A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF DELETION PROCESSES OF KANURI-ENGLISH LOANWORDS

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Abstract

This paper examines deletion process in Kanuri-English loanwords. The objectives of the study are to i) identify the loanwords ii) classify them iii) examine the nature and the process of linguistic modification found in the loanwords. The loanwords were extracted manually from the dictionary and were descriptively analysed with instances from both languages. The study reveals that borrowed words were found to have the following phonological characteristics: deletion, fricativization, vowel insertions, degemination etc. But our study is only limited to the process of deletion. With regards to the frequency of occurrence observed, the English loanwords are found to be 25.47% of the seven hundred and thirty (730) words found in the dictionary during the course of this study.

Keywords: Description, phonological deletion, loanwords, Kanuri-English Dictionary

Introduction

This study explores on deletion process in Kanuri-English loanwords. The research aims at identifying, classifying and examining the nature and the process of linguistic modification establish in the loanwords. Linguistic borrowing is a general phenomenon that can be found many languages of the world. It presupposes contact between two or more people speaking different languages and some linguistic terms are moved or transferred from one language to another. The direction of the language transfer generally depends on the relative prestige, strength and dominance of the language within a given community or contact between languages. Thus, this study is deemed necessary

because the level at which the two selected languages for this study are interwoven due the global technological advancement, economic, educational, political, religious and cultural factors which influence the borrowing of lexical items.

History of the Dictionary

The *Kanuri-English Dictionary* was published by Bulakarima et al. in 2003.The Dictionary is presented according to the spelling rules and conventions which were established based on the Standard Kanuri Orthography (SKO).The dictionary comprises more than ten thousand words, which were collected and compiled in Yerwa dialect. It comprises seven hundred and thirty (730) loanwords in Arabic, English, Hausa and French language.

Jolayemi (2010:98) reports the reason behind the different behaviours in speech sound utterance in English as 'the inherent need to maintain internal cohesion and rhythm. This is often referred to as phonological processes', while Oyebade (2004:60) argues that it is as a result of 'sound modification mediated by the need to maintain euphony in the production of an utterance.' One of the processes of modification of sounds involves the deletion of a segment (phoneme) which is the primary purpose of this study.

Conceptual Review

This section presents conceptual review on phonology, deletion and other related terms.

Phonology

Phonology is one of the core fields of linguistics, which is defined as the scientific study of language.   It is the study of sound structures in language, which is different from the study of sentence structures (syntax) or word structures (morphology), or how languages

change over time (historical linguistics). The sound structure of a word and its pronunciation are the fundamental goals of phonology. However, the principles of pronunciation in a language are subjected to change over time. The study of phonology eventually touches on other domains of linguistics (Odden, 2005).

Phonology is concerned with the symbolic sounds which are cognitive abstractions but are not the same as physical sounds. One of the goals of phonology is to discover exactly what these cognitively important properties are, and how they function in expressing regularities about languages. We will consider some specific aspects of the sound structure of loanwords that would be part of a phonological analysis of the phonological rule of deletion. The principal goal of the study of phonology is to explicate the properties of the sound systems which speakers internalize in order to use their language for the purpose of communication.

These are with regards to the growth of wrong pronunciations of English phonemes, /p/ to /f/, which are sometimes interchanged by some Nigerians from certain ethnic backgrounds. According to Jolayemi (2010:67), these variant exchanges have been pointed out mostly in the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria, where the English phoneme /f/ is used instead of /p/ or replaced by /pf/. This phonological change is not the only sole purpose of this study, but just a note of reservation of existing elements in line with this study.

Deletion

According to Abubakar (2013:706)**, deletion** is one of the five phonological processes (the other four being **insertion, assimilation, dissimilation** and **metathesis).** Abubakar cites Lass (1984), that "it is a whole segment process where a segment of a word (i.e. a vowel or a consonant) becomes null."Lass (1984:186) explicates that there are three basic types of deletion. They are as follows:

i) Aphaeresis: deals with the initial loss or omission of segment at the initial position of a word as in /k/ in know /nəʊ/.

ii) Syncope: also referred to as internal deletion i.e. deletion of a segment at medial position of a word.

iii) Apocope: is the loss of a final segment, often before a word beginning with another consonant.

