Phonological integration of German loanwords in Cameroonian Fàŋ-Bətí languages: the case study of Èwòndò.

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Abstract:

Basically, this study is geared towards the phonological description of the nouns the Fàŋ-Bətí languages borrowed from the German language, specifically in Èwòndò and Búlù. During the analysis, references would be made to other formal linguistic aspects of these loanword, e.g., the semantic, and morphological aspects, only where necessary. One of the methodologies will be to analyse phonological processes that occurs when loanwords are integrated in Èwòndò and Búlù.

Keywords: German, loanwords, language contact, contact linguistics and loanwords.

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1. Introduction

The German loanwords are one of the features found in various languages in the German formal colonial countries of Africa. The acquisition of these can be justified by variant degrees of language contacts. And when two or many languages come into contact, loanwords are the most attested language phenomenon (Phubon, 2022:1). A considerable number of Cameroonian languages integrated German loanwords during the colonial period (Engelberg 2006, 2008; Stolberg 2015). This was the case of Èwòndò, a Bantu language of Cameroon. This paper thus examines the contributions of German to the Èwòndò lexicon, and the adaptation of the borrowed words to actual structures of this indigenous Cameroonian language. Since each language has its own phonological rules, the adaptation is required to conformed to the host language. (Beel & Felder, 2013 and Phubon 2022).

2. Background information

2.1 Loanwords

Before analysing the phonological adaptation of German loanwords in Èwòndò, it would be preferable to define what a loanword is. In nutshell, loanwords can be defined as *"words that are borrowed from one language to another."* This means a word that is transferred from a donor language to a recipient language (Thomason & Kaufman 1988:37). Therefore, we can say that the borrowing of words is the result of contact between different people, cultures and languages. And the donor language must be conformed to the grammar of the recipient language.

2.2 Generalities on Èwòndò

According to Guthrie (1967, 1971), Èwòndò is classified as a Niger Kordofanian (Niger-Congo), 70 Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Bantu, Yaoundé-Fang (A70). Èwòndò, also known as Kòlò, is spoken in Cameroon by approximatively half Millions of people (Biloa, 1996:1). It is spoken mainly in the Central, South and East regions of Cameroon. As widespread characteristics of Bantu languages, Èwòndò is a tonal language. Èwòndò has 23 consonants and 8 vowels, which can be phonetically presented as follow:

A. Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Close-mid	e		o
Open-mid	ɛ	ə	ɔ
Open		a	

B. Consonants

		Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labio-velar	Glottal
Plosive	**Voiceless**	p	t		k	kp	
	Voiced	b	d		g	gb	
Affricate	**Voiceless**		ts				
	Voiced		dz				h
Fricative	**Voiceless**	f	s				
	Voiced	v	z				
Nasal		m	n	ɲ	ŋ		
Lateral			l				
Rhotic			r				
Approximant				j		w	

Sources: Atenke und Onguene, 2017

3. Theoretical framework

This work is based on the language contact's theory. According to Thomason (2001, 1) *„language contact is the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time. Language does not require fluent bilingualism or multilingualism; but there is a need for some form of communication between speakers of different languages. "And* language contact happens at language borders or as results of migration with one language acting as a superstratum. As result of each language contact it occurs the exchange of borrowing of words. From this we can say that we cannot examine the loanwords phenomenon without referring to the language contact theory.

4. Methodology

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I proceed as follows: After collecting data from natural discussions with native speakers of Èwòndò and in some books, bible translations and dictionaries written in Èwòndò, I recorded its into my computer for transcription and analyses.

