin 2004; Lewis 2009; Ugorji 2013). Their neighbours are the Isoko to the East, the Itsekiri and Ijaw to the West, Edo people to the North and the Ukwuani people to the North-east. The Urhobo people are predominantly known for farming and fishing (Ekeh 2007). Urhobo speaking communities comprises twenty-two clans, each with its own linguistic

peculiarities, some include- Agbarha-ame, Agbarha-otor, Agbarho, Agbor, Arhavanen, Avwraka, Eghwu, Evwereni, Ephro-oto, Idjeihe, Oghara, Ogor, Okere, Okparabe, Okpe, Olomu, Orogun, Udu, among others. Aziza (2007: 273) reports that "Urhobo has fifteen mutually intelligible dialects."

A number of investigations have been made into Urhobo language generally. Some include: Ladefoged (1968), Welmers (1969), Aziza (1997, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2008), Aziza & Utulu (2006), Ugorji (2013), Roelle (2013), Utulu (2019) Ajiboye (2020), among others. Research on the phonology of Urhobo reports that Urhobo vowel system came previously from a 10 vowel system which maintained tongue root distinctions but may have collapsed to 7 over time, that is why the -ATR vowels like /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ appear to co-occur freely with /e/ and /o/ +ATR vowels (Elugbe 1989; Roelle 2013:284). Urhobo sound system comprises 28 consonants /p, b, t, d, c, ɟ, k, g, k͡p, g͡b, ɸ, f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, ɣ, h/x, m, n, ɲ, ŋm, r, ɾ, ʋ, j, w/ (Aziza 2003; 2007; Roelle 2013; Ugorji 2013). Urhobo also attest 7 oral contrastive vowels /i, e, ɛ, a, o, ɔ, u/ with each having their nasal complements /ĩ, ẽ, ɛ̃, ã, õ, ɔ̃, ũ/ which have been argued to occur in variations (Welmers 1969:85; Aziza 2008). These vowels occur in the initial, medial and final environments of words. Diphthongs do not occur in Urhobo but what is rather seen is a sequence of vowels which rarely occur (Roelle 2012:286). Though Ajiboye (2020:50) refutes Roelle's claim, arguing that vowels in Urhobo do not occur in sequences and when they do, they are elided during native speakers' natural conversations.

Urhobo distinguishes between two distinctive tonemes: High and Low, alongside a Mid or Downstepped High (Aziza 2003, Roelle 2013, Ugorji 2013). In Urhobo, only vowels bear tones. The tonal pattern in Urhobo shows that the downstep(ed high) tone restrictedly occurs after a high or two successive high tones. Urhobo also attests consonant clusters and permits only /j/, /w/, and /r/ to occur as the second consonant in a [CCV] sequence: (Roelle 2013:311). But these clusters occupy only the onset slot and occur more in nouns. Also, the Urhobo language has a constraint on coda elements (Ugorji 2013). The syllable structure is important to note here because it best explains why loan words must follow the "possible well-formed syllable constituents since all substantive segments and prosodic resources" must follow these requirements in a language loaned or not (p. 183). This is why Ugorji (2013) argues that loanwords are 're-syllabified' to agree with Urhobo syllable structure in their segmental and tonal features and when it does not, it maintains the syllable specifications as in its source language.

3. Method

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach. 80 loan words constituted data for this study. Out of this 80, 10 were elicited from primary sources whereas 70 were from secondary sources (35 loan words from Emowverha 2005, 11 from Aziza 2007 and 24 from Onose 2009). The primary source involved interview with six language consultants who were purposively selected; two monolinguals (who only speak Urhobo), two bilinguals (one speaks Urhobo and English, one speaks Yoruba and Urhobo) and two multilinguals (who speak Urhobo, Yoruba and English) without bias to the dialect of respondents. This enabled us get a distribution of native speakers who have and have not had contact with Yoruba and/or English. The Urhobo native speakers (who speak Urhobo and English) were also presented with the list of loan words; which constituted the secondary source of data, in order to verify pronunciations and confirm the data collected, as the researchers believe that bilingual speakers' confirmation can increase reliability of data previously elicited. During the interraction with the monolingual language consultants, they were asked in Urhobo to list some English names given to people and other items too (as one of the authors is a native speaker of Urhobo). This was to help us evaluate how they are pronounced and for comparison purposes with those of the bilinguals and multilinguals. While the bilingual who speaks Urhobo and Yoruba gave us the loan words from Yoruba. The objective is to find out how these loan words are adapted at the phonological level to the structure of Urhobo based on the natural pronunciations of these native speakers with varying levels of contact with Yoruba and English. As a qualitative study, the elicited data are descriptively analysed in the following section.