Deletion is one of the phonological processes existing in most of languages spoken across the globe. Refreshing our mind on deletion in loanwords, it is evident that this process varies. However, it depends on the structure of the introduced loanwords to particular language where the speakers of the language will adopt the new loanword and pronounce it in such a way that will respect the phonological rules of their language.

Jolayemi (2010:102) states that deletion occurs when a sound such as stress less syllable or a weak consonant takes another form...; that is to say deletion can occur in phonemes and stress less syllables. Some writers relate deletion with only consonant and state elision as involving vowel phonemes, while others strongly argue that deletion can be of consonant, vowel or syllable (Gimson 1980; Lass 1984) cited in Jolayemi (2010). Deletion and elision therefore involve the omission or eliding of phonemes (segment) at initial, medial or final position of a word.

Review of Related Works

Baldi (1991) investigates Arabic loanwords that are common to Hausa and Kanuri, and in the process he categorised the study under the following headings:

1. Common Arabic Loanwords to Hausa and Kanuri.
2. Peculiar Arabic Loanwords to each Language.

3. Transfer of Arabic Loanwords from one Language to other.

4. Hausa Loanwords in Kanuri.

5. Kanuri Loans in Hausa.

He further explains that after the acceptance of Islam as the State religion, the pattern of leadership also changed, from nomadic *Mai* (title local leaders) to monarchy of Sheikhs (titles of Arab leaders). The form of leadership tried to adopt various Arabic and Islamic titles such as; *Imam, Waziri, Qadi, Amir, Katib, Mu'umin, Amin etc.* Like other African languages, Kanuri is also affected by the influence of Arabic. Dikwa (2000) affirms that the Kanuri language had benefited from examples offered by the Arabic language during their long period of interaction. Kanuri language borrowed and will continue to borrow words notable from Arabic and French languages to enrich its vocabulary.

Abdullahi (2013) explores the phenomenon of borrowing in Kanuri, paying specific attention to Arabic, English and Hausa loanwords. The study provides a list of thirteen thousand three hundred and twenty nine (13,329) lexical items borrowed from Arabic, Hausa and English which were compiled, analysed and subjected to statistical test using the SPSS model, out of these, over 76% came from Arabic, 90% from English and only 5% from Hausa. In his findings the three languages (English, Hausa and Arabic) have relative proportions of influence on Kanuri lexical.

In another study, Shettima, A. K et al. (2019), examines a descriptive study of Arabic loanwords' adaptation in the bilingual (Kanuri-French) dictionary titled: *Kalmaram Təlamyindia Kanuri-Faransa-a*. The focus of the study is to identify and classify the Arabic loanwords in the said dictionary into their domains and examine the nature and process of their linguistics adaptations. The study reveals that the loanwords are characterised by phonological processes such as;

sonorisation, simplification, degemination, metathesis, nasalisation, vowel insertion, deletion and re-syllabication.

Abubakar, A, et al. (2019), discuss on a phonological adaptation of Arabic and Kanuri loanwords in Bagirmi Language. The study investigates the level of adaptation, nature and process of modification of the phonological adaptation of the selected loanwords for this study. The study reveals that Arabic and Kanuri loanwords in Bagirmi exhibit both imported and substituted features of phonological process such as; valorisation, syncopation, vowel deletion, sonorisation, syllable deletion, consonant insertion, weakening among others.

Model of Approach

The model of approach adopted in this study is the phonetic approximation model by Abdulkadir (2013) who adopted Haugen model (1950: 215). Haugen, (1953:288) explains borrowing as "an attempt to produce in one language patterns that have previously been found in another". This shows replacement loan sounds by the phonemes of the native language. It was part of the structuralists' contribution to linguistic discourse to provide a framework for contact induce changes in lexicon around 19th century till date. Haugen (1953) had made a distinction in this aspect, where he provides a framework for importation and substitution of sounds and words from different languages, as well as adaptation of such loanwords. He considers phonological processes such as; assimilation, deletion, vowel deletion, syllable deletion, consonant insertions, somatisation, weakening, vowel harmony, fricativization, degemination syncopation, and valorisation. This are phonological this study will investigate in accordance with adaptation and modification of Kanuri-English loanwords found in the target dictionary.