5. Data presentation

We have a wordlist of 90 words:

N°	Deutsch	Èwòndò
1	Ablas	àblás
2	Advent	àdven
3	Afrika	àfríkà
4	Ägypten	égítɛ̀n
5	Almosen	aləmósen
6	Altar	álàtàr
7	Apfel	àfélé
8	April	apríl
9	Apostel	àpostəl
10	Artikel	artikəl
11	Bahnhof	bànɔk
12	Bibel	bíbɛ̀l
13	Bier	bíá
14	Bis bald	biá bálà
15	Bischof	bísɔb
16	Brot	bɛ̀lɛ́d
17	Bruder (religiös)	búlàdà
18	Christen	krístɛn
19	Dachziegel	tàŋsigɛ̀l
20	Degen	dégè
21	Diakon	dìàkɔn
22	Doktrin (religiös)	dɔ̀ktən
23	Eden	ìdən
24	Engel	ɛŋglɛ̀s
25	Epistel	épístolè
26	Esel	ɔ̀zəlé
27	Evangelisten	evàngelisten
28	Evangelium	éfàŋgelìum
29	Februar	febrùar
30	Fieber	fíbà
31	Firmung	éfiramug
32	Foto	fódà
33	Gold	gɔ̀lt
34	Griffel	grífən
35	Hades	Hàdés

36	Hammer	háman
37	Heiden	hédən
38	Ja	yá
39	Januar	yánùar
40	Jehova	yéóvà
41	Jesus	yésʋ̀s
42	Jordan	yórdàn
43	Josef	yɔsɛ̀b
44	Josua	yòsúà
45	Juda	yúdà
46	Judäa	yúdéà
47	Jude(n)	yúdən
48	Juli	yùlì
49	Juni	yùnì
50	Kaiser	kɛ́sà
51	Kakao	kəkà
52	Kamel	kàmələ
53	Kamerun	kámərún
54	Kapitel	Kápítəl
55	Kelle	Kəlà
56	Kilogramm	kílà
57	Kilometer	Kílòmédà
58	Kreuz	klòs
59	Leiter	ládà
60	Liter	lídà
61	Maria	mária
62	Markt	mákíd
63	Mauerer	màwàd
64	Meister	másà
65	Meter	mɛ́dà
66	Milch	mílíg
67	Minute	ìnútɛn
68	Mitschüler	míɛsúkʋlʋ̀
69	Mittwoch	mìlívɔk
70	Mose	mózəs
71	Papst	páps
72	Pastor	Pàstoà
73	Pfarrer	fádà
74	Pfennig	féníg

75	Pharao	Fáràó
76	Psalm	psálmɛ̀n
77	Sakrament	Sákràmen
78	Satz	sás
79	Schule	súkúlɔ̀/ síkúlù
80	September	səptembà
81	Silber	Sílbà
82	Steuer	tóyà
83	Tafel	táfəlé
84	Tempel	tɛ́mpəl
85	Ticket	tikɛ̀d
86	Tinte	tíɲtɛ̀
87	Wache	vǎ
88	Zange	tsáŋa
89	Zigarette	sígà
90	Zwölf	tólób

6. Adaptation processes

An adaptation process is a method that a language uses to adapt a loanword from its original native phonology to a secondary language phonological system ((Beel & Felder, 2013). To adapt a loanword from German to its phonological system, Èwòndò uses the following ways: the vowel reduction, epenthesis, cluster reduction, final consonant reduction, devoicing and substitution.

6.1 Vowel reduction

Phonologically it is any of various changes in the acoustic quality of vowels because of changes in stress, sonority, duration, loudness, articulation, or position in the word.

Ablas	Ablás
Advent	Advent
Afrika	Afríkà
Ägypten	Ègítɛ̀n
Altar	Álàtàr
Apostel	Àpostəl
April	Apríl
Artikel	Artikəl
Bibel	Bíbɛ̀l
Diakon	Dìàkɔn
Ja	Yá
Januar	Yánùar
Jehova	Yéóvà

Jesus	Yésùs
Jordan	Yórdàn
Josua	Yòsúà
Juda	Yúdà
Judäa	Yúdéà
Jude(n)	Yúdən
Juli	Yùlì
Juni	Yùnì
Kamerun	Kámərún
Kapitel	Kápítəl
Maria	Máría

From the above examples we can see that these words match to the phonotactic of the recipient language. The only changes occur at the level of the pronunciation. Just vowels change.

