

Cultural and Linguistic Hybridizations in Cameroon: English Loanwords in ngômbà

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Abstract

This paper examines the various linguistic processes that English loanwords in ngômbà have undergone due to the long-term contact between this African language and English as the language of European importation. A close scrutiny of the borrowed lexical items shows that they fall under many domains of life such as administration and religion, commerce and technology, culture and artefacts, to name these few and have undergone many modifications at the levels of phonology (clusters simplification, shwa deletion, voicing, devoicing, tone insertion, etc.), morphosyntax (compounding, syllable insertion, derivation, reduplication, etc.) and semantics (broadening, narrowing, loan translations, etc.). The present study analyses the linguistic processes that underlie English loanwords in ngômbà, a Bantu language spoken in the West Region of Cameroon. The corpus gathered for the study

comprises 249 loanwords collected through interviews and participant observation of ngômbà speakers aged between 16 and 83, living in rural and urban areas. The descriptive model is the framework used for the data analysis in this study.

Keywords: Ngômbà, Cultural hybridization, Linguistics hybridization, English loanwords, Cameroon

1. Introduction

Factors such as trade, colonisation and religion have contributed significantly to the contact between ngômbà and English. One of the linguistic implications of this contact is the borrowing of a multitude of lexical items from English, a language of European importation. Once integrated into the ngômbà lexicon, the borrowed items undergo many modifications at the level of phonology, morphosyntax and semantics. The present study sets out to describe the linguistic processes through which English words have become ngômbà words. The presentation of background of information about the ngômbà language (section 2) is followed by the classification of the loanwords into various domains (section 3). An analysis of the linguistic processes underlying English loanwords in ngômbà (sections 4 & 5) closes up the study.

2. Background of Information about the ngômbà language

ngômbà is a language spoken in four of the seven Divisions of the West Region of Cameroon in West Africa. Its speakers are the natives of Bansoa, Bamoungoun, Bamendjou Bameka and Bafounda. ngômbà belongs to the Niger-Kordofanian phylum under the Niger-Congo Subphylum. It is a language of the Benue-Congo family within the Bantoïd subfamily. Within the Grassfield sub-group of the Bantu group, ngômbà is classified under the Bamileke sub-branch of the East-Grassfield branch (Boum Ndongo-Semengue and Sadembouo, 1999 : 70). Recent studies extensively describe the structure of this language (Fossi 1997, 2000, 2006; Soh Jean Philip 2005, 2009; Ouafu 2007; Kuitche Fonkou et al. 1991).

3. Classification of the loanwords into Domains

English loanwords in ngômbà pertains to many domains of life namely religion, commerce and technology, culture, fauna and flora. Words are also borrowed from English to describe the days of the week and places in ngômbà. The tables below present the borrowed lexical items as used today by ngômbà speakers and the donor words in English. Borrowed items are presented in the first column with their phonetic transcription following the IPA style sheet. It is worth stating that the list of the loanwords in the charts below is not exhaustive rather it is a sample of loanwords from English that exist in ngômbà and their different domains of usage.

3.1 Administration and religion

Table 1. Administration and religion

Borrowed words	Donor words
ngômna' [ŋgomna']	Government
mítin [mitin]	meeting
másà [masa]	master
mésənjà [məsəndʒa]	Messenger
tôn [tɔŋ]	Town

prěyà [preja]	prayer
Fálà [fala]	father
péŋgè [pɛŋgɛ]	pegan
yěsò [jeso]	Jesus
bìshôp [bisop]	Bishop
ŋkwáya [ŋkwaja]	choir
Sátà [ata]	Satan
krètè [kretɛ]	Christian
Mósòŋ [məsɔŋ]	Mission

