

Phonological Outcomes of Yoruba and English Contact on Urhobo Loanwords

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 results in such contact situation amongst Yoruba, English and Urhobo in Urhobo speech communities of Delta State and also examines the possible implications of these adaptations for language change. Since phonological change is almost a universal characteristic of languages which 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 loanwords. Data is elicited from conversations with six language consultants. Also, selected participants are prompted to produce established loanwords to evaluate how they are adapted into the structure of Urhobo. Findings suggest that phonological features like epenthesis, tone polarisation, some phonotactic constraints, phonological substitution, free variation and deletion are observed as these loanwords from English are adapted to suit the phonological structure of Urhobo. In contrast, the loanwords from Yoruba are assimilated into Urhobo just the way they are used in the source language.

Keywords: Contact Linguistics, Phonological change, Loanwords, Language change, Urhobo (Nigeria).

1. Introduction

The study examines the various phonological outcomes of borrowing from Yoruba and English on Urhobo. People from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds converge at a particular place to interact for one reason or the other, 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 and can occur both directly or indirectly. Socially and historically, oriented works done

Commented [A1]: The sentence is too long. Please, break it up.

Commented [A2]: Why 'almost'? Is there any human language in which phonological change is not observed?

Commented [A3]: Are these 'participants' different from the 'consultants' in the preceding line? Please, be consistent.

Commented [A4]: Why "prompted"?

Commented [A5]: Findings don't suggest, but they are show

Commented [A6]: assimilated

Commented [A7]: what does this expression mean? Do you mean words borrowed/loaned from Yoruba do not undergo those phonological phenomena English source words undergo? This has to be clearly stated.

Commented [A8]: This

Commented [A9]: I think you need to rephrase this statement as: This study examines some phonological outcomes observed when Yoruba and English source words are borrowed in Urhobo.

Commented [A10]: another

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Commented [A12]: What does the expression mean?

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). 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 others before it) 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.

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Hausa as well as 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 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 side of the coin, 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 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 teaching/learning 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.

Commented [A15]: Avoid such expression in such domain of academic writing. You can instead simply say, on the other hand, there are numerous...

Commented [A16]: But you didn’t indicate that the so-called majority languages are languages of education; you only indicated that they are lingua francas.

Commented [A17]: Avoid repetitions

Commented [A18]: Why not medium of instruction?

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 (see section two for brief details). 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 (see Dawulung 1999; Kuju 1999; Schaefer & Egbokhare 1999; Haruna 2003, Nwaozuzu, Agbedo and Ugwuona 2013; Obiegbu 2016).

Commented [A19]: Can you name some of them?

Urhobo is a South Western Edoid language of the Niger-Congo family, spoken in Delta State, Nigeria, with approximately 2,000,000 million speakers (Elugbe 1989). Their neighbours are the Isoko to the East, the Itsekiri and Ijaw to the West, Edo and Bini 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, Avwra, Eghwu, Ewvereni, Ephro-oto, Idjeihe, Oghara, Ogor, Okere, Okparabe, Okpe, Olomu, Orogun, Udu among others. Aziza (2007: 273) reports that "Urhobo has fifteen mutually intelligible dialects." She further argues that the Urhobo sound system comprises 28 consonants /p, b, t, d, c, j, k, g, kp, gb, f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, y, h/x, m, n, ŋ, r, ɾ, v, j, w/, 7 oral vowels /i, e, ε, a, o, ɔ, u/ and 7 phonetically-conditioned nasal vowels /ĩ, ĕ, ê, â, ô, ã, û/. Urhobo is also a tonal language with a CV syllable structure (Aziza, 2007). Urhobo attests three tone-high, low and down-stepped high tone. Again, a few recent studies in the area of curriculum development have been carried out in the Urhobo language for Primary 1 to JSS 3 by the Urhobo Studies Association and Delta State University in collaboration with Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC).

Commented [A20]: Are there recent studies that give updated population figures? This is over two decades ago....

Commented [A21]: .

Commented [A22]: .

Commented [A23]: Do you consider downstepped a toneme or an allotone?

Commented [A24]: How does this statement relate to your study?

There have also been a number of related studies carried out on Nigerian endangered languages with reference made to Urhobo like: Onose (2009), Tonukari, Ejobee, Aleh and Orjinta (2014), Mowarin (2014) and Oduaran (2017) among others. In the light of these studies, it is still obvious that the present study is one of the very few attempts to investigate the adaptation of loanwords from Yoruba and English into Urhobo and the possible implication for language change. This study is significant in the areas of Urhobo language studies, Nigerian English and Pidgin studies in contact with Nigerian indigenous languages. It is also relevant in areas like Sociolinguistics, Urhobo cultural studies, language change, language attrition, and above all documentation of Urhobo and by extension, other Nigerian languages. As earlier stated, this study attempts to discuss the various phonological outcomes of borrowing from Yoruba and English on Urhobo.

