



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN: BORROWING AND VITALITY IN LUBUKUSU

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Abstract

When languages come into contact, there is some degree of cultural contact, however limited. As a result, there is bound to be some negative as well as positive language change. Borrowing, bilingualism, code switching, code mixing, pidgins, creoles, language shift and language death are some of the products of language contact. The focus of this paper is linguistic borrowing as a result of contact between two languages: Lubukusu, an African language spoken by the Babukusu, a sub-tribe of the Luhya ethnic group of Bungoma County, Kenya and English, a foreign language in Kenya, first introduced through European explorers, Christian missionaries, traders and the British colonialist and its resultant effect on the borrowing language.

Key words: Borrowing, bilingualism, code switching, language shift, pidgin, creole, borrowing.

Introduction

Studies done on lexical borrowing particularly highlight the negative effects of such borrowing: language shift and death of the borrowing language(s). This paper however examines the other side of the coin: that although core borrowing - the incorporation of foreign features into a group's native language by speakers of that language - has a negative impact on the borrowing language, cultural borrowing which is the incorporation into a language, of foreign objects or concepts which are new to the borrowing language culture, is positive and does enrich and strengthen a language hence better communication. This is because it enhances the speaker's ability to express new concepts, experiences and objects that are alien to their culture, for which they lack native words.

This paper identifies some of the cultural lexical nominals borrowed in Lubukusu from English and how these increase the expressive power of Lubukusu hence its vitality. A language's vitality is defined as the range and importance of the symbolic functions a variety serves, that is, the degree to which a variety is used. The measure of such vitality is based on demographic, status and institutional support factors and these are examined in this paper with regard to the use of the borrowed words.

Background to the Study

Borrowing is the incorporation of foreign features into a group's native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features (Thomason and Kaufman as cited in Meyers-Scotton, 2002). In a borrowing situation, the first foreign elements to enter the borrowing language are words since of all sectors of language; it is the lexicon which reflects the culture of its speakers most closely. Of these, nouns are the most borrowed category (Meyers-Scotton, 2002).

Meyers-Scotton (1993, p. 169) identifies two types of borrowing: Cultural borrowing which represents objects or concepts new to the borrowing language culture for example 'baisikeli' ('bicycle' in Swahili) and core borrowing which represents items for which the borrowing language already has viable equivalents for example 'epia' ('beer' in Lubukusu. Its viable equivalent is 'kamalwa'). While cultural borrowings fill lexical gaps in the borrowing language or dialect, core borrowings are borrowed because they are felt to be prestigious or just novel. Having such words as part of one's own repertoire is a means of identifying with the donor-language culture (Meyers-Scotton, 1993).

Lubukusu is the language spoken by the Babukusu, a sub-tribe of the Luhya ethnic group of Western province of Kenya (Were, 1967). Though considered a dialect (Angogo, 1980; Kebeya, 1997; Nandelenga, 2000 and Barasa, 2001), for purposes of this study Lubukusu shall be treated as a language. Lubukusu has three main variations:

- i. The dialect spoken North of Kimilili area, with its heaviest influence being noted in the region around Kitale.
- ii. The dialect spoken west of Webuye town, with its purest form in the region around and to the west of Bungoma town. This region borders Uganda to the West and Kakamega to the east.
- iii. The dialect spoken east of Webuye town extending to Kakamega and Lugari counties.

This paper shall be based on the dialect spoken North of Kimilili area and any reference to Lubukusu shall be referring to it. English, an international language, has become a lingua franca in many parts of the world. In its interaction with other languages, it has been a donor to many of them and a recipient of quite a number of borrowed items from others. For example, 'altar' has its origin in the Latin 'altāre' while 'chef' has its origin in the French 'chef (de cuisine)' meaning 'head cook' (Bynon, 1977). In Kenya just like in India, Singapore, Jamaica and Hong Kong among many other countries, English has been assigned a special role. It has been made the official language of the country, to be used as a medium of communication in such domains as government, the law courts, the media, and the educational system (Furaha, 2007), and provision is made for this in the current constitution. English in Kenya is therefore prestigious and occupies a culturally and socio-economically dominant position. Its influence after independence remains and it is elevated and given a higher status than other languages. As such, it enjoys a certain amount of prestige. This kind of prestige makes it a likely donor for many less prestigious languages like Kiswahili and Lubukusu among others, as illustrated above. Hock (1986) augments this in his lexical principle: Lexical borrowing usually takes place from the more to the less prestigious culture.