Methodology

The data for this for this study was fundamentally from The *Kanuri-English Dictionary* was published by Bulakarima et al. in 2003. The dictionary comprises more than ten thousand words, which were collected and compiled in Yerwa dialect. It comprises seven hundred and thirty (730) loanwords in Arabic, English, Hausa and French language. These loanwords were carefully extracted and used as data for this research. These loanwords were presented and analysed based on their nature and the process of linguistic modification in a descriptive manner with instances for clarification and comprehension.

Analysis

In the data analysis of this paper, we are employing the use of all possible instances of deletion in loanwords, viz, Aphaeresis, Syncope or Apocope, these could be either vowel, consonant, stress or weak syllable.

Aphaeresis

We observe that the English loanwords in Kanuri experience initial consonant deletion as seen in the data (1).

English	Kanuri	Gloss
1. Handcuff /ˈhændkʌf/	Ankôp	handcuff

From the example above, it is observed that the phonemic transcription in English includes Voiceless Glottal Fricative sound /h/ at the initial position, but the loanword experienced deletion at both orthographical and phonemic level.

Syncope

At this level we are concerned with syncope which is known as deletion of a phoneme (segment) at the internal or middle position of loanwords in question as provided in the examples as below:

English	Kanuri	Gloss
2. Governor /gʌvənər/	gúmna	Governor
3. Government /gʌvənmənt/	gúmnáti	Government

If we carefully observe, some phonemes(segment) are deleted in the cited loanwords above and the phonemic transcription of the words are all in syllabic form; as observed in data two (2), two phonemes were respectively deleted. These sounds are /v/, the voiced labio-dental fricative consonant sound and /ə/ the half open vowel sound. Jolayemi (2010) indicates that such a sound is the most difficult to realize for L2 users. This is because they are completely absent in most of the vowel sound systems of African languages. And, observing the second data, the sound /mən/ as completely elided in the loanword. These are the voiced bilabial nasal consonant /m/, the centre half open vowel sound /ə/ and the alveolar nasal consonant /n/ which stand as syllables were omitted in the said loanword.

English	Kanuri	Gloss
4. Handcuff /ˈhændkʌf/	ankôp	handcuff
5. Secretary /sɛk.rə.tə.rɪ/	sákátəre	secretary
6. Certificate /sərˈtifikit/	satifiket	certificate

Evidently from the data presented above, there are certain internal deletions. Data four (4) experienced omission of the voiced Lenis Alveolar Plosive /d/ in the middle of the word. In data five (5), the omission took effect of the Voiced Frictionless Post Alveolar Continuant sound /r/ observed deletion and lastly in example seven (6) equally.

English	Kanuri	Gloss
7. Kiosk /ˈkiːɒsk/	kês	kiosk
8. Cooperative / kəʊˈɒpərətiv/	kofaréti	cooperative
9. Philosopher /fiˈlɒs.ə. fə/	falsafa	philosopher

This segment of loanwords observed their deletions with a particular phoneme, the short, back, low and open vowel /ɒ/. In example seven (7), there is the deletion of the Voiceless /s/.In the data number eight (8), the diphthong /əʊ/ was totally deleted in the word while the open short, back and low pure vowel /ɒ/ maintained its articulation as in the loanword before the Voiceless and Fortis Bilabial Plosive sound /p/.Data number (9) shows a case of deletion of /ɒ/ before the Alveolar Fricative sound /s/. All these loanwords have experienced deletion at internal positions as the loanwords which placed them under syncope.

Apocope

According to Lass (1984:186), this segment or type of deletion involves omission final element of a give linguistic item or word. This can occur before another word beginning with a consonant sound or in a syllabic form as we will be observing in the loanwords below:

English		Kanuri	Gloss
10. Line	/laɪn/	lái	line
11. Headman	/hedmæn/	hélma	headman
12. Guard	/gɑ:dɪŋ/	gádi	guard

We can clearly observe from the loanword that omission occurs primarily with consonant nasal sounds. The tenth and eleventh loanwords show the alveolar nasal sound /n/ was rightly omitted at the final position of the loanword and the twelfth experienced deletion of the velar nasal consonant sound /ŋ/.This also happens at the final position, noting that all the following omissions occur as a nasal phoneme at the final position of articulation.