3.2 Commerce and technology

Table 2. Commerce and technology

Borrowed words	Donor words
Lisà [lisa]	razor
Məsəŋ [məsəŋ]	machine
tóksúlám [tɔksúam]	torch lamp
kákũ [kaku]	cargo
táksi [taksi]	tax
fəlán [fələn]	Franc
ndúla [ndula]	dollar
fáltè [fatlə]	factory
Səká [səka]	cigarette
lātré [latre]	light
Kəlasí [kəlasɪ]	kerosene
ladyö [ladjo]	radio
mbasəku [mbasəku]	bicycle
tlaktè [tlaktɛ]	tractor
kindət [kindət]	candle Glass
ŋjɔ̀áktà [ndzók]	jug
zin [zin]	zinc
Mbələn [mbələn]	blanket
ndóktà [ndɔkta]	doctor
khinîn [kinin]	quinine

3.3 Culture and artefact

Table3. Culture and artefact

Borrowed items	Donor words
tlósi [tlósi]	Trousers
táwet [tawet]	towel

wáŋglísi [waŋglisi]	handkerchief
shúsi [ʃusi]	shoes
Sətók [sətók]	socks
Kwot [kwot]	coat
shæt [ʃæt]	shirt
mbût [mbut]	boots
Mənik [mənik]	milk
mblət [mbət]	bread
kót [kót]	cot
velándà [velanda]	veranda

3.4 Fauna and flora

Table 4. Fauna and flora

Borrowed items	Donor words
káwù [kawu]	cow
muskító [muskito]	mosquito
dókfawèt [dókfawət]	duck
tomátoè [tomato]	tomato

3.5 Days of the week and names of places

Table 5. Days of the week and names of places

Borrowed items	Donor words
mónde [monde]	Monday
tósidê [tóside]	Thursday
aptamónde [aptamonde]	after Monday
fra&dé [frade]	Friday
Sásəde [sasəde]	Saturday
sónde [sonde]	Sunday
Bənəgló/ŋ [bənəglón]	burial ground
khisim [khisim]	kitchen
Lûm [lum]	Room
kónam [konam]	corner

The sample loanwords above show that the domains in which ngômbà people have borrowed most is that of technology and commerce. The common assumption among ngômbà people is that English loanwords that describe technical material and commercial items result from the fact that many of these materials and items did not exist in the ngômbà culture before colonization. The examples supporting this assumption are words such as razor, machine, torch lamp, bicycle (technological words) and factory, dollar, tax, franc (commercial words). A similar assumption goes for loanwords in religion that would result from the Christian

religion brought along by the English colonizers and words describing clothes and house material (see table 3 on culture and artefacts). ngômbà words resist to borrowing from English to describe the flora and fauna and both young and old ngômbà people continue to use ngômbà original words. This explains the existence of few English loanwords in the domain. As far as the days of the week and places are concerned, ngômbà are more and more shifted by English loanwords in a way that some young people do not know the existence of equivalent ngômbà words (Ouafo, 2007).

After describing some English loanwords in ngômbà, the study now discusses the phonological, morphological and semantic processes, which affect these English loanwords in a way that the English speakers cannot recognize them.

4. Phonology, Morphology and Semantics of English Loanwords in ngômbà

English and ngômbà are languages of different structures and morphologies (see Kuitche Fonkou 1991 and Fossi 1997 for the structure of ngômbà). Thus, once in ngômbà, English loanwords have undergone many linguistic processes so as to suit the phonological, morphological and semantic constraints of the borrowing language.

4.1 Phonological processes

Weinreich (1953:24) states that changes at the level of phonology result from the fact that “it requires a very high level of sophistication to be able to render loans in their original phonetic setting”. In the course of their integration into the ngômbà lexicon, English loanwords are affected by many phonological modifications following the phonological and phonematic constraints of the recipient language. Some of these processes include:

4.1.1 Cluster simplification

This phenomenon affects both consonants and vowel sounds. The simplified or deleted clusters can appear both at the initial, medial as well as final positions. In the following examples, Hyb_En-Ng means hybrid words from English into ngômbà.