According to Ryan and Giles as cited in Meyers-Scotton (2002, p. 50), a language's vitality is defined as the range and importance of the symbolic functions a variety serves, that is, the degree to which a variety is used. The measure of such vitality is based on demographic, status and institutional support factors such as: how many speakers the language has, whether or not it is standardized, if it has a literary tradition, if it has status in government and education and so on. Related to this is ethnolinguistic vitality (EV), which Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) as cited in Meyers-Scotton (2002) define as that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations. Language contact situations are intergroup situations hence the need to assess the vitality of Lubukusu in relation to cultural lexical borrowing of nominals from English. This paper therefore sought to identify some of the cultural nominals that Lubukusu has borrowed from English and examine how these have enriched the language hence its vitality.

Literature Review

Studies on Borrowing

Mesthrie et al. (2000) define borrowing as a technical term for the incorporation of a linguistic item from one language into another while Thomason and Kaufman as cited in Meyers-Scotton (2002) advance this thought further by emphasizing three features about borrowing that imply process: i) speakers who borrow elements still maintain their L1, ii) the extent of borrowing and, more important, the types of elements borrowed depend on the degree of cultural contact and iii), borrowing includes structural borrowing, that is, incursions into the phonology, morphology or syntax of the recipient language. The current paper seeks to establish whether or not this is the case for borrowings in Lubukusu from English.

Meyers-Scotton (1993) identifies two types of borrowing: Cultural borrowing which represents objects or concepts new to the borrowing language culture and core borrowing which are items for which the borrowing language already has viable equivalents. According to her, cultural borrowed forms usually appear abruptly in a language when influential individuals or groups begin using them. They may appear frequently in two outcomes: in the monolingual speech of either bilinguals or monolinguals (speaking the recipient language) or in the code switching of bilinguals. Core borrowed forms usually begin life in the recipient language when bilinguals introduce them as singly occurring code switching forms in the mixed constituents of their code switching. This paper focuses specifically on the first type: cultural borrowing.

Appel and Muysken (1987) identify different social and cultural contexts in which borrowing takes place such as invasions, conquest and domination by a majority culture, limited culture contact, limited immigration and economic dependence and coexistence in a colonial setting (as is the case for Lubukusu as earlier mentioned in the abstract). In each case, the extent, type and sociolinguistic effect of borrowing is different. Wamalwa (1997) accounts for the sociolinguistic principles that govern Kiswahili lexical absorption into Lubukusu. She identifies, among other factors, the need to express oneself with linguistic economy and ease and the need to express a new concept as the major motivating principles for Kiswahili-Lubukusu borrowing. This paper follows up on these two principles.

Kisembe (2003) examines the linguistic effects of English on Luhya languages of western Kenya, which she identifies as borrowing, code-switching and code-mixing, and language shift resulting to language death in some cases. She argues that English is detrimental to the development of ethnic languages in ways such as substantial reduction in stylistic expressions within ethnic languages, reduced lexicon with a lot of intrusions, changes in ethnic language phonology (prosodic and phonetic features), decrease in competence of ethnic languages, and loss of linguistic and cultural identity.

Studies on Language Vitality

Arnold (1982) defines vitality as the degree to which a variety has visible interaction networks that actually employ it natively for one or more essential functions. The more numerous and more important the functions served by the variety for the greater number of individuals, the greater is its vitality. This paper seeks to establish the vitality of Lubukusu by identifying the different functions for and domains in which it is used.

According to Appel and Muysken (1987), four factors influence language maintenance. One of these is status factors which refer to economic, social, sociohistorical and language factors. Demographic factors refer to the number of members of a linguistic minority group and their geographical distribution, while institutional support factors include mass media, religion, governmental, or administrative services and

education. The fourth factor they identify is cultural (dis-) similarity: when cultures involved are similar there is a greater tendency for shift than when they are less similar. This paper sought to establish the vitality of Lubukusu as a result of borrowings from English in the light of these factors.

Lin (2007) looks at a Sociolinguistic Study on Yami Language Vitality and Maintenance (Yami is one of the indigenous languages spoken in Taiwan). This study found that the teenagers seldom speak Yami in most of the situations and most can't speak Yami very well. Although teenagers from the most conservative village use more Yami and speak it better, their Yami ability seems to decline as they advance with age. The decreasing Yami language use and proficiency indicates that the vitality of Yami is decreasing. The focus of the study was on teenagers. This study however examined a broader age group (20-50) to make the study more representative. It will also be interesting to compare the findings of this paper with those of an African language as is the case in this study.