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2. Review of related literature

A few concepts and empirical studies relevant in the study of this nature is briefly highlighted here.

Contact Linguistics

Contact Linguistics is the branch of linguistics that pays attention to the grammatical structures between two or more languages looking at the speech of bilingual speakers (Myers-Scotton 2002: 5). According to Myers-Scotton, contact linguistics usually yields the following linguistic outcomes or what she calls "contact phenomena": lexical borrowing, convergence, attrition, mixed languages, creole formation, and codeswitching. On the contrary, Winford (2003: 9) observes that contact linguistics is not only concerned with grammatical structures but is an interdisciplinary field of research which "employs an eclectic methodology that draws on various approaches, including the comparative historical method, and various areas of sociolinguistics". Winford believes that, it is this interdisciplinary approach that defines contact linguistics and gives it its strength. He further explains that 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. (p. 5, 11). From the foregoing definitions, this study deduces that contact linguistics focuses on the different structures or nature of influences that emerges from the

different contact relationships that languages in contact share; such structures may be phonological, grammatical or in have sociocultural implications.

Language Contact

Language contact occurs when speakers of two or more languages or varieties interact and influence each other. Matras (2009: i), describes language contact as a situation that occurs when speakers of different languages interact and their languages influence each other. According him, the high rate of languages coming in contact is traced to the multilingual nature of most societies in the world today. That is, language contact is one of the direct consequences of multilingualism. For Muhvić-Dimanovski (2005: 1), language contact arose since “philologists became aware of the fact that there is no language which would be free of foreign elements and that languages influence one another on different levels”. She simultaenously uses the term language contact and linguistic borrowing explaining that language contact usually triggers drastic change in the phonological, morphological and semantic structures of the languages in questions. According to her, languages adjust their structure in contact situations due to borrowing from each other. Muysken (2013: 711) observes that some social factor constraints on the language processing system affects the degree to which languages resemble themselves in lexicon, morpho-syntax, semantics/pragmatics and phonology and also determines or limits the outcomes of language contact. In order words, cognition, linguistic phenomenon and social factors have a direct impact on contact-induced change(s) that occur in languages. On this premise, it is then safe to say that language contact remains one of the chief contributors to language change.

Phonological Change

Sankoff (2001: 642) observes that the linguistic outcomes of language contact are usually in terms of four major domains- the phonetic/phonological level, the lexical level morphological trapping/syntactic change level and semantic and pragmatic consequences. The phonological and lexical level according to him, constitute the major “gateways” to all of the other aspects of contact-influenced change. He claims that, when a common second language is learned and used by a group of people - whether immigrants or by virtue of the introduction of a new language to a resident population, they often find themselves introducing second-

language lexical items into conversations with fellow bilinguals in their original first language, such items were referred to as nonce borrowings in Weinreich (1968: 47). Sankoff affirms that, nonce borrowings are usually the path through which these lexical items become accepted or assimilated as loan-words in the immigrant or minority language. Along with the adoption of these loan words comes a level of changes/ alterations/adjustments in the phonology of the recipient language. Such alterations may include processes that apply only to foreign-origin vocabulary, but may also spread to native vocabulary. He further adds that phonological change is also almost a universal characteristic of adult L2 speakers, because of what he calls “substratum potential” which can constitute an important segment of the speech community and have a very strong influence in bringing about phonological changes that can have far reaching influences in morphology and syntax and semantic as well (p. 643). The phonological outcomes of the linguistic contact of English and Yoruba on Urhobo is primarily the focus of this work.

Loanwords

According to Hoffer (2005: 1), loanwords are one of the most “easily observable results of intercultural contact”. To improve the vocabulary of a language and for communication purposes, loanwords are usually imported into languages. Hoffer illustrates that in the study of language borrowing, loanwords are borrowings that occur across language boundaries. According to him, loanwords occur when speakers adopt the item or idea and the source language word for each as they are confronted with new items and ideas in another language. For Haspelmath (2009: 36), loanword is regarded as lexical borrowing. He further defines loanword as “a word that at some point in the history of a language entered its lexicon as a result of borrowing (or transfer, or copying)”. Nordquist (2019: 1) explains that in linguistics, borrowing (also known as lexical borrowing) is the process by which a word from one language is adapted for use in another. The word that is borrowed is called a borrowing, a borrowed word, or a loanword. This study therefore agrees with Hoffer’s and Nordquist’s definitions that languages in contact situations often borrow or loan (the two words can be used interchangeably) lexical items when they are confronted with new ideas and cultures or when the need for communication arises.