- Consonants deletion: the deleted consonants appear not only at the initial position but also at the medial and final.
- Initial consonant deletion: the [s] sound in some English words is deleted when words are borrowed by the ngômbà language.

Hyb_En-Ng1: Story [stɔ:ri] tolé [tole]

Hyb_En-Ng12: Stranger [streindzə] trěnja [trendza]

- Medial consonal deletion: the consonant sounds [k] and [r] are deleted in the loanwords below

Hyb_En-Ng3: Factory [fæktəri] fátlè [fatlə]

Hyb_En-Ng4: Jewellery [dʒuəlri] njalé [ndʒálé]

- Final consonants deletion: the final consonants [z], [f], [d], [l], [t] and [p] respectively in the English words below are deleted in the borrowed lexical items.

Hyb_En-Ng5: trousers [traʊzəz] → tlósi [tlósi]

Hyb_En-Ng6: handkerchief [hæŋkətʃɪf] → wáŋglisi [wáŋgtisi]

Hyb_En-Ng7: yard [jɑd] → yâ [ja:]

Hyb_En-Ng8: school [skʊl] → səkʷút [səkʷút]

Hyb_En-Ng9: pocket [pɒkɪt] → pó ké [póke]

Hyb_En-Ng10: lamp [læmp] → lám [lam]

As earlier stated, not only consonant sounds but also vowels are deleted in the course of the adaptation of English loanwords in ngômbà.

4.1.2 Shwa modifications

- Shwa deletion

The [ə] sound in some English loanwords is deleted when they enter the ngômbà lexicon.

Hyb_En-Ng11: police [pəlis] → plúsi [plúsi]

Apart from vowels deletion, there is also the process of schwa insertion, which affects some English loanwords in ngômba.

- Schwa insertion

Hyb_En-Ng12: candle [kændl] → kiíndát [kidət]

Hyb_En-Ng13: mattress [matris] → mətənəsi [mətənəsi]

Hyb_En-Ng14: bread [bred] → mbəlét [mbəlet]

Hyb_En-Ng15: to learn [tʊ lɜ:n] → nǎ lánə [nələnə]

Hyb_En-Ng16: witness [witnis] → wúsənêt [wusənɛt]

English loanwords in ngômbà are also affected by the phenomenon of reinterpretation of new segments or sounds substitution.

4.1.3 Reinterpretation of new segments or sounds substitution

Some English sounds segments which do not exist in ngômbà are substituted by the ones of this Bantu language so as to fit the phonological constraints of the language. This phonological process usually affects consonant sounds.

Hyb_En-Ng17: marriage [maridʒ] → malet [malet]

Hyb_En-Ng18: sugar [ʃʊgə]	→	shúkà [ʃuka]
Hyb_En-Ng19: fish [fɪʃ]	→	fĩsi [fisi]
Hyb_En-Ng20: tractor [traktə]	→	tlaktě [tlaktɛ]
Hyb_En-Ng21: radio [reɪdʒəʊ]	→	ladyõ [ladjo]
Hyb_En-Ng22: rice [raɪs]	→	lésì [lesi]
Hyb_En-Ng23: kerosene [kerəsin]	→	kəlasí [kələsi]
Hyb_En-Ng24: frying pan [fraɪɪŋ pæn]	→	frepà [frepə]
Hyb_En-Ng25: Friday [fraɪdi]	→	frădé [frəde]

It can be observed that the sounds [dʒ], [g], [ʃ] and [r] in the above English words are systematically replaced by the sounds [t], [k], [s] and [l]

4.1.4 Devoicing

Some voiced consonants in English words become voiceless when these words are integrated into the ngômbà lexicon.

Hyb_En-Ng26: bad [bad]	→	pát [pat]
Hyb_En-Ng27: table [teɪbl]	→	táplɛ̃ [taplɛ]

The English voiced consonant [b] in the words “bad” and “table” is voiced into [p]

4.1.5 Voicing

In the process of borrowing, some English voiced consonants become devoiced. It is the case of consonants such as [p] and [t] which change into [b] and [d].