4. Data Analysis

The study adopts the Tone Marking Convention (TMC) of Williamson (1984) and Emenanjo (2015); where high tones are unmarked, while the downstep, mid and low tones are marked. It is also worthy to note here that some of these loan words have been given indigenous equivalents (native words) developed by some Urhobo scholars through loan translation; referred to as calquing in morphology (c.f. Onose, 2009: 12). Words like *ìtrọ́sà - itawore 'trousers'; ìbeelitì - ikpacha 'belt'; ìshetì – enwù 'shirt'; ìmotò- ọkọ̀rótọ 'motor/car', ìtenivishọ̀nì - ekpètìrùghe 'television'; ìrediò - agbòrọ̀ 'radio'; ìtishà – òyònò/òyònìkwo 'teacher'; ìshọ́ọ́shì - ùwèvwìrega 'church'; - ìjọjì - òbrorhìe 'judge' - ọkọ̀renu 'airplane', and so on.* Nevertheless, many Urhobo native speakers (both old and

young) still use these adapted forms rather than the metalanguage developed for them. In fact, many Urhobo speakers today do not know that there exists indigenous terminologies to express these words in Urhobo. Some phonological features and patterns which are observed from the data are discussed below.

4.1. Insertion

Observing the set of English loan words below, we can see that there is a prothetic high, front, unrounded low-toned vowel /ì/, all through the data in example (1) below:

1.　　English　　　　　　　　　　　　　Urhobo

a. *Powder* /paʊdəʳ/　　　　　　　*ìpọdà* /ìpɔdà/
b. *Photo*　 /fəʊtəʊ/　　　　　　　*ìfòto* /ìfòto/
c. *Radio*　 /reɪdiəʊ/　　　　　　　*ìrediò* /ìredjò/
d. *Teacher* /tiʧəʳ/　　　　　　　　*ìtishà* /ìtiʃà/
e. *Lawyer* /lɔjəʳ/　　　　　　　　*ìlọyà* /ìlɔjà/
f. *Butter*　 /bʌtəʳ/　　　　　　　*ìbọtà* /ìbɔtà/
g. *Knicker* /nikəʳ/　　　　　　　*ìnikà* /ìnikà/
h. *Coat*　　 /kəʊt/　　　　　　　*ìkootù* /ìko:tù/
i. *Sandal* /sændal/　　　　　　　*ìsadàsì* /ìsadàsì/
j. *Fridge* /friʤ/　　　　　　　　*ìfrijì* /ìfriʤì/
k. *Motor*　 /məʊtəʳ/ (Emowverha 2005)　*ìmotò* /ìmotò/
l. *Bread*　 /brɛd/ (Emowverha 2005)　*ìbrẹdì* /ìbrɛdì/
m. *Table*　 /teɪbl/ (Aziza 2007)　*ìtebùrù* /ìtebùrù/ *ìtebùlù/*
n. *Clerk*　 /klɜk/ (Aziza 2007)　*ìkrakì* /ìkrakì/ *ìklakì/*
o. *Brother* /brʌðəʳ/ (Aziza 2007)　*ìbrọ̀da* /ìbrɔ̀da/
p. *Bucket* /bʌkɪt/ (Aziza 2007)　*ìbọ́kẹ̀tì* /ìbɔ́kɛ̀tì/
q. *Earring* /ɪəriŋ/ (Aziza 2007)　*ìyẹrìnì* /ìjɛrìnì/
r. *Cake*　　 /keɪk/ (Aziza 2007)　*ìkekì* /ìkekì/
s. *Church* /ʧɜʧ/ (Onose 2009)　*ìshọọshì* /ìʃɔ:ʃì/
t. *Bible* /baɪbᵊl/ (Onose 2009)　*ìbaìbùlù* /ìbaibùlù/
u. *Father (Priest)* /fæðəʳ/ (Onose 2009)　*ìfàada* /ìfà:da/
v. *Choir*　　 /kwaɪəʳ/ (Onose 2009)　*ìkwayà* /ìkwajà/
w. *Television* /tɛlɪvɪʒᵊn/ (Onose 2009)　*ìtẹnìvishọ̀nì* /ìtɛnìviʃɔ̀nì/
x. *Bicycle*　 /baɪsɪkl/ (Onose 2009)　*ìbasikòrò* /ìbasikòrò/
y. *Telephone* /tɛlɪfəʊn/ (Onose 2009)　*ìtẹ̀nifònù* /ìtɛ̀nifònù/