Empirical studies

Siemund (2008) examines language contact, constraints and common paths of contact induced change. The study aims at analysing language contact from different perspectives, notably those of language typology, diachronic linguistics, language acquisition and translation studies and to describe, explain and elaborate on universal constraints on language contact. The findings reveal the systematic comparisons of a wealth of contact situations. Another finding is that speakers perceive something in the contact language that they feel is missing in their own language. For instance, language A lacks what language B has and speakers replicate items to compensate for the perceived gap. The paper contributes to deepening our understanding of contact-induced language change. Siemund's study is similar to the current study as both look at language contact but differs on the basis that the current study emphasizes the phonological consequences of English and Yoruba influence on Urhobo loanwords.

Ariyati (2014) analyses English loan and borrow words used by information and technology writers in thesis abstracts. The objective of the study is to explain words in relation to linguistics, particularly loan words such as definitions of loanwords, patterns of borrowing and reasons for borrowing. Questionnaire was used to gather data for analysis. The study reveals six patterns of English loanwords. They are total borrowing, partial borrowing, total modification, borrowing with modified meaning, partial phrase borrowing and newly created words based on loanwords. The finding shows that out of the six patterns of borrowing identified, only three types are used by IT people. The three types include total, partial and EYD. The total borrowing has been popularly used by IT Aronin people, reason is because IT people are more familiar with English words and the English words are easier to understand as the language has been used as an international language. The paper concludes by recommending further research on borrowed words and if collaborated with other similar work, which helps the information of new dictionary of IT based on the current glossary produced by the ministry of national education and involve not only the IT people but also linguist in Indonesia and English to give broader and better perspective in the lexicography development. Ariyati's study is similar to the current study as both look at loanwords. The difference lies in the fact that Ariyati's study focuses on English

Commented [A26]: I think the author(s) should rather go ahead actually discuss relevant 'related' literature, which mean literature related to your study. By so doing, the readers can clearly establish the gap created for your study to potentially fill to be able to facilitate our understanding of the concept.

Commented [A27]: I suppose you mean 'borrowed'

Commented [A28]: What is the meaning of IT?

Commented [A29]: What does this mean?

Commented [A30]: English is easier to be understood by who? Check the entire construction again for clarity.

Commented [A31]: Detailed information about the paper including the method is irrelevant to your paper. Do you identify a gap in the methods the author used?

Commented [A32]: These look quite lousy statements. I am still wondering how relevant all these information are to your study.

while the current study looks at the phonological outcomes of English and Yoruba loanwords on Urhobo.

Ugot (2013) examines the phenomenon of lexical enrichment in the Agwagune language, which was brought about by contact with other languages and the need to develop new vocabulary from other language sources, compounding, hybridization, collocation and so on. Findings reveal codeswitching and codemixing as results of this language contact situation. The paper also discovers the relevance of borrowing from languages such as English, Efik, and Igbo through early contacts in these languages. The study also looks at other ways for enrichment such as collocations, metaphorical extensions, compounding and metonymy. Ugot's study focused on how language contact enriched lexical items/vocabulary in Agwagune which differs from the current study.

Commented [A33]: Enrichment of what?

Nnebedum, Onuora and Obiakor (2018) examine how languages borrow and evaluate the negative or positive implications to both languages. The study discusses the concept of linguistic borrowing and its importance to Igbo language vocabulary enrichment. The study reveals more negative implications attached to the donor language Igbo borrowed from while positive implications are more on the recipient language, reason because those borrowed words help in the enrichment of the recipient language vocabularies. The study concludes by recommending that linguistic borrowing be encouraged and adapted by every language community so as to enhance and expand vocabulary. Nnebedum, Onuora and Obiakor's study is similar in some respects, in that, they both look at borrowed words in Nigerian indigenous language(s), but clearly differs from the current study in other ways.

Commented [A34]: What is the import of this statement? Which language is the donor language? Why the negative implications?

From the review of literature above, it is obvious that many language contact scholars agree that the outcomes of language or dialect contact depend on both the linguistic relationship between the languages/varieties and the social conditions underlying the contact. This study emphasizes 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). The review has shown the justification for this study, as little or no work has been done on the phonological outcomes of English and Yoruba on Urhobo especially in the

Commented [A35]: If little has been done on English and Yoruba on Urhobo, then let the reader know how little it is.