The Current Study

This paper adopted both a qualitative and quantitative research design. Both primary and secondary data was used. Twenty four Lubukusu-English bilinguals who are native speakers of Lubukusu were interviewed. According to Christophersen as cited in Ochwaya (1992), someone speaking or writing in his mother tongue is allowed to take liberties with the language, since after all, 'it is his own language'. The respondents were also required to have a minimum of secondary school O-level education as by this level, the respondents would have acquired sufficient proficiency in English to borrow from the language. Informants ranged between the ages of twenty and fifty and of these there was an equal representation of gender. In this study, respondents aged 20-35 are treated as 'younger' speakers and those aged 36-50 as 'older' speakers. Trudgil (1974) and Chambers (1995) use a similar approach. Amongst the respondents were teachers, farmers, shopkeepers, business people, medical practitioners, housewives and students.

In addition to the twenty four respondents, two more respondents aged 70 and 74 respectively and native speakers of Lubukusu were identified to verify that the identified nominals are indeed cultural borrowings and that no native equivalents exist in the Lubukusu lexicon. This choice was based on the view that speakers of this age are considered the custodians of a language's purity and would know which words are borrowed, and amongst these, which are cultural and which are core.

The interviews, carried out in Lubukusu, were on a wide range of topics relating to the respondents' language (Lubukusu), their attitude towards it and generally the status of the language. The questions were also on the respondents' occupation and hobbies. More data was collected from Lubukusu radio broadcasts on two local FM radio stations namely Mulembe FM and West FM. These were also tape recorded and transcribed. Secondary data was collected from books written in Lubukusu: the Lubukusu dictionary 'Bukusu- English Dictionary' (Marlo and Wasike, 2008) and the Lubukusu Bible 'Ebibilia Endakatifu' (2007).

From both the primary and secondary data a total of 157 cultural borrowed nominals from the nine semantic fields of religion, science and technology, clothing, administration, transport, business, household items, education and medicine were drawn for analysis. These areas were selected because they either initially were alien to the Bukusu culture or existed in a different form such as traditional African religion, clothing and informal education as opposed to Christianity, western clothing and formal education respectively. For this reason, there is a high likelihood of getting words in these areas that are not of Lubukusu origin.

Findings

Borrowed Cultural Lexical Nominals

Below is a sample list of the nominals collected from each of the nine semantic fields.

i) Science and Technology

Bukusu		English Gloss
Etiibi/ediestiibi	-	television/DSTV
Ebidio (kamera)	-	video (camera)
Ekompyuta	-	computer
Edibidi	-	DVD

ii) Education

Bukusu		English Gloss
Purofesa	-	professor
Echoka	-	chalk
Erejesta	-	register
Etaimutebo	-	time table

iii) Administration

Bukusu		English Gloss
Ekaunti (kanso)	-	county (council)
Eripoti	-	report
Efomu	-	form
Esatifiketi	-	certificate

iv) Transport

Bukusu		English Gloss
Litoka	-	(motor) car
Einjini	-	engine
Ekilachi	-	clutch
Omundereba	-	driver

v) Clothing

Bukusu		English Gloss
Eobaroli	-	overall
Esikati	-	skirt
Elong'i	-	long (trouser)
Lishaati	-	shirt

vi) Religion

Bukusu		English Gloss
Omukuristo/Omukuristaayo	-	Christian
Lisakaramendi	-	sacrament
Ebangeli/ebibilia	-	bible
Mwitembeli	-	in the church/temple

vii) Household items

Bukusu		English Gloss
Efuriji	-	fridge
Esofaseti	-	sofa set
Egilasi	-	glass
Ethamosi/eflaski	-	thermos flask

viii) Business

Bukusu

Esitoko	-
Ehoteli	-
Erendi	-
Esupamaketi	-

English Gloss

stock
hotel
rent
supermarket

ix) Medicine

Bukusu

Omunasi	-
Ethieta	-
Efamasi	-
Muekisireyi	-

English Gloss

nurse
theatre
pharmacy
in the x-ray room

In the borrowed nominals identified, it is observed that some semantic fields had more borrowings than others. The table below presents the frequency of occurrence of the cultural lexical nominal borrowings per semantic field.