6.2 Consonant changes

We can discover that some consonants change while borrowing from German to Èwòndò.

Bahnhof	bànɔ̀k
Bier	bíá
Bis bald	biá bálà
Bischof	bísɔ̀b
Kilometer	Kílòmédà
Kreuz	klòs
Leiter	ládà
Liter	lídà
Pfarrer	fádà
Gold	gòlt

6.3 Cluster simplification

Since Èwòndò language don't have and allows some clusters, some vowels are inserted to facilitate the pronunciation of borrowing word.

Almosen	aləmósen
Altar	álàtàr
Apfel	àfélé
Brot	bèlέd
Bruder (religiös)	búlàdà
Engel	ɛŋglὲs
Epistel	épístolè
Esel	ɔ̀zəlé
Kamel	kàmələ

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Psalm	psálmɛn
Mitschüler	míɛ̀súkʋ̀lʋ̀
Mittwoch	mìlívɔ̀k
Schule	súkúlʋ̀/ síkúlʋ̀
Tafel	táfəlé
Zwölf	tólób

6.4 Sound deletion

It is a way to omit a particular sound while borrowing a word.

Degen	dégè
Steuer	tóyà
Kilogramm	kílà
Zigarette	sígà
Minute	ìnútɛn
Apfel	àfélé
Pfarrer	fádà
Pfennig	féníg

6.5 Vowel substitution

According to Kangwa (2017, 30), vowel substitution is a general tendency to preserve sounds from deletion and it tries to reshape the word closer to the input form, but at the same time because some sound combinations are not allowed in the recipient language, they undergo certain adaptations. In substitution, an item is replaced to the phonetically close phonemes in the recipient language.

Epistel	épístolè
Heiden	hédən
Kelle	Kəlà
Kilogramm	kílà
Meister	másà

6.6 Syllable substitution

It is the adaption process that a language uses by substituting one phoneme (speech sound) with another more familiar phoneme.

Dachziegel	tàŋsigɛl
Mitschüler	míɛ̀súkʋ̀lʋ̀

6.7 Sound or Syllable insertion

It is a way of adding a new sound to the loanwords that dos does not exist in the donor language.

Firmung	éfiramug
Esel	òzəlé
Kamel	kàmələ

From the above data analysis, we can say that Èwòndò has adapted many words from German. A number part of these loanwords from German contains sounds which does not exist in the donor language. These sounds have been replaced by sound that like those in recipient language. From the above analysis, it results the followings phonological changes:

1. Vowel reduction /ɔ:, a:, i:, e/ to /o, ə, i, a/ or   /ai, au, ɔi/ to /a, e, o, ə/

2.   Epenthesis, which is the insertion of an extra sound into a word to facilitate the pronunciation of this. E.g. àfélé, táfəlé

3. consonant changes, E.g. klòs, ládà, lídà

4. Sound insertion, E.g. éfiramug, òzəlé

5. Vowel harmony: épístolè, òzəlé kàmələ.

6. Consonant fortition/strengthening : A consonantal change that increases the degree of stricture. E.g., Meister becomes másà.

6. Final Consonant deletion: The final consonants of almost all the words are not pronounced. This process, also known as elision, is used to ease the pronunciation of words E.g., Sakrament becomes Sákràmen; Advent becomes àdven

7. Devoicing: /d/ becomes /t/ E.g Gold becomes gòlt

7. Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that loanwords must be altered to fit the rules of the receiving language. The phonological analysis of German loanwords in Èwòndò permit us to see that Èwòndò language reshapes German loanwords to the closest available sound in its phonological system. As German loanwords are adopted into the Èwòndò vocabulary, phonological adjustments must be made to compensate for the German phones that are foreign to the native speaker of Èwòndò.

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