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area of borrowing. This study delimits its scope to examining specifically the phonological outcomes of English and Yoruba on Urhobo using some selected loanwords.

3. Method

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach. 50 loanwords constitute data for this study and is elicited from primary and secondary sources. The primary source involves interview with six language consultants who are purposively selected; two monolinguals (only speak Urhobo), two bilinguals (one speaks Urhobo and English, one speaks Yoruba and Urhobo) and two multilinguals (who speak Urhobo, Yoruba and English). This will enable us get a distribution of native speakers who have and have not had contact with Yoruba and/or English in order to confirm the data collected. The bilingual and multilingual language consultants are asked to produce the established Urhobo loanwords elicited from extant literature (c. f. Onose 2009 and Aziza 2007); which constitutes the secondary source of data. During the interaction with the monolingual language consultants, they are made to produce the same set of Urhobo loanwords to evaluate how they are adapted into the structure of Urhobo and for comparison purposes with those of the bilinguals and multilinguals. The objective is to find out how these loanwords 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. The study finds out that all speakers produce these loanwords largely in the same way. Hence, the data in the table in the next section is a representation of their pronunciations. As a qualitative study, the elicited data are descriptively analysed in the following section.

4.1. Results

In this section, the data is presented and subsequently analysed. The following established loanwords that are used in the analysis are presented in Table 1 and 2 below:

Table 1: *Loanwords from Yoruba Language*

Commented [A37]: You need to report in the past tense.

Commented [A38]: I wonder if 50 examples are robust enough to make generalisation out of. Many how were primary and how many were secondary from the books?

Commented [A39]: So, how many data/examples did you get from each book?

Commented [A40]: If the stimuli are already Urhobo loanwords, what exactly did you want the monolinguals to do? If the stimuli or tokens were 'English' or Yoruba, in that case you were to find out how they are adapted in Urhobo....This needs clarity.

Commented [A41]: I think you don't need to talk about findings here.

	Yoruba	Urhobo	English
1	ẹwà /ɛwà/ (culled from Aziza 2007)	ẹwà /ɛwà/	Beans
2	àkpèrè /àkpèrè/ (Aziza 2007)	àkpèrè /àkpèrè/	Basket
3	àkàrà /àkàrà/ (Aziza 2007)	àkàrà /àkàrà/	Bean cake
4	ìyàwó /ìyàwó/ (Aziza 2007)	ìyàwó /ìyàwó/	Wife
5	òlópá /òlópá/	òlópá /òlópá/	Police

Commented [A42]: What is happening in Table 1? Any thing phonologically interesting? At both segmental and tonal levels, there don't seem to be contrast observed.

Table 2: Loanwords from English Language

	English	Urhobo
6.	Motor /məʊtə/	ìmótò /imótò/
7.	Powder /paʊdə/	ìpòdà /ipòdà/
8.	Bread /bred/	ibrédi /ibrédi/
9.	Photo /fəʊtəʊ/	ifòtò /ifòtò/
10.	Radio /reɪdiəʊ/	irédiò /irédjò/
11.	Teacher /ti:tʃə/	itíshà /itífà/
12.	Lawyer /lɔ:jə/	ilóyà /ilɔjà/
13.	Butter /batə/	ibótà /ibótà/
14.	Knicker /nikə/	inikà /inikà/
15.	Coat /kəʊt/	ikóótù /ikó:tù/
16.	Sandal /sændəl/	isádàsì /isádàsì/
17.	Fridge /frɪdʒ/	ifrijì /ifridʒi/
18.	Table /teɪbl/ (Aziza 2007)	itébùrù /itébùrù/ itébùlù/
19.	Clerk /klɜ:k/ (Aziza 2007)	ikrákì /ikrákì/ iklákì/
20.	Brother /brʌðə/ (Aziza 2007)	ibròdá /ibròdá/
21.	Bucket /bʌkɪt/ (Aziza 2007)	ibókètì /ibókètì/
22.	Earring /ɪərɪŋ/ (Aziza 2007)	iyérìní /ijérìní/
23.	Cake /keɪk/ (Aziza 2007)	ikéki /ikéki/
24.	School /skul/ (Aziza 2007)	isùkùrù /isùkùrù/ isùkùlù/
25.	Church /tʃɜ:ʃ/ (Onose 2009)	ishópòshì /ifɔ:ʃi/
26.	Bible /baɪbəl/ (Onose 2009)	ibáibùlù /ibáibùlù/
27.	(Reverend) Father /fæðə/ (Onose 2009)	ifàádá /ifà:dá/