Table 1: Frequency of borrowed cultural lexical nominals per semantic field in regard to data

SEMANTIC FIELD/ DATA SOURCE	Interview	%	Dictionary	%	News Bulletin	%	Bible	%	TOTAL	%
Education	26	93	2	7	0	0	0	0	28	16
Religion	9	36	11	44	1	4	4	16	25	14
Transport	20	83	2	8	1	4	1	4	24	14
Administration	11	48	2	9	10	44	0	0	23	13
Business	10	56	2	11	6	33	0	0	18	10
Science & Technology	16	94	0	0	1	6	0	0	17	10
Medicine	10	59	2	12	5	29	0	0	17	10
Clothing	7	54	6	46	0	0	0	0	13	7
Household Items	9	69	3	23	1	8	0	0	13	7
TOTAL/ %	118	66	30	17	25	14	5	3	178	100

Source: Fieldwork (2011)

Table 1 shows that a total of 178 lexical items were identified from four data sources namely interviews, the Bukusu-English dictionary, news bulletins in Lubukusu and the Lubukusu bible. The highest cultural

lexical nominal borrowings occur in the discourse drawn from interviews. They constitute 66.3% of the total number of borrowings. A possible explanation for this high number of borrowings is the liberty with which speech in conversation is produced. In natural speech, individuals may not be very particular about their choice of words and would probably utter words that first come to their mind, especially if they are in a relaxed atmosphere as is the case for this study. Their speech is also not controlled or influenced by a second or third party.

The language or lexical items used in the other three data sources is/are regulated by external forces. The Bukusu-English dictionary (2008) which comes second after interviews, with 16.9% of the total borrowings, for example, has been controlled and influenced by editors. The final output is not the result of a single individual's effort. The language and words used are carefully selected and have to meet certain standards to be published and circulated for use. It is also possible that being a dictionary in one of the indigenous languages, the authors may have wanted to restrict themselves to the indigenous words only to be of help to both first and second language learners of the language to learn both the spoken and written standard language.

News bulletins carry the third highest number of borrowings and elicit 14% of the total number of borrowings. This could be as a result of media house style and the fact that news broadcasters do not speak off the cuff but are aided by an autocue during any live broadcast. The data source with the least number of borrowings is the Lubukusu bible with only 2.8% of the total borrowings. This low number can be attributed to the external influence necessary for the translation, editing and publishing of work of this magnitude. It is also likely that the choice of words in the Lubukusu bible is dependent on the original version from which it is translated; hence this has a bearing on the use of borrowed cultural lexical nominals. It is also worth noting that written language is more formal than spoken, thus great care tends to be taken in writing and/or translating the Lubukusu bible.

Cultural Lexical Nominal Borrowings in Different Semantic Fields

There are variations in the number of borrowings in the different semantic fields with the highest number of borrowings being drawn from the semantic field of education while the semantic field of household items had the least. A logical reason for this is that education was among the first forms of and reasons for contact between Lubukusu and English. This contact has lasted through the years to date. English has over the years been the language of instruction in education in Kenya, apart from mother tongue in lower primary school (Mbaabu, 1996). Because of the constant contact between the two languages however, there has probably been more room for borrowing than coinage. Education has had the highest influence on the contact between the two languages and thus the increased need for borrowing.

Another reason for the higher percentage of borrowings in education is that all the respondents interviewed have had access to formal education at least up to Form Four hence their competence in English. The logical thing to do when faced with a situation where there is no native equivalent for an English concept they wish to express in Lubukusu is to borrow the term and make it sound Bukusu through assimilation.

Clothing and household items were in existence long before the initial contact between Lubukusu and English speakers. Also, in these fields, there has not been too much cross cultural interaction between speakers of the two languages. There are Lubukusu equivalents in use for many concepts in English in these fields and this explains the small number of borrowings.

Cultural Lexical Nominal Borrowing and Gender

It was observed that there were variations too in the borrowing patterns of the different genders. Male respondents (68.6%) were found to borrow more than their female counterparts (45.8%). These findings agree with linguistic patterns in studies carried out in different communities where it has been found that males borrow more than females. The argument behind this is that women are more conservative and tend to be slow in adapting to changes in progress (Labov, 1972; Trudgil, 1974; Milroy, 1980; Chambers, 1995; and Kebeya, 2008).