Hyb_En-Ng28: Carpenter [karpəntə]	→	kápìndà [kapinda]
Hyb_En-Ng29: Country [kʌntri]	→	kondre [kondre]
Hyb_En-Ng30: Lamp [lamp]	→	lambò [lambo]

4.1.6 Consonant hardening

Fricatives become stops and continuant sounds are replaced by non-continuant ones.

Hyb_En-Ng31: half [haf]	→	háp [hap]
Hyb_En-Ng32: wash mouth [wɔʃməʊθ]	→	wasmɔ̃p [wasmɔp]
Hyb_En-Ng33: wonderful [wʌndəfʊl]	→	wándáfût [wandafut]
Hyb_En-Ng34: nothing [nʌθɪŋ]	→	nátɪŋ [natiŋ]
Hyb_En-Ng35: thousand [θaʊznd]	→	tosi [tosi]

In a, b, c, d and e, the sounds [f], [θ], [l], [θ] and [θ] are respectively replaced by the sounds [p], [p], [t], [t] and [t].

4.1.7 Homographic nasal assimilation or nasal insertion

In the process of the adaptation of English lexical in ngômbà, some homographic nasals such as [m], [n] and [ŋ] are inserted before certain consonants.

Hyb_En-Ng36: bicycle [baisikl] → mbasəku [mbasəku]

Hyb_En-Ng37: jug [dʒʌk] → njók [ndʒɔk]

Hyb_En-Ng38: the some [θəseim] → ndisêm [ndisem]

Hyb_En-Ng39: grater [greitə] → ŋgrǎtà [ŋgrɛta]

Hyb_En-Ng40: dirt [dɜt] → ndotí [ndoti]

4.1.8 Glottal insertion

The glottal sound [ʔ] is inserted in some English loanwords in ngômbà.

Hyb_En-Ng41: question [kwɛstʃən] → khi'si [khi'si]

Hyb_En-Ng42: governor gʌvnə] → ŋgómna' [ŋgómna']

Hyb_En-Ng43: pillow [piləʊ] → pilu' [pilu']

It can be noticed that the insertion of the glottal [ʔ] is made at the words medial and final positions

4.1.9 [h] insertion

Not only the glottal is inserted in English loanwords in ngômbà but also the [h] sound in the loanwords below:

Hyb_En-Ng44: fever [fivə] → fibhà [fibha]

Hyb_En-Ng45: auction [ˈɔːkʃən] → hóksi [hóksi]

Hyb_En-Ng46: key [ki] → khí [khí]

Hyb_En-Ng47: kitchen [kitʃən] → khísim [khisim]

4.1.10 Monophtongisation

English diphtongs and thriphongs are systematically replaced by monophtongs in the borrowed lexical items. These English sounds are transformed into monophtongs because they are nonexistent segments in the ngômbà language.

Hyb_En-Ng48: motor [məʊtə] → mətua [mɛtua]

Hyb_En-Ng49: soldier [səʊdzə] → sonja [sonɔa]

Hyb_En-Ng50: comb [kəʊmb] → khûm [khum]

Hyb_En-Ng51: radio [reidiəʊ] → ladyô [ladjo]

Hyb_En-Ng52: rice [rais] → lési [lesi]

4.1.11 Vowel modifications

- Vowel shortening

Some English vowels that are long are shortened in the process of borrowing.

Hyb_En-Ng53: carpenter [kapəntə] → kápinda [kapinda]

Hyb_En-Ng54: cargo [kagəʊ] → kákù [kaku]

Hyb_En-Ng55: school [skul] → səkút [səkú]

Hyb_En-Ng56: auction [ókʃn] → hóksi [hóksi]

Hyb_En-Ng57: liter [li:tə] → lita [lita]

- Vowel raising

The pitch of some low vowels raises in some English loanwords in ngômbà.