28.	<i>Choir</i> /kwaɪə/ (Onose 2009)	ikwáyà /ikwáyà/
29.	<i>Television</i> /tɛlɪvɪʒən/ (Onose 2009)	iténívíshòni /iténívíʃni/
30.	<i>Bicycle</i> /baɪsɪkl/ (Onose 2009)	ibásìkòrò /ibásìkòrò/
31.	<i>Telephone</i> /tɛlɪfəʊn/ (Onose 2009)	itènífònù /itènífònù/
32.	<i>Motorcycle</i> /məʊtəˈsaɪkl/ (Onose 2009)	imàshínì /imàʃínì/
33.	<i>Register</i> /rɛdʒɪstə/ (Onose 2009)	irhéjístà /irédʒístà/
34.	<i>Ink</i> /ɪŋk/ (Onose 2009)	íkì /íkì/
35.	<i>Class</i> /klas/ (Onose 2009)	ìklàsì /ìklà:sì/
36.	<i>Trouser</i> /traʊzə/ (Onose 2009)	itròsà/itròzà /itròsà/itròzà/
37.	<i>Belt</i> /bɛlt/ (Onose 2009)	ibéélítì /ibé:lítì/
38.	<i>Hospital</i> /hɒspɪl/	òsípítò /òsípítò/
39.	<i>Kerosene</i> /kerəsin/ (Onose 2009)	ikrààsì /ikrà:sì/
40.	<i>Pineapple</i> /paɪnæpl/ (Onose 2009)	ipànapòrò /ipànapòrò/
41.	<i>Pawpaw</i> /pɒpɒ/ (Onose 2009)	ipópò /ipópò/
42.	<i>Mortuary</i> /mɔːtjʊəri/ (Onose 2009)	imòshuàrhì /imòʃuàrì/
43.	<i>Nurse</i> /nɜːs/ (Onose 2009)	inòsì /inòsì/
44.	<i>Court</i> /kɔːt/ (Onose 2009)	ikòtù /ikò:tù/
45.	<i>Maggi (seasoning)</i> /mægi/ (Onose 2009)	imààgì /imà:gì/
46.	<i>Tomatoe</i> /təmatəʊ/ (Onose 2009)	itòmátòsì /itòmátòsì/
47.	<i>Tea</i> /ti/ (Onose 2009)	itíí /ití:/
48.	<i>Pastor</i> /pastə/ (Onose 2009)	ipásítò /ipásítò/
49.	<i>Ball</i> /bɔːl/ (Onose 2009)	ibóólù /ibó:lù/
50.	<i>Catechist</i> /kætkɪst/	ikátìsì /ikátìsì/

Note that some of these loanwords 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 *itròsà* - *itawore* 'trousers'; *ibéélítì* - *ikpacha* 'belt'; *ishétì* - *énwù* 'shirt'; *imòtò* - *òkòrótò* 'motor/car', *iténívíshòni* - *èkpètìrùghé* 'television'; *irédìò* - *àgbòrò* 'radio'; *itìshà* - *òyòrò/òyònikwó* 'teacher'; *ishòpshì* -

ùwèwìrègá 'church'; - ijòjì - òbrórhié 'judge' - òkòrénu '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. This study is set to show what is witnessed in the day-to-day (natural) conversations of Urhobo native speakers.

4.2. Discussion of Findings

From table 1 and 2 above, we can observe some phonological features and patterns which are discussed below. The researchers left the mid tones in the tables above unmarked.

4.2.1 Epenthesis

Observing the set of loanwords from English in table 2, we can see that there is an epenthetical low, front, unrounded vowel /i/ which is usually inserted at word initial position. This is very typical in examples (5) - (50); except in (38) ósipitò /òsipitò/ 'hospital', unlike in table 1 where we see that in examples (1) - (4), the loaned words from Yoruba are assimilated into Urhobo just the way they are used in the source language except in (5) where we see a change in the tone of the final syllable from mid to high, as in òlópá /òlókpa/ (Yoruba); òlópá /òlókpa/ (Urhobo) 'police'. This could be because Yoruba shares some linguistic (syllable structure) and cultural affinities with Urhobo.

Another kind of insertion occurs at the word final position where /i/, /u/, /o/, /ɔ/ or /a/ is inserted. This kind of change in the adaptation of words from English into Urhobo is because it has to fit into the phonotactics of Urhobo. English operates closed and open syllable structures, whereas, Urhobo operates basically an open syllable structure. That is why in examples (8), (16), (17), (19), (21) - (23), (25), (29), (32), (34), (35), (37), (39), (42), (43), (45) - (47) and (50) there is a consistent insertion of /i/ at word final positions where in the source language there is a coda. The same process applies to examples (15), (18), (24), (26), (31), (44) and (49) where the high, back, rounded vowel /u/ is inserted at word final positions. For /o/ insertions, we can see them in examples (6), (9), (10), (30) and (40). For /ɔ/, examples (38), (41) and (48) illustrate it. While for /a/, we can see it clearly in

Commented [A43]: What does this statement intend to mean?