z.	*Register /rɛdʒɪstəʳ/* (Onose 2009)	*ìrhɛjistà* */ìrɛdʒistà/*
aa.	*Class /klas/* (Onose 2009)	*ìklasì /ìkla:sì/*
bb.	*Trouser /traʊzəʳ/* (Onose 2009)	*ìtrọsà/ìtrọzà /ìtrɔsà/ìtrɔzà/*
cc.	*Belt /bɛlt/* (Onose 2009)	*ìbẹẹlitì /ìbɛ:litì/*
dd.	*Kerosene /kɛrəsin/* (Onose 2009)	*ìkràsi /ìkrà:si/*
ee.	*Pineapple /paɪnæpl/* (Onose 2009)	*ìpànapòrò /ìpànapòrò/*
ff.	*Pawpaw /pɔpɔ/* (Onose 2009)	*ìpọ̀pọ /ìpɔ̀pɔ/*
gg.	*Mortuary /mɔtʃʊʳtri/* (Onose 2009)	*ìmọshùarhì /ìmɔʃùaṛì/*
hh.	*Nurse /nɜs/* (Onose 2009)	*ìnọsì /ìnɔsì/*
ii.	*Court /kɔt/* (Onose 2009)	*ìkọọtù /ìkɔ:tù/*
jj.	*Tomato /təmatəʊ/* (Onose 2009)	*ìtòmatòsì /ìtòmatòsì/*
kk.	*Tea /ti/* (Onose 2009)	*ìtii /ìti:/*
ll.	*Pastor /pastəʳ/* (Onose 2009)	*ìpasitọọ /ìpasitɔ̀ɔ̀/*
mm.	*Motorcycle /məʊtəʳsaɪkl/* (Onose 2009)	*ìmàshinì /ìmàʃìnì/*
nn.	*Maggi (seasoning) /mægɪ/* (Onose 2009)	*ìmààgí /ìmà:gi/*
oo.	*Catechist /kætkɪst/* (Emowverha 2005)	*ìkatìsì /ìkatìsì/*

It seems obvious that /ì/ is the default epenthetic vowel which is typical of all the examples. Since nouns in Urhobo usually do not have onsets, **prothesis** (insertion at word initial position) occurs for loan words to meet the syllabification requirements. In this cases, a high front unrounded vowel is inserted at word initial position. Stork and Widdowson (1974:137) assert that the reason could be that /i/ is one of the primary vowels aside /a/ and /u/ which are among the first vowels acquired during the language acquisition process. But, this study argues that this may be because Urhobo generally forbids nouns with word-initial consonants in its phonological grammar; which agrees with previous studies (c.f. Ugorji 2013 and Roelle 2013). Secondly, to maintain euphony, Urhobo may choose to commence the pronunciation of nouns with a vowel rather than a consonant (just as in many other languages). However, a contrast can be seen in the Yoruba loanwords culled from Aziza (2007) in example (2) below:

2.	Yoruba	Urhobo	English
a.	*ẹ̀wà /ɛ̀wà/*	*ẹ̀wà /ɛ̀wà/*	*Beans*
b.	*àkpẹ̀rẹ̀ /àkpɛ̀rɛ̀/*	*àkpẹ̀rẹ̀ /àkpɛ̀rɛ̀/*	*Basket*
c.	*àkàrà /àkàrà/*	*àkàrà /àkàrà/*	*Bean cake*
d.	*ìyàwó /ìjàwo/*	*ìyàwo /ìjàwo/*	*Wife*
e.	*ọ̄lọpàa /ɔ̄lɔkpàa/*	*ọ̄lọpàa /ɔ̄lɔkpàa/*	*Police*

Here, we see that the loan words from Yoruba are assimlated into Urhobo with no changes except in (e) where we see a change in the tone of the final syllable from mid to high. This may not only be because Yoruba shares some linguistic and cultural affinities with Urhobo. Observing 2(a)-(e), all the words are nouns and nouns in Yoruba are constrained from having initial consonants, likewise Urhobo. This affirms the assertion in Ugorji (2013:187) that states that, when loan words do no go through resyllabification, (an adjustment of syllable constituents to conform to the syllable formalisations or conditions of the recipient language" or the outcome of adapting a loan word enabled by phonological processes), "the loan word may remain as a loaned unit retaining the syllable properties of its own language source rather than being indigenised or adapted." That is why even loan words (nouns) from English that begin with a vowel, need no prothetic vowel, as in the following words:

3.a. /amì/ 'army'
   b. /ovuùnù/ 'oven'
   c. /ɔfisì/ 'office'
   d. /èròplenì/ 'aeroplane'
   e. /ìjɛrìnì/ 'earring'
   f. /īki/ 'ink'

The above examples confirm the fact that loan words are actually resyllabified only when necessary to agree with the target or host's language syllable requirements. Again, another insertion occurs where **epenthetic** vowels; vowels inserted in word medial position. See a few examples below from Emowverha (2005):

4. a. ìdɔkitɔ̀ 'doctor'
   b. ìwisikì 'whiskey'
   c. ìkandòrò 'candle'
   d. ìketòrò 'kettle'
   e. ìtebòrò 'table'
   f. ìbankì 'bank'

On a cursory note, the data in (4) above could be misconstrued as not following the earlier statement of loan words conforming to the syllable conditions of the host langauge. But leaning deeper to look at examples 4 (a-f), we can see that the language epenthesizes the vowels to break up consonant clusters, whenever it is perceived or to

ensure that the no coda constraint remains unvioleted. For (a) and (b), what happens is the latter. The English loan words /dɒk.təʳ/ 'doctor' and /hwɪs.ki/ 'whiskey' are di-syllablc words with the first syllable having a coda. They are therefore, re-syllabified to meet up with the syllable requirements of Urhobo, hence the epenthetic vowel /i/ is inserted to make them open syllables. For (c) – (e), since Urhobo does not permit consonant cluster in the coda slot, the epenthetic /o/ is inserted to break up the clusters and also at the end to make it an open syllable. Finally, for (f), the 'nk' in /ìbankì/ 'bank' *is not a cluster.* Phonetically it is pronounced as [ì.bã.kì] which gives us three open syllables, with the second syllable having a nasal vowel, since Urhobo attests contrastive nasal vowels.

Furthermore, we see another kind of insertion; where the **paragogic** vowels /i/, /o/ and /u/ are inserted at the word final positions. The following examples in 5 show the insertion of paragogic /i/:

	Paragogic /i/ vowels		
5a.	*/brɛd/*	*/ìbrɛ́dì/*	*'bread'*
b.	*/klɜk/*	*/ìkɾakì/*	*'clerk'*
c.	*/bʌkɪt/*	*/ìbɔ́kɛ̀tì/*	*'bucket'*
d.	*/ʧɜʧ/*	*/ìʃɔːʃì/*	*'church'*
e.	*/keɪk/*	*/ìkekì/*	*'cake'*
f.	*/tɛlɪvɪʒᵊn/*	*/ìtɛ̀niviʃɔnì/*	*'television'*
g.	*/bɛlt/*	*/ìbɛːlitì/*	*'belt'*
h.	*/nɜs/*	*/ìnɔsì/*	*'nurse'*
i.	*/dʌzᵊn/*	*/ìdɔzìnì/*	*'dozen'*
j.	*/kɒfi/*	*/ìkɔ̀fì/*	*'cofee*
k.	*/kɪʧɪn/*	*/ìkiʃìnì/*	*'kitchen'*
l.	*/geɪt/*	*/ìgetì/*	*'gate'*

In example (5) above, there is a consistent insertion of /i/ at word final positions because in the source language there is a coda. /i/ seems to be more productive than other paragogic vowels. The same process applies to following data in (6) below, where the mid, back, rounded vowel /o/ is inserted at word final positions:

Paragogic /o/ vowels

6a.	/kɛtl/	/ìkɛtòrò/	'kettle'
b.	/kænd^əl/	/ìkandòrò/	'candle'
c.	/teɪbl/	/ìtebòrò/	'table'
d.	/baɪsɪkl/	/ìbasikòrò/	'bicycle'
e.	/paɪnæpl/	/ìpànapòrò/	'pineapple'

For /u/ insertions, we can see them in example 7 below:

Paragogic /u/ vowels

7 a.	/kəʊt/	/ìko:tù/	'coat'
b.	/baɪb^əl/	/ìbaibùlù/	'bible'
c.	/tɛlɪfəʊn/	/ìtènifònù/	'telephone'
d.	/kɔt/	/ìkɔ:tù/	'court'
e.	/bɔl/	/ìbɔ:lù/	'ball'