Hyb_En-Ng58: candle [kandl] → kíndət [kindət]

Hyb_En-Ng59: trousers [traʊzəs] → tlósi [tlósi]

Hyb_En-Ng60: capenter [kapəntə] → kápinda [kapinda]

Hyb_En-Ng61: bad [bæd] → pát [pat]

Hyb_En-Ng62: watch [wótʃ] → wási [wasi]

It can be noticed that [a] raises into [i], [ə] changes into [i], [ʌ] becomes [a] and [ó] turns into [a] in example (15a), b, c, d and e respectively

- Vowel lowering

The pitch of other English vowels is lowered down when the words in which they occur are borrowed.

Hyb_En-Ng63: scissions [sizəz] → səsási [səsasi]

Hyb_En-Ng64: cement [siment] → səmət [səmət]

Hyb_En-Ng65: captain [kæptin] → kaptən [kəptən]

Hyb_En-Ng66: witness [witnis] → wusənét [wusənət]

[i] becomes [ə], [I] changes into [ɛ] respectively in examples (16a), b and c, d.

- Vowel rounding

Some English vowels become round in the course of borrowing.

Hyb_En-Ng67: witness [witnis] → wusənêt [wusənɛt]

Hyb_En-Ng68: number [nʌmbə] → numba [numba]

Hyb_En-Ng69: window [windəʊ] → wúndo [wundo]

Hyb_En-Ng70: dirt [dɜt] → dóti [doti]

Hyb_En-Ng71: purse [pɜs] → pósa [posa]

The English vowel [i] is replaced by [u] (example 17a and b), the vowel [ʌ] changes into [u] (example b), [ɜ] becomes [o] (example 17d and e).

4.1.12 [i] insertion

The [i] sound is inserted in some loanwords medial and final positions.

Hyb_En-Ng72: tax [taks] → taksi [taksi]

Hyb_En-Ng73: rice [rais] → lésì [lesi]

Hyb_En-Ng74: Thursday [θɜsdi] → tósidê [tósidiɛ]

Hyb_En-Ng75: lemon [lemən] → ləmási [ləmasi]

Hyb_En-Ng76: dirt [dɜt] → dóti [doti]

Vowels other than [i] and [ə] are inserted in some loanwords.

4.1.13 Epenthesis or vowel insertion

Hyb_En-Ng77: lamp [lamp] → lambò [lambo]

Hyb_En-Ng78: mat [mat] → mótà [məta]

Hyb_En-Ng79: table [teibl] → táplè [taplɛ]

Hyb_En-Ng80: lend [lend] → lèntà [lɛnta]

The vowels [o], [a], [ɛ] are inserted in the loanwords final positions.

4.1.14 Reinterpretation of [ə]

In the process of borrowing of some English words into ngômbà, the vowel [ə] is transformed into [a], [ɛ], [o] and [am]:

Hyb_En-Ng81: father [faθə] → fálà [fala]

Hyb_En-Ng82: dinner [dinə] → ndinà [ndina]

Hyb_En-Ng83: order [ódə] → ódà [oda]

Hyb_En-Ng84: tractor [traktə] → tlaktɛ [tlaktɛ]

Hyb_En-Ng85: pastor [pastə] → pástò [pasto]

Hyb_En-Ng86: corner [kónə] → kónàm [konam]

Hyb_En-Ng87: answer [ansə] → haksam [haksam]

The [ə] sound becomes [a] (81, 82, 83 and 84), [o] (examples 85) and [am] (86 and 87).

4.1.15 Metathesis or permutation of segments

This is a modification whereby a sound occupies a different position in the recipient language from its initial position in the donor language.

Hyb_En-Ng88: foolish [fuliʃ] → fùsì [flusi]

The [u] sound appears before [l] in the donor language and after [l] in the recipient language.