Commented [A44]: Where are the findings? We can only see lists of data, which rather qualifies for appendix. You need to speak to the data and tell the reader what is going on.

Commented [A45]: Simply say epenthetic

Commented [A46]: How possibly can /i/ be a low vowel? Please, check again.

Commented [A47]: Why is /i/ and not any other vowel is the choice for initial epenthesis?

Commented [A48]: I think there is no /i/ beginning example 5. Check again.

Commented [A49]: So, if there is no change, why should it warrant readers' attention?

Commented [A50]: In that case, how do you convince readers that those so-called loaned words from Yoruba are not actually cognate words between the two languages?

Commented [A51]: What phonological explanations do you provide for the choice of these vowels as the epenthetic vowels to avoid coda? What accounts for their choice?

Commented [A52]: You have to refer the reader back to your table on the previous page to be able to appreciate your discussions. You need to show data exclusively on initial insertion to back your discussion and do same to support your claim of final consonant epenthesis. Group the data according to which vowel feature that has been epenthetised.

examples (7), (11) – (14), (20), (27), (28), (33) and (36). Since there are no patterns in the alternations observed in the word final insertions, this study does not explain why these alternations of segments exist; though it could serve as an area for further studies.

4.2.2. Tonal features

Another phonological outcome observed in the loanwords in the two tables above is the tonal features. Tone is the relative pitch of a syllable resulting from the rate of vibration of the vocal cords. English as a language exploits pitch but not as Urhobo does, while English uses pitch as stress, Urhobo marks its pitch as tone. This is one of the phonological changes observed in the adaptation of loanwords from English to Urhobo. It can be observed that in table 1, the loanwords from Yoruba are adapted and both the segments and pitch on each of these segments are retained; save for (5). While in table 2, there is a consistency in the use of a low tone epenthetic high vowel at the initial positions of the words, as can be seen all through the words in table 2 (except for 38) and also the use of a tonal vowel at word final positions where they are inserted to make room for an open syllable structure, as in all the examples.

Another phonological feature observed is **tone polarisation**. This is a situation where the tones of adjacent syllables are in the opposites. From the loaned words from English, we can observe that where the tone is a low tone, the adjacent (second) syllable is usually a high tone; and where it does not apply in the second syllable, it applies in the following syllable (that is, the third syllable) as we can see in *ifòto* /ifòto/, *ibròda* /ibròda/ where the syllable next to the second syllable contrasts in tone (from low to mid) and in *isùkùrù* /isùkùrù/isùkùlù/ 'school'; *ifààdà* /ifà:dà/ 'father', *imàshini* /imà:fini/ 'motorcycle/machine'; *ikrààsì* /ikrà:si/ 'kerosene', *ipànápòrò* /ipànápòrò/ 'pineapple', *imààgì* /imà:gi/ 'maggi' and *itòmátòsì* /itòmátòsì/ 'tomatoes', where the third syllable contrasts from the first two syllables (from low to high).

4.2.3. Syllable structure

We have earlier said that Urhobo operates basically, an open syllable structure and that is the reason responsible for the /i/, /o/, /a/, /ɔ/ and /u/ insertions at word final positions where the loanword, is a closed syllable. Another point to note here is the use or retention of some consonant clusters especially in the onset.

Commented [A53]: Usually each borrowing language has its default epenthetic vowel. Readers would be interested to know why sometimes it /o/, while another time it is /a/. In what contexts are each of the vowels employed to occupy the epenthetic slots? This explanation crucial.

Commented [A54]: How is the adaptation done since there is neither segmental nor suprasegmental change? What was the basis of the adaptation?

Commented [A55]: What does this mean?

Commented [A56]: Why is it almost always Low tone beginning the so-called loaned words? How do stress patterns of source English interpret in Urhobo tone? Kenstowicz's similar work on English loans in Yoruba would be helpful here. How are stressed syllables realised in Urhobo?, etc.

Commented [A57]: You need to show examples here to illustrate your claim. You don't have to refer the reader to the previous pages.

Commented [A58]: Which situation? Do you mean phenomenon?

Commented [A59]: What triggers the adjacent syllable to bear contrastive tone? Is it coincidence or something triggers it?

Commented [A60]: What would you have expected? Are there things out of the norms? That is what phonology should be about! In the first place you didn't discuss tone patterns of Urhobo. Do you see LH on disyllables or what?