What we observe here is that since consonant clusters are only allowed in Urhobo onset slots, invariably, loan words into Urhobo would not permit codas or what Ugorji (2013:189) calls 'checked syllables', as such, it either inserts paragogic vowels (or deletes the final consonant). For the choice of vowel /i/ insertion, the reason is not farfetched. It is due to what we call phonological markedness. Cross-linguistically, the vowels that are more prone to insertion are high vowels, particularly /i/ and /u/. For consonants, they are usually the glottals, that is, the glottal fricative /h/ and the glottal stop /ʔ/. There is enough evidence in many languages to empiricize this claim (c.f. Akinlabi, 2004; Egbokhare, 1998). In a nutshell, languages generally prefer to use vowels /i/ and /u/ as prosthetic (word-initial), epenthetic (word-medial) or paragogic (word-final) vowels than any other kind of vowels. This also affirms Aziza and Utulu (2006), that /i/ and /u/ align with the permissible morpho-syllabic structure of Urhobo. However, the choice of /o/ as a Paragogic vowel in some loan words, whereas /u/ occurs in others, may be based on how each loan word is perceived and interpreted in the Urhobo native speaker's intuition; which may not be far-fetched from its pronunciation in English. This is what Ugorji (2013:189) refers to as a "kind of perceptual illusion, tending to copy the place features" of the conterminous consonant (specifically, the first or preceding consonant).

4.2. Tone feature

Another phonological outcome observed in the Urhobo loan words from English is that stress changed to tone since, which is totally in order because Urhobo is a tonal language (c.f. Ufomata, 2004; Oyebade 2006). Urhobo and English both exploits pitch but while English uses pitch as stress, Urhobo marks its pitch as tone. This is one of the phonological changes observed in the adaptation of loan words from English to Urhobo. It can be observed that in the data below:

8 a. */ˈbʌkɪt/*   */ìbɔ́kɛ̀tì/*   *'bucket'*
   b. */ˈteɪbl/*   */ìtebùrù/*   *'table'*
   c. */ˈtraʊzəʳ/*   */ìtrọsà/*   *'trouser'*
   d. */ˈmɔtʃʊʔtri/*   */ìmɔʃ̃uaɾì/*   *'mortuary'*
   e. */təˈmatəʊ/*   */ìtòmatòsì/*   *'tomato'*
   f. */ˈtɛlɪˌvɪʒʔn/*   */ìtɛnìviʃɔ̀nì/*   *'television'*

The above English loan words confirms that high tones in Urhobo are used for stressed syllables while low tones for unstressed syllables. This is hinged primarily on the observation of the data elicited and confirmed from the Urhobo native speakers. We can also see that the 'default' tonal melody of Urhobo loan words is L(L)HL. Examples (e) and (f) butteresses this point that loan words chooses to retain the 'high' pitch in stressed syllable(s) and the low pitch in the syllable(s) that is not stressed. For the loan words from Yoruba, the pitch of the souce language is retained; save for (e). See the examples in 9 below:

     Yoruba   Urhobo   English
9 a. */ɛ̂wà/*   */ɛ̂wà/*   *Beans*
   b. */àkpɛ̀rɛ̀/*   */àkpɛ̀rɛ̀/*   *Basket*
   c. */àkàrà/*   */àkàrà/*   *Bean cake*
   d. */ìjàwó/*   */ìjàwó/*   *Wife*
   e. */ɔ̄lɔkpàa/*   */ɔ̄lɔkpàa/*   *Police*

In the data in (9) above, we can see that because Yoruba and Urhobo exploits tone as pitch, the pitch of the source language (Yoruba) was retained in the target language (Urhobo), except for 9(e), where we see a tonal change from mid to high tone. Note here, that we had earlier pointed out that data is presented following the TMC of Williamson

(1984) and Emenanjo (2015); where high tones are unmarked, while the downstep and low tones are marked. Also, the perception of tone in all the data is based on the confirmations elicited from the Urhobo native speakers used as language consultants in the study.