Cultural Lexical Nominal Borrowing and Age

Although research carried out previously has found that younger speakers are more prone to borrowing (Poplack, Sankoff and Miller, 1988), in this study the findings are the exact opposite: the older respondents aged between 36-50 borrowed more (60.1%) than the younger speakers (39.9%). A possible explanation for this is the earlier argument in the introduction that there has been contact between Lubukusu and English for a long time and borrowing is an effect of this contact that continues to be felt to date. It is also worth noting that the focus of this study is borrowed lexical nominals that have no native equivalents in Lubukusu. Because of the advantage of age, older speakers have had longer exposure to this contact hence their higher use of cultural lexical borrowed nominals in speech than the younger speakers.

Cultural Lexical Nominal Borrowing and Vitality

According to Giles et al. (1977) the three indicators of a language's vitality are institutional support, demography and status. Borrowing in the semantic fields identified in this study is related to these indicators of vitality.

Institutional Support

From the interviews carried out, Lubukusu is one of the languages used in dominant domains in society such as the home, school, work place and town/market among others. Use of language in these domains is manifested through different areas such as education, mass media, administration, business, religion, at ceremonies and so on. These correspond to the semantic fields under discussion in this study.

The semantic field of education, for example emerges the one with the highest number of borrowed cultural lexical nominals (see Table 1). This is an indicator that communication in Lubukusu in this domain relies to some degree on borrowed cultural lexical nominals. This is also evidenced by the existence of printed literature in Lubukusu such as the Lubukusu bible, the Bukusu- English dictionary, story books and oral literature books with riddles, proverbs and sayings as drawn from the interviews carried out. Mass media which also falls under this indicator relies to a great extent on Lubukusu and by extension borrowed cultural lexical nominals. The respondents interviewed demonstrate an awareness of and interest in two FM radio stations namely West FM and Mulembe FM which broadcast in Lubukusu.

In domains such as the home, work place, church, town/ market and at ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and circumcision ceremonies, 70.3% of the respondents say the main language of use is Lubukusu while the remaining 29.7% cite other languages, mainly Kiswahili followed by English. The home and ceremonies domains exhibit the highest use of Lubukusu while the church exhibits the lowest use with Kiswahili being spoken more. It is also observed that respondents are consistent in the language they speak with different people; these are spouses, children, siblings, parents, grandparents, friends and colleagues. They mainly speak Kiswahili with their children and Lubukusu with the others if they are Lubukusu speakers.

The argument above implies that borrowed cultural lexical nominals in Lubukusu from English add to the vitality of the language since Lubukusu is one of the dominant languages in the dominant domains in society.

Demographic Factors

Giles et al. (1977) identify demography as an indicator of the vitality of a language. The higher the number of speakers of a language, the greater is its vitality. The Kenya Population and Housing Census carried out in August 2009 revealed that Lubukusu has 1,432,810 speakers (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Being the Luhya dialect with the highest number of speakers, this makes up 26.83 % of the entire Luhya speakers' population. In second position is Luloogoli with 618,340 speakers. According to the same census report Kenya has a total population of 38, 610, 097. The Gikuyu language has the highest number of speakers standing at 6,622,576 (17.15%) followed by the Luhya languages with 5,338,666 (13.82%) speakers (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

According to Appel and Muysken (1987) if the absolute number of speakers of a language decreases, it implies decreasing usefulness of the language in question, which in turn gives way to shift away from the minority language. This implies that the reverse is also true and that in the case of the current study the high number of Lubukusu speakers means an increase in the usefulness of the language, hence its vitality.

The geographical distribution of a group of people over a territory also determines the vitality of their language. According to Appel and Muysken (1987), minority groups have better chances of maintaining their language as long as they live concentrated in a certain area and this is the case for speakers in the current study. Speakers of Lubukusu mainly inhabit Bungoma and Trans Nzoia counties though a few others have settled in the neighbouring counties and other parts of the country (Nandelenga, 2000). Respondents cite agricultural productivity and employment opportunities as reasons for the settlement outside their ancestral land.

Status Factors

The third indicator of vitality according to Giles et al. (1977) is the status factor. The status of a language can be determined by speakers' (lack of) pride in their language. All the older speakers and 75% of the younger speakers liked speaking Lubukusu for various reasons such as taking pride in the language, the ability to communicate better, feeling good about the language and the desire to teach the language to their children. 25% of the younger speakers gave such reasons as having non-Lubukusu speaking friends, fear of offending non-Lubukusu speakers and not knowing the language well enough for their reservations. Seventy five percent of both the older and younger speakers felt other Lubukusu speakers were proud of speaking the language. Both the younger and older speakers felt it was important to learn and speak Lubukusu for various reasons such as cultural identity, preservation of the language, communication with the elderly and ability to communicate secret information in the presence of non-Lubukusu speakers. They all wished to see the language promoted through such means as teaching it in schools, use in the media, parents speaking it to and with their children and its use in more social functions or forums.