Commented [A61]: Be consistent in the use of terminology. Loaned word vs. Loanword vs. Borrowed word...

Let us look at examples (8), (17), (19), (20), (35), (36) and (39): *ibrédi* /ibrédi/ 'bread', *ifrídí* /ifrídí/ 'fridge', *ikráki* /ikráki/iklákí/ 'clerk', *ibròda* /ibròda/ 'brother', *iklási* /iklási/ 'class', *itròsà* /itròsà/ 'trouser' and *ikrààsí* /ikrà:si/ 'kerosene'. According to Aziza (1997), Urhobo's phonotactics permit consonant clusters in its onset and obviously these examples buttress that. Now, we do not know whether it is a result of language shift over time or is indeed an original feature in Urhobo phonology. Reason being that it is common to see in many Nigerian languages where borrowing occurs, that a vowel is either inserted to break up consonant clusters and/or at the beginning or end of the onset or coda to agree with the phonotactics of the language. But in the above examples in Urhobo, we see that such instances of words with consonant clusters borrowed from English are adapted into Urhobo maintaining the consonant clusters in the onset of these words, though what we observe as a pattern is that, this mostly occurs in onsets having this structure: C(r); Consonant and a voiced alveolar tap/flap.

Commented [A62]: Are Cr and Cl considered true clusters?

Commented [A63]: from

Commented [A64]: Let us know how the language treats proper clusters such as st, sk, str, etc.

4.2.4. 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 within an individual. 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 loanwords from English in table 2. For instance, examples (6), (7), (9) - (16), (18), (19), (21) - (23), (25) - (30), (33), (36), (38) - (40), (42), (43), (45), (46), (48) and (50) are represented here as table 3 below.

Commented [A65]: What does this mean?

Table 3: *Phonologically substituted loanwords from English*

English		Urhobo
<i>Motor</i>	/məʊtə/	<i>imótò</i> /imótò/
<i>Powder</i>	/paʊdə/	<i>ipódà</i> /ipódà/
<i>Photo</i>	/fəʊtəʊ/	<i>ifòto</i> /ifòto/
<i>Radio</i>	/reɪdiəʊ/	<i>irédiò</i> /irédjò/
<i>Teacher</i>	/ti:tʃə/	<i>itishà</i> /itíjā/
<i>Lawyer</i>	/lɔ:jə/	<i>ilóyà</i> /ilójā/
<i>Butter</i>	/bʌtə/	<i>ibótà</i> /ibótā/

Commented [A66]: The big question is, who speaks English with these diphthongs in Nigeria for the bi-and multilinguals to adapt them?

<i>Knickers</i> /nikəʃ/	inikà /inikà/
<i>Coat</i> /kəʊt/	ikóótù /ikó:tù/
<i>Sandal</i> /sændəl/	isádàsì /isádàsì/
<i>Table</i> /teɪbl/	itébùrù /itébùrù/ itébùlù/
<i>Clerk</i> /klɜ:k/	ikrákì /ikrákì/ iklákì/
<i>Cake</i> /keɪk/	ikéki /ikéki/
<i>Church</i> /tʃɜ:ʃ/	ishóóshì /ifɔ:ʃi/
<i>Bible</i> /baɪbəl/	ibáibùlù /ibáibùlù/
<i>(Reverend) Father</i> /fæðə/	ifàádá /ifà:dá/
<i>Choir</i> /kwaɪə/	ikwáyà /ikwáyà/
<i>Television</i> /telɪvɪʒən/	iténívíshòni /iténívíʃni/
<i>Bicycle</i> /baɪsɪkl/	ibásìkòrò /ibásìkòrò/
<i>Register</i> /redʒɪstə/	ìrhéjístà /ìrhéjístà/
<i>Trouser</i> /traʊzə/	itrósà/itrózà /itrósà/itrózà/
<i>Hospital</i> /hɒspɪtəl/	òsípítò /òsípítò/
<i>Kerosene</i> /kerəsin/	ikràsí /ikrà:si/
<i>Pineapple</i> /paɪnæpl/	ipánápòrò /ipánápòrò/
<i>Mortuary</i> /mɔ:tjʊəri/	imóshùárhì /imóshùárhì/
<i>Nurse</i> /nɜ:s/	inòsì /inòsì/
<i>Maggi (seasoning)</i> /mægi/	imààgì /imà:gì/
<i>Tomatoe</i> /təmatəʊ/	itòmátòsì /itòmátòsì/
<i>Pastor</i> /pastə/	ipásítɔɔ /ipásítɔɔ/
<i>Catechist</i> /kætɪkɪst/	ikátìsì /ikátìsì/

From the table above, we can clearly see many 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 loanwords represented in table 3 above.