4.1.16 Consonant – vowel reinterpretation

It is a transformation whereby a vowel occupies the initial place of a consonant.

Hyb_En-Ng89: angle [eɪndʒl] → anjɛ̀ [andʒɛ]

Hyb_En-Ng90: motorcycle [məʊtəsaɪkl] → motosáku [motosaku]

Hyb_En-Ng91: question [kwɛstʃ] → khísí [khisi]

Hyb_En-Ng92: last [last] → lási [lasi]

Hyb_En-Ng93: satan [seɪtn] → sátà [sata]

[i] is replaced by [ɛ] (89); [i] is substituted by [u] (90); [n] is replaced by [i] and [a] (91); [t] is substituted by [i] (92).

4.1.17 Harmonization of prosody or tones insertion

ngômbà is a tone language whereas English is a stress language. When some words from English are borrowed in ngômbà, stresses are replaced by tones. Nevertheless, tones do not play the function of stresses. In the following examples, tones do not appear exactly at the same places as stresses from English into ngômbà.

- The high tone [ˈ]

Hyb_En-Ng94: handkerchief [ˈhændkətʃɪf] → wángílsì [wɔŋglisi]

Hyb_En-Ng95: cupboard [ˈkʌbəd] → kóbhá [kobha]

Hyb_En-Ng96: motorcycle [məʊtəsaɪkl] → motosákú [motosaku]

- The low syllable

Hyb_En-Ng97: bicycle [ˈbaɪsɪkl] → mbásəkù [mbasəku]

Hyb_En-Ng98: teacher ['titʃə] → cícà [tʃitʃa]

Hyb_En-Ng99: to try [tʊ'traɪ] → nǎtlà [nətlà]

Hyb_En-Ng100: factory ['faktəri] → fátlǎ [fatlə]

The examples above indicate that the low tone occurs almost always at the end of words. It appears on “ù”, “à”, “ǎ” and “ə” respectively in 97, 98, 99 and 100 respectively.

- The high – low tone [^]

Hyb_En-Ng101: jug [dʒ^g] → njók [ndʒɔk]

Hyb_En-Ng102: milk [milk] → mǎník [mənɪk]

Hyb_En-Ng103: shirt [ʃʒt] → shǎt [ʃʒt]

Hyb_En-Ng104: town [tavn] → tǎŋ [təŋ]

Hyb_En-Ng105: christmas [krisməs] → kilisimǎt [kilismət]

- The low-high syllable

Hyb_En-Ng106: flower [flaʊə] → flǎwà [flawà]

Hyb_En-Ng107: glass [glas] → ŋglǎsi [ŋglasi]

Hyb_En-Ng108: stranger [ˈstreɪndʒə] → tlǎnjà [tlendʒa]

Hyb_En-Ng109: saw [sə] → sǎ [sə]

The examples above show a harmonisation of prosody from the stress to the tone language ngǎmbà. Some stress syllables in English take the high tone or low-high tone in the borrowed items whereas some unstressed syllables in English take the low, high-low tones in the loanwords. More than modifications at the phonological levels, English loanwords in ngǎmbà also undergo morphological features.

4.2 Morphosyntactic processes

Morphology studies words forms. The various morphological processes which affect English loanwords in ngǎmbà include compounding, reduplication, apocope, syllable elision, derivation and syllable insertion.