In relation to the sociohistorical status of the Babukusu, 58.3% of both the younger and older speakers knew of a period when the Babukusu had to defend their ethnic identity and cited such incidents in history as land issues in which they fought the Bawaanga and the Baloogoli among other Luhya dialect speakers. They also fought to retain their political identity and unity (resisted the colonial master who had

teamed up with Nabongo Mumia, a Wanga king, to politically rule them and take over their land) and maintenance of cultural practices such as circumcision.

Borrowing and Lubukusu Vitality

When asked to explain why they have used some English words yet they are speaking Lubukusu 54% of the respondents said there are no Lubukusu equivalents for the English words they had used. Of these 66.6% are male while 33.3% are female. 21% said they only knew the word in English, 17% said the English word was more readily available while 8% cited other reasons such as the concept requiring a lengthy explanation in Lubukusu and the need to accommodate the non- Lubukusu speaker. One respondent even insisted that the English word was actually a Lubukusu word.

Responding to the question on whether the respondents felt Lubukusu alone was sufficient in discussing their occupations (when speaking to other Lubukusu speakers), 88% admitted that it wasn't. 63% felt that this was because they would not communicate effectively and make themselves understood while 8% said it was because they were just used to using English words. 13% felt Lubukusu alone was sufficient because it had viable equivalents for the English words borrowed though they had not used these themselves. 17% cited other reasons for Lubukusu alone not being sufficient. Some of these were that using some English words in Lubukusu made it sound nice and complete and that since the speaker spoke other languages (English and Kiswahili) it was only natural that they should use these while speaking Lubukusu.

When asked what effect they thought this kind of borrowing had on Lubukusu, 57% felt that this kind of borrowing strengthened Lubukusu. 42% of these thought this was the case because it helped speakers express themselves and communicate although they also felt Lubukusu should get native words for these concepts. 39% felt this kind of borrowing weakens Lubukusu. 22% thought so because they felt there were Lubukusu equivalents for the English words used and that where there weren't, Lubukusu should come up with them. 4% gave other explanations for the positive effect of this kind of borrowing on Lubukusu such as borrowed nominals being made to sound like Lubukusu words through assimilation and increasing the vocabulary of Lubukusu.

Only 25% of the respondents felt there were native equivalents for the borrowed English words they used. However, only 1% was able to give viable equivalents while the 'viable' equivalents given by 8.3% of the respondents were themselves words borrowed from English. They insisted the words they had used such as *ebangeli* 'bible' (from the verb 'evangelize'), *lubaso* 'verse' and *eromani* 'roman' (Catholic Church) were native Lubukusu words. 38% of the respondents felt there were no native equivalents for the borrowed words they had used while 21% were not sure. 17% give other reasons. When all the respondents were asked to give what they thought were viable Lubukusu equivalents of some of the borrowed words they had used 91% were unable to do so; only 9% did.

Conclusion

Borrowed nominals are significant to communication in the borrowing language. Borrowed cultural lexical nominals identified and discussed in this study indicate that Lubukusu borrows heavily from English as it (Lubukusu) lacks native equivalents to express ideas and concepts that are foreign to the Bukusu culture. These borrowings give Lubukusu speakers an opportunity to express what would otherwise have been a challenge. These borrowed items increase the Lubukusu lexicon hence its expressive ability and vitality. It has been argued in earlier studies that borrowing has a negative effect on the borrowing language. However this study has proved that indeed there is the other side of this coin: that cultural lexical nominal

borrowing does actually strengthen a language and increase its vitality.

Recommendations

From the findings in this paper, it is evident that the notion that borrowing is detrimental to ethnic languages is not entirely true. Cultural borrowing, which is the focus of this study, is indeed beneficial to the recipient language as it increases the recipient language's expressive ability. Cultural borrowing in Lubukusu should be encouraged as this is one sure way in which the language can increase its vitality.

Further Research

Since the scope of this paper was limited to cultural lexical nominals borrowed from English into Lubukusu further research could be done on other grammatical classes such as verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Further research could also be done on borrowings from other ethnic languages and their effect on Lubukusu.

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