4.3. Syllable structure

We have earlier said that Urhobo permits consonant clusters only in the onset slot and has a constraint that does not permit codas; which means Urhobo operates an open syllable structure and that is the reason responsible for the prothetic /i/ and the epenthetic and paragogic /o/ and /u/ insertions to break up clusters and at word final positions where the loan word, is a closed syllable. This is why we can have the following examples in (10) below:

10 a. */fridʒ/*   */ìfridʒì/*   *'fridge'*

    b. */klɜk/*   */ìkrakì/ìklakì/*   *'clerk'*

    c. */brɔðəʳ/*   */ìbrɔ̀da/*   *'brother'*
    d. */traʊzəʳ/*   */ìtrɔsà/*   *'trouser'*
    e. */brɛd/*   */ìbrɛdì/*   'bread'
    f. /drivəʳ/   /ìdravà/   'driver'
    g. /kɛrəsin/   /ìkrà:si/   *'kerosene'*
    h. */skul/*   */ìsìkuru/*   *'school'*

Urhobo's phonotactics permit consonant clusters in its onset (CCV; where a consonant is followed by /j,/ /w or /r/) and obviously these examples buttress that. This is uncommon in some other Nigerian languages where borrowing occurs. This also disagrees with Aziza and Utulu (2006). In the above examples in Urhobo, we observe that the loan words from English having consonant clusters, align with the phonotactics of Urhobo. Although, we also observe instances where other kinds of clusters occur like /sk/, /st/ and /kl/ clusters. Look at the examples below culled from Emowverha (2005):

    11a. ìklasì   */ìkla:sì/*   *'class'*
    b. *ìglasì*   */ìgla:sì/*   *'glass'*
    c. ìwisikì   /ìwisikì/   'whiskey'
    d. *ìsìtovù*   */ìsìtovù/*   *'stove'*
    e. **ìbàskɛtì*   */ìbàskɛtì/*   *'basket'*

f.   *ìstriìtì   /ìstriitì/   'street'
g.   *ìstrɔgì   /ìstrɔngì/ [ìstrɔ̃gì]   'strong'

The Universal syllable constraint of sonority (Universal sonority sequencing principle) explains that in a cluster string of $C_1 C_2$, C_2 will be added to the onset, if only it is more sonorous than C_1 (Roca 1994). We see that in 11(c) and (d), the clusters 'sk' and 'st' were broken up and the epenthetic /i/ vowel is inserted. However, in 11(a) and (b), we see that the clusters 'kl' and 'gl' were retained. This can be explained both on the basis that the obstruent-liquid cluster can be permissible in onset positions in the Urhobo language (though not previously reported in native words in Urhobo but since /l and /r/ occur in free variation, the study believes that it is permissible). And that /l/ is more sonorous than /k/ and /g/, so such cluster is permissible. On the contrary, for (e), (f) and (g), to retain the clusters 'sk' and 'str'in the Urhobo loan word, voilates the sonority priniple and the no coda phonotactics. For example 11(e), /s/ and /k/ cannot be the onset of the third syllable nor can /s/ be the coda of the second syllable; going by the established principles. The same goes for 11(f) and (g), /s/ and /t/ onset cluster; though the /r/ segment included in the cluster can be accounted for. So, it becomes unclear why such pronunciation is represented in Emowverha (2005) and why the native speakers confirmed such output.

4.4. Phonological substitution

This is a very common phonological outcome of language contact situation. Substitution is a phonological phenomenon whereby a sound replaces another one when two or more languages come in contact. This implies that bilinguals and multilinguals usually employ this phonological feature when they pronounce sound(s) that they are not familiar with or sounds that are absent in their phoneme inventory. We identify and analyze few patterns of substitution found in the English loan words presented here:

12.   English   Urhobo
  a. *Motor*   /məʊtəʳ/   ìmotò   /ìmotò/
  b. *Powder*   /paʊdəʳ/   ìpọdà   /ìpɔdà/
  c. *Photo*   /fəʊtəʊ/   ìfòto   /ìfòto/
  d. *Radio*   /reɪdiəʊ/   ìrediò   /ìredjò/
  e. *Teacher*   /tiʧəʳ/   ìtishà   /ìtiʃà/
  f. *Lawyer*   /lɔjəʳ/   ìlọyà   /ìlɔjà/
  g. *Butter*   /bʌtəʳ/   ìbọtà   /ìbɔtà/
  h. *Knickers*   /nikəʳ/   ìnikà   /ìnikà/