English		Kanuri	Gloss
13. Passport	/ˈpɑ:spɔ:t/	fasfó	Passeport
14. Cigarette	/sigə.rɛt/	səgári	cigarette
15. Crankshaft	/kræŋkʃɑ:ft/	karanshaf	crankshaft

The examples show specifically the omission of consonant sounds at the final position involving the Voiceless Alveolar Plosive sound /t/ at all the final position of the loanwords. It is important to note the observation according to Lass (1984:186) that it can occur also at the end of a word before the beginning of another word with a consonant. Observe these following loanwords again.

English		Kanuri	Gloss
16. Crankshaft	/kræŋkʃɑːft/		karanshaf
crankshaft			
17. Kiosk	/kɪːɒsk/	kês	kiosk

Evidently we can see that the first loanword, 'Crankshaft', as it is being transcribed, experienced double omission. This is because it contains two different words joined together as a single word (Compound word) and at the end or position of the first word 'Crank', the phoneme /k/, which is a Voiceless-Fortis Velar Plosive sound, was totally omitted in the loanword as well in the eighteenth loanword, 'kiosk', noticing the word endswith the Voiceless Alveolar Fricative sound /s/.

English		Kanuri	Gloss
18. Headquarters	/hedˈkwɔːtəzː/		hêtkwáta
headquarters			
19. Cooperative	/kəʊˈɒpərətiv/		kófaréti
cooperative			
20. England	/ɪŋglənd/	Íngəla	England

Example eighteen (18) shows the final position omission of the Voiced, Alveolar Fricative sound /z/;it is clearly elided in the loanword. Example nineteen (19) represents the same genre of deletion i.e. final position deletion in which the last phoneme, the voiced, labio-dental fricative sound /v/ is omitted in the given loanword. The last data (20) in this segment observes the omission of two different phonemes at the final position of the loanword. These phonemes are the alveolar nasal

sound /n/ and the voiced and alveolar plosive sound /d/ which at the final position of the loanwords are respectfully omitted.

English	Kanuri	Gloss
21. Carpenter /kɑːpəntər/	kápínta	carpenter
22. Paper /ˈpeɪpər/	féfa	paper
23. Lawyer /ləːjər/	lóya	lawyer
24. Ruler /ruːlər/	rúla	ruler
25. Passenger /pæsəndʒər/	fásenja	passenger
26. Danger /ˈdeɪndʒer/	dánja	danger

Following all the loanwords listed above, one thing is common with the six of them, which is the omission of a single phoneme, the vibrate and frictionless, post-alveolar continuant sound /r/ at all their final positions. This is because the said sound in the source language is mute and less observed.

English	Kanuri	Gloss
27. Governor's house /gʌvənəz haʊs/	gumnari	Governor's house
28. Cupboard maker /ˈkʌbədmeɪkər/	kabotmá	cupboard maker

Lass (1984) states that, where the stress less or weak syllable get omitted in a word could still explain or represent deletion as a phonological rule or process. Evidently the first and second words observe syllabic deletion. In the first loanword (27), the Voiceless Fortis glottal fricative sound /h/, the closing diphthong /ɑʊ/, which glides reside at the back close region and the Voiceless Fortis, and Alveolar fricative sound /s/, all in a single sequence, lost their forms in the loanword. The second loanword (28), just like the first, omits a segment of the word, /kər/, which is the last syllable of the word lost its form to deletion. The segments are phonemes like the voiceless velar plosive consonant sound /k/, the short centre half open and neutral vowel sound /ə/ and lastly,

the voiceless and frictionless post-alveolar continuant sound /r/ at the final articulated position of the loanword.

Conclusion

Phonological rules vary among languages and dialects, and they reflect the common pronunciation habits of various linguistics groups. These rules are written out in specialized notations that codify the ways in which a sound or a group of sounds is altered by appearing in a specific linguistic context. By studying the way a particular phonological rule operates in a spoken language, linguists are able to determine the physiological and neurological mechanisms that translate mental language into spoken language. Deletion, as a phonological rule or process in loanwords, is greatly in existence and possible to be realized as shown in the results of the data analysed. This could be the omission of phonemes, when such omission involves a consonant which often happens or precedes a consonant at the boundary of two words. This is deleted such that we do not hear it pronounced in the sequence of the loanwords. Thus, elisions can also refers to as omission of a vowel sound in a sequence of sounds or at the boundary of an utterance. This is explained in the study as loss, elision or omission of vowel sounds in colloquial language.

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