4.2.1 Compounding

Yule (1996) defines compounding as “a joining of two separate words to produce a single item”. According to Mutaka & Tamanji (2000), it is the process of “bringing together lexical items that exist independently in the lexicon”. Three types of compound elements can be distinguished in the English loanwords in ngǎmbà:

- Simple compounding by the juxtaposition of two nouns

Hyb_En-Ng110: pocket knife (noun phrase)	→	panêp [panɛp] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng111: water road (noun phrase)	→	watalût [watalut] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng112: burial ground (noun phrase)	→	bənəglôŋ [bənəglɔŋ] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng113: bank master (noun phrase)	→	mbaŋməsà [mbaŋməsa] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng114: palm tree (noun phrase)	→	pantrê [pantrɛ] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng115: pepper soup (noun phrase)	→	pepesûp [pepesup] (noun)

- Compounding with the insertion of an “ú” or “ə” between the words

Hyb_En-Ng116: torch lamp (noun phrase)	→	tɔ́ ksúlam [tɔksúlam] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng117: Size pot (noun phrase)	→	sasəpôť [sasəpɔť] (noun)

4.2.2 Adjective + noun sequence

Hyb_En-Ng118: long chair (adjective + noun)	lɔ́ ŋchya [lɔŋtʃia] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng119: bad luck (adjective + noun)	balók [balɔk] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng120: bitter leaf (adjective + noun)	mbitalêp [mbitalɛp] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng121: big day (adjective + noun)	mbigdê [mbigdɛ] (noun)

4.2.3 Verbs + noun sequence

cover pot (verb + noun) kɔbhapôť [kɔbhapɔť] (noun)

4.2.4 Article + noun sequence

Hyb_En-Ng123: the same (article + noun) ndisêm [ndisɛn] (noun)

4.3 Reduplication

Chrystal (1987:325) defines reduplication as a repetition whereby the form of a prefix reflects certain phonological characteristics of the root. Reduplicated loanwords in ngômbà are scarce.

Hyb_En-Ng124: sand (noun) → saŋsaŋ (noun)

4.4 Apocopate

It is a process whereby a suffix is reduced in word formation. Apocopate deals with the deletion of the final element in a word

Hyb_En-Ng125: blanket (noun)	→	mbəlaŋ [mbəlaŋ] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng126: cigarette (noun)	→	siká [sika] (noun)
Hyb_En-Ng127: photograh (noun)	→	futù [futu] (noun)

The final syllable “ket” is reduced in the first example; “rette” is reduced in the second example and “graph” is reduced in the last one.

Other syllables in donor language words are suppressed in the borrowed lexical item.

Hyb_En-Ng128: frying pan → flepà [flepà]

Hyb_En-Ng129: pocket knife → panêp [panêp]

Hyb_En-Ng130: washing pan → waspân [waspan]

The syllables “ing” is suppressed in the first and third examples whereas “et” is elided in the second example.

4.5 Derivation

Derivation is the insertion of a derivational affix in a word in order to form a new lexical item. It results in a change of the original grammatical category of a word.

Table 6. Derivation in loanwords

Borrowed words	Category RL	Donor words	Category
nəsókɔ̀ [nəsɔkɔ]	v	Soap	n
nə hanyà [nəhanja]	v	iron	n

In ngômbà, verbs in the infinitive form are preceded by “nə”, this [nə] prefix changes the word class of the borrowed word from noun into verb.

4.6 Syllable insertion

In the process of integration of English loanwords into ngômbà some syllable is inserted in the borrowed lexical items.

Table7. Syllable insertion in loanwords

Borrowed words	Category RL	Donor words	Category DL
Latré [latə]	N	Light	N
DókfaàwèÈt	N	Duck	N

The syllables “trə” and “fáwə̀te has been inserted in the examples above. We did not find any explanation to these insertions during our investigations.

It is worth pointing out that English loanwords in ngômbà pertain to the grammatical class of

noun, adjective, verb, and adverb and can play the functions of subject, object and complement.

4.7 Grammatical loanwords

4.7.1 Subject

Hyb_En-Ng131: Káwù' nkú

[kawu'nkú]

cow runs

“The cow ran away”

4.7.2 Object

Hyb_En-Ng132: tálà jú mətúà

[tala jú mətúà]

father-my bought car

“My father bought a car”

4.7.3 Complement

Hyb_En-Ng133: mətúà tálà

[mətua tala]

Car father-my

“The car of my father”

In sentences (131), (132) and (133) above, the words “káwù”, “mətúa” and “mətúà” play the role of subject, object and complement respectively.