i.	Coat	/kəʊt/	ìkootù	/ìko:tù/
j.	Sandal	/sændal/	ìsadàsì	/ìsáadàsì/
k.	Table	/teɪbl/	ìtebòrò	/ ìtebòrò/
l.	Clerk	/klɜk/	ìkrákì	/ìkɾakì/ ìklakì/
m.	Cake	/keɪk/	ìkekì	/ìkekì/
n.	Church	/ʧɜʧ/	ìshọọshì	/ìʃɔ:ʃì/
o.	Bible	/baɪbᵊl/	ìbaìbùlù	/ìbaìbùlù/
p.	(Reverend) Father /fæðəʳ/	ìfààda	/ìfà:da/	
q.	Choir	/kwaɪəʳ/	ìkwayà	/ìkwayà/
r.	Television	/tɛlɪvɪʒᵊn/	ìténivishọ̀nì	/ìtɛnìviʃɔ̀nì/
s.	Bicycle	/baɪsɪkl/	ìbáasikòrò	/ìbasikòrò/
t.	Register	/rɛʤɪstəʳ/	ìrhẹjistà	/ìɾɛʤistà/
u.	Trouser	/traʊzəʳ/	ìtrọsà	/ìtrɔsà/ìtrɔzà/
v.	Hospital	/hɔspitᵊl/	ọsìpitọ̀	/ɔsìpitɔ̀/
w.	Kerosene	/kɛrəsin/	ìkrààsi	/ìkrà:si/
x.	Pineapple	/paɪnæpl/	ìpànapòrò	/ìpànapòrò/
y.	Mortuary	/mɔtjʊtrɪ/	ìmọshùarhì	/ìmɔʃùaɾì/
z.	Nurse	/nɜs/	ìnọsì	/ìnɔsì/
aa.	Maggi (seasoning) /mægɪ/	ìmaagí	/ìma:gí/	
bb.	Tomatoe	/təmatəʊ/	ìtòmatòsì	/ìtòmatòsì/
cc.	Pastor	/pastəʳ/	ìpasitọ̀ọ̀	/ìpasitɔ̀ɔ̀/
dd.	Catechist	/kætkɪst/	ìkatìsì	/ìkatìsì/
ee.	Brother	/brɔðəʳ/	ìbrọ̀dá	/ìbrɔ̀da/

The data above shows clearly instances where the segments of English are substituted wherever a native speaker of Urhobo is posed with the challenge of producing segments in English that are not in his/her sound inventory. Therefore, there is a replacement of English sounds with Urhobo sounds that share similar features with the segments from the source language. Below are the various patterns of substitution of the loan words presented in example (12) above.

   English sounds substituted with Urhobo sounds

           13. Vowels

                a. /əʊ/   ~   /o/
                b. /aʊ/   ~   /ɔ/

c.	/eɪ/	~	/e/
d.	/ə/	~	/a/
e.	/ʌ/	~	/ɔ/
f.	/ə/	~	/o/
g.	/æ/	~	/a/
h.	/ɜ/	~	/a/
i.	/ɜ/	~	/ɔ/
j.	/ə/	~	/u/
k.	/aɪə/	~	/a/
l.	/ə/	~	/ɔ/
m.	/ə/	~	/o/

Some diphthongs (and triphthongs) are monophthongized; which are obvious cases of them being simplified. This agrees with Utulu (2019). These kinds of substitutions are mostly observed in vowels with only a few instances in consonants:

14.   Consonants

a.	/t/j/	~	/ʃ/
b.	/l/	~	/n/
c.	/z/	~	/s/
d.	/ʧ/	~	/ʃ/
e.	/ð/	~	/d/

From the above examples, we can see that the English segments at the leftmost side are substituted with the Urhobo sounds at the rightmost side for ease of pronunciation. A native speaker of Urhobo can naturally produce loan words which have similar sounds in his/her phoneme inventory, like the examples of Yoruba loan words. But may find it difficult (at varying degrees) to produce loan words with sounds that are different from those in their sound inventory. Therefore, what typically happens is that these segments are substituted based on euphony or preference for some phonetic plausibility for vowels (sharing particular features) and place features for consonants. This agrees with Aziza and Utulu (2006). Although generally, a low vowel like /a/ is "phonologically placeless, is the most sonorous vowel and is phonetically and perceptually more salient" in comparison to other vowels (Rose and Demuth 2006:1134). So it does not rely on any place features to epenthesize itself in loan words.

4.5. Free variation

In Urhobo segments like /l/ or /r/ can be interchanged with no significant bearing on the mening of those lexical items. This exemplifies free variation process. For example:

15 a.   /teɪbl/ -   /ìtebòɾò/ *or* /ìtebòlò/   *'table'*
    b.   /klɜk/ -   /ìkɾakì/ *or* /ìklakì/   *'clerk'*
    c.   /skul/-   /ìsìkuru/ *or* /ìsìkulu/   *'school*
    d.   /kændl/ - /ìkandòɾò/ *or* /ìkandòlò/   'candle'
    e.   /kɛtl/ -   /ìkɛtòrò/ or /ìkɛtòlò/   'kettle'