English sounds substituted with Urhobo sounds

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

Commented [A67]: You need to organise the vowels separately from the consonants.

Commented [A68]: This is repeated

d.	/eɪ/	~	/e/
e.	/ə/	~	/a/
f.	/ʌ/	~	/ɔ/
g.	/ə/	~	/o/
h.	/æ/	~	/a/
i.	/eɪ/	~	/e/
j.	/ɜ/	~	/a/
k.	/ʃ/	~	/ʃ/
l.	/ɜ/	~	/ɔ/
m.	/ə/	~	/u/
n.	/aɪə/	~	/a/
o.	/ə/	~	/ɔ/
p.	/ə/	~	/o/
q.	/aʊ/	~	/ɔ/
r.	/ɪj/	~	/ʃ/
s.	/l/	~	/n/

Commented [A69]: This is repeated

Commented [A70]: This is repeated

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 loanwords which have similar sounds in his/her phoneme inventory, like the examples of Yoruba loanwords in table 1. But may find it difficult (at varying degrees) to produce loanwords with sounds that are different from those in their sound inventory. These kinds of substitution may somewhat be responsible for the alternations of **epenthetical** vowels that appear at the word final positions of loanwords in Urhobo as we see in section 4.2.1. We also see instances where loanwords with /l/ from English occur in **free variation** in Urhobo either as /l/ or /r/. For example, /teɪbl/ - /itébùrù/ *'table'*; /klɜk/ - /ikràkì/ *'clerk'*; /skul/ - /isùkùrù/ *'school'*.

Commented [A71]: So, what inform the selection of the substitute vowels? Is it done randomly (which I doubt)? Explanation of this is necessary.

Commented [A72]: Epenthetic

4.2.5. Deletion

This is a situation whereby loanwords from English lose a segment as it is adapted into Urhobo. Examples of words from the data where this process occur include: /kætɜkst/ - /ikátìsì/ *'catechist'*, /k/ and final /t/ is deleted. /hɔspitl/ - /ɔsìpítò/ *'hospital'*, /h/ is deleted (this aligns more with the way Yoruba speakers speak

Commented [A73]: You need to expand your discussions here with more examples/data. Show examples of initial cluster and how it is handled.

English). /mɔtjotrɪ/ - /imɔʃiári/ 'mortuary' /t/ and /j/ are deleted and replaced entirely with /ʃ/. /ɪŋk/ - /iki/ 'ink' /ŋ/ is deleted. /kerəsin/ - /ikrà:si/ 'kerosene' /ɛ/ and final /n/ are deleted.

4.2.6. 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, technological advancement and the need for importation of foreign materials to meet certain needs in the Urhobo society, language change becomes inevitable. We see in the foregoing discussions, the situation surrounding consonant clusters in Urhobo, which is not consistent with many other Nigerian languages within the Niger-Congo language family where it belongs. It brings up the question: is there any possibility that this situation came about as a result of contact with other languages? We also noted earlier that some of these loanwords 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 the native words for these loanwords. As long as Urhobo native speakers (especially, the younger generation) continue to be less motivated to preserve the integrity 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.

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

Commented [A74]: How does this affect your study?

Commented [A75]: We saw in the foregoing discussions...

Commented [A76]: This statement is not complete.

Commented [A77]: Which situation?

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 loan words are first adopted and then adapted to fit into the phonotactics of the language, so in many cases, we see Urhobo maintaining almost all of Yoruba phonological features but some of the phonological features of English which in turn have prompted some phonological changes in Urhobo. It is not news that some triggers of linguistic borrowing (despite its ability to enrich vocabulary) has some underlying demerits. Sometimes, it is emphasized by the need to adapt foreign cultures and technologies, (as we observe with English), 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 ultimately lead to language shift, attrition or even death. Notwithstanding, borrowing should be encouraged in Urhobo but not at the cost of losing the “Urhoboness” in 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 loanwords and make more efficient strides to document Urhobo and other indigenous Nigerian languages.

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Commented [A78]: I don't think you pointed this out until now.

Commented [A79]: Check the expression again.

Commented [A80]: Have

Commented [A81]: The whole sentence is too long; consider breaking it up.

Commented [A82]: Do we actually adapt English cultures and technologies when adapting English words?

Commented [A83]: What does this mean? Up to what degree you consider acceptable?

Commented [A84]: We expect conclusions based on segment behaviour and situate it in broader context of what happens other languages...

Commented [A85]: .

Commented [A86]: .

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