Apart from phonological and morpho-syntactic processes, English loanwords in ñgâmbà are also affected by semantic processes.

5. Semantic processes

These processes include narrowing, broadening, semantic shift and loan- translations.

Narrowing or specialization is when a general term refers to a more specific thing than the original referent. It is a restriction of meaning in the recipient language in the process of borrowing.

5.1 Narrowing

Table 8. Narrowing in loanwords

Borrowed words	Donor words	Meaning in RL
shúsi [susi]	Shoes	Sandals
mitin [mitin]	Meeting	political rendez-vous
njalé [ndzale]	Jewelry	earring
jwân [jwan]	wine	red wine
Fĩsi [fisi]	Fish	fresh fish
Hép [hɛp]	Help	financial aid in associations

5.2 Broadening or extension of meaning

Broadening is a semantic process whereby words of a donor language extend their meaning(s) in the recipient language. It is a generalization of the referent of certain terms to a wider range of things.

Table 9. Broadening of meaning

Borrowed words	Donor words	Meanings
nglĩsi [ɲglisi]	English	The language, a native speaker, the people of the North-West and South-west regions of Cameroon
Côsi [tʃæsi]	Church	Church, mass, religion
ndóktà [ndokta]	Doctor	hospital, nurse any employee of a hospital
Tôɲ[tɔɲ]	Town	town, district, area
ɲjakási [ɲdʒakasi]	Jackass	donkey, slave, convict
ɲgômna [ɲgômna]	Governor	Governor, government, chief of police

5.3 Semantic Shift

The meaning of some words change completely into others so that the original word and the loanword do not have any relation in meaning anymore. This change of meaning is known as semantic shift.

Table 10. Semantic shift

Borrowed words	Donor words	Meanings
səlpási [səlpasi]	slippers	sandals
wákà [waka]	walk	journey
káku [kákù]	cargo	Luggage, property
ndùla [ndula]	dollar	money, coin
fasim [fasim]	fashion	behavior
mbigdê [mbigdê]	Big day	public holiday

5.4 Loan translation

Words are translated so that they can express new realities. The translated loan only takes into consideration the structure of the recipient language as well as the message to transfer as it is proved in the examples below.

Table 11. Loan translations

Borrowed word	Donor words	Meanings
panêp [panɛp]	pocket knife	jack knife
bənəglôŋ	Burial ground	grave
watalût [watalut]	Water road	gutter
wasnêt [wasnet]	Watch night	watchman

Fibhaŋglási [fibhaŋglasi]	fever grass	a green plant used in the treatment of fever
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6. Conclusion

This paper has discussed cultural and linguistic hybridizations in Cameroon with a focus on English loanwords in the Bamileke language ngômbà. The study shows that as a result of contacts between English and ngômbà, many lexical items borrowed from English are transformed so as to suit the linguistic structure in ngômbà and used to pertain to various domains of life such as administration and religion, commerce and technology, culture and artifacts. The phonological processes that these loanwords have undergone include cluster simplification, consonant vowel reinterpretation and harmonization of prosody or tones insertion. As regards morphology, the findings show that the loanwords have undergone the processes of compounding, reduplication, apocope, syllable elision, derivation and syllable insertion. The results suggest that ngômbà borrowed English words from different grammatical classes and modified the donor words so that they can play the syntactic functions of subject, object and complement in the borrowing language. With regard to semantic processes, it is found that English loanwords in ngômbà are affected by narrowing, broadening, semantic shift and loan translations. As a path forwards into linguistic processes undergone by colonial languages in former colonial countries, this study suggests that further research may be done concerning language maintenance and language shift in Bantu languages within the context of the promotion of bilingualism with Western languages in Cameroon.

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