4.6. Deletion

This is a situation whereby loan words from English lose a segment as it is adapted into Urhobo. This is like another repair strategy that languages employ while resyllabifying loan words to meet the syllable structure requirements of the host language. Examples include:

16 a. /kætkɪst/ - /ìkátìsì/ *'catechist'*, /k/ and final /t/ is deleted.
    b.   /skul/- /ìskuu/ *'school'*, the final /l/ is deleted.
    c.   /hɔspitᵊl/ - /ɔsìpitò/ *'hospital'*, the final /l/ and initial /h/ is deleted
    d.   /mɔtjʊtrɪ/ - /ìmɔ́ʃùáɹ̀ì/ *'mortuary'*, /t/ and /j/ are deleted and replaced with /ʃ/.
    e.   /ɪŋk/ - /íki/ *'ink'* /ŋ/ is deleted.
    f.   /kɛrəsin/ - /ìkrà:sí/ *'kerosene'* /ɛ/ *and final* /n/ are deleted.
    g.   /mɪnᵊrᵊl/ /ìminirà/ 'mineral' (used to refer to soda or fizzy drinks). Here, the final /l/ is deleted.
    h.   /kɛmɪst/ - /ìkɛmísì/ 'chemist' the final /t/ is deleted.

Where this loss takes place at word final position it is referred to as apocope, if in other contexts, it is called syncope.

4.7. Possible implications of these adaptations for language change

In retrospect, this study assumes that Urhobo is and will always be in constant contact with Yoruba (because of shared geographical location and cultural values) and English (because it is the lingua franca in the environment). As a result of globalisation and technological advancement, language change becomes inevitable. We saw in the foregone discussions (example 11), that Urhobo permits consonant clusters which are not consistent with its phonotactics and some other Nigerian languages within the Niger-Congo language family. It brings up the question: is there any possibility that these 'deviant' clusters came about as a result of contact with other languages? We also noted earlier that some of these loan words have their indigenous equivalents which native speakers have abandoned in favour of their loan counterparts such that presently, an average Urhobo native speaker finds it difficult to give or use the native words for these loan words. As long as Urhobo native speakers (especially, the younger generation) continue to be less motivated to preserve the intergrity of their mother tongue and use English and Yoruba over Urhobo, Urhobo will be prone to influences from these languages and eventually a major language convergence or change may occur. In other words, when Urhobo speakers replace their native lexicon and structure through extensive borrowing from the dominant language (to which they are shifting); or abandon native lexicon and structure without any replacements, language shift and attrition is bound to happen which gives credence to Roelle's (2013:282) assertion that Urhobo is 'highly endangered'.

5. Conclusion

No language can be said to have fully developed to the extent that new words are no longer needed. Social interaction within and across speech communities lead to diffusion of linguistic and other cultural practices. Hence, in order to understand the outcomes of language contact, we have to look at all that pertains to the speech of the communities in contact, and the dynamics of their patterns of interaction. Borrowing or loaning is one of the many ways in which the lexicon or vocabulary of a language can grow and develop. The resulting outcomes discussed in this paper are not exhaustive but are a few instances of phonological influences on Urhobo language as a result of its contact with Yoruba and particularly English language; the language of cross-cultural communication in Nigeria and many other countries of the world. This impact is made possible because of other underlying social and cultural development in the lives of the Urhobo people. We also

see in many of the instances in the paper that the English loan words are adapted to fit into the phonotactics of Urhobo, which have prompted some phonological changes in Urhobo (as we see in examples 11e, f and g). But in contrast, almost all the phonological features of the Yoruba loan words are maintained. It is not news that some triggers of linguistic borrowing (despite its ability to enrich vocabulary) have some underlying demerits. Sometimes, it is emphasized by the need to adapt foreign cultures and technologies, the need for speakers to align themselves with a more dominant language either for political or social reasons or because of the fact that they share close boundaries (as we see with Yoruba), which may ultimatelty lead to language change, shift, attrition or even death. Notwithstanding, borrowing, adaptation of loan words and development of meta language for loan words should be encouraged in the Urhobo language. Therefore, we commend the efforts of the Urhobo Studies Association (USA) and Delta State University in collaboration with Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) who have picked up the pace in ensuring a uniform curriculum development of the Urhobo language for teaching primary 1 to JSS 3. We recommend that more native and non-native Urhobo linguists, language stakeholders and government put hands together to take the bull by the horn as we develop better metalanguage for expressing loan words and make more efficient strides to document Urhobo and other indigenous Nigerian languages.

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