

# LANGUAGE CONTACT AND LEXICAL HYBRIDIZATION: THE YORUBA- ENGLISH EXAMPLE

**Samuel Ayodele Dada**

Department of English, Ekiti State University,  
Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Language contact to many researchers (Nelde, 1990, 2000; Igboanusi and Oha, 2001; Egbokhare, 2004) must inevitably lead to conflict. It is, however, remarkable that the contact between Yoruba and English as evident in this study has resulted in a compromise rather than a conflict, at a very unusual level, which is the morphological level. This research has its basis in the lexical hybridization of Yoruba and English. Lexical influence of English on Yoruba lexemes and vice-versa manifests instances of affixation, compounding, coinage, deletion, blending and reduplication. The paper implores Yoruba linguists to take the situation seriously by exploring in detail this peculiar process of Linguistic Borrowing within Yoruba morphology.

Le contact des langues pour beaucoup de chercheurs ((Nelde, 1990, 2000; Igboanusi et Oha, 2001; Egbokhare, 2004) mène irrémédiablement à un conflit. Il est remarquable, cependant comme le montre cette étude, que le contact entre le yoruba et l'anglais a abouti à un compromis au lieu d'un conflit, à un niveau apparemment étrange, le niveau morphologique. La recherche a pour base le caractère hybride lexical du yoruba et de l'anglais. L'influence lexicale de l'anglais sur les lexèmes yoruba et vice-versa, se manifeste par des exemples d'affixation, de composition, d'assemblage (coinage), de suppression, de fusion (blending) et de reduplication. L'article en appelle aux linguistes yoruba de prendre la situation au sérieux en explorant dans les détails ce processus particulier d'emprunt linguistique au sein de la morphologie du yoruba.

## 0. INTRODUCTION

Language contact phenomenon has remained a crucial part of modern linguistic discourse. Any two languages or speech-forms are said to be in contact if they are employed alternatively by the same bilingual person. Contact between languages is unavoidable and indispensable since no people can remain as an island. Indeed, in this regard, Millar (2007:387) states as follows:

Only very rarely, if ever, does a language find itself spoken in a completely isolated environment, with no contact at all between its speakers and the speakers of other languages...Indeed, for the larger part of human existence, the normal situation was probably for everybody routinely to learn and use two, three, even four different languages...it is thought that between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the earth's population are bilingual or multilingual...in much of Africa, ... the South Asian subcontinent, multilingualism is still the norm, and the same was true of Australia and North America before the European settlements largely destroyed the indigenous cultures and languages. The state of affairs that we may now think of as typical, with a single language being spoken with some uniformity over hundreds of miles, is a relatively recent development in human history, and it is not at all representative of what has been going on during the past few millennia.

As already evident from the foregoing, language contact is indispensable in that such a contact can enrich a language as well as broaden the world view of its

speakers, thereby, positioning them to be able to tackle developmental challenges resulting from their interaction with the rest of the world.

What is more, whenever languages first come into contact with one another, it is abhorred, if they remain in contact with one another long enough; they are finally embraced and become influenced by this contact. Thus, when two languages come into contact, the result over-time, if the contact persists, includes the emergence of loan words, borrowings, code-switching, bilingualism and possibly, the emergence of a third hybrid language or pidgin. In Nigeria today, there are some hybridization features evident in some mother tongues depending on ethnic or regional language in contact with English in particular. Indeed, these features are exhibited by Yoruba language which has been in contact with English since 1842. The contact between Yoruba and English can be said to have resulted in language convergence at least at the morphological level with the Yoruba language being the beneficiary.

This paper is of the view that morphology stands as a link between phonology and syntax. It studies how words are composed, the major components of a word and the function of each component. In sum, while code-mixing may be seen as a challenging mark of communicative strategy employed by bilinguals, even then, far more challenging is the phenomenon of lexical hybridization.

### 1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today, it is an established fact that Nigerian English (NE) exists apart from British English (BE) or Standard English (SE). It is also an established fact that NE is just a variety of the English language and that many Nigerians often merge pidgin or indigenous languages with the Standard English both in speech and in writing - a phenomenon known in sociolinguistics quarters as code-mixing. This poses several communication problems to users of English within the country as many Nigerians find it difficult to speak and even write good English without alternating between English and the mother tongue (MT) or pidgin.

Observe, however, that the phenomenon of code-mixing or that of borrowing is not unidirectional. That is, code-mixing and borrowing are not limited to English - based expressions. As evident in the study, Yoruba-based expressions/utterances, for instance, are replete with loans from English. Meanwhile, these phenomena of code-mixing and borrowing hinder a good mastery of the English language in a second language situation and lead to communicative stress as far as English - based expressions are concerned. Thus, we care to ask; Can this (i.e., the stress) be also true of MT-based expressions containing borrowed items?

Moreover, since the phenomenon of borrowing has some relationships with that of code-mixing, Yoruba scholars (Salami, 1982; Lamidi, 2003, 2006) have attempted to analyze Yoruba-English lexical hybrids as code-mixed items rather than regard them unconditionally as a legitimate part of Yoruba vocabulary. This analysis is rather confusing in that code-mixing/switching naturally belongs to syntactic analysis whereas hybridization belongs to morphological study. What is more, lexical hybridization just like code-mixing/switching is rule-governed. Thus, to discuss lexical hybridization as a syntactic process will definitely diminish its status as a linguistic innovation. Indeed, this kind of treatment undermines the innovative, artistic and creative potentials of the Yoruba - English bilingual as evident in the data presented in this study

Again, such a treatment subjects such items to various interpretations, since to the language purist, code-mixing and even code-switching carry a NEGative connotation. Besides, in the syntactic approach, the form cannot be separated from its formation, even as it cannot be separated from its function.

## 2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper examines the hybrid of Yoruba with English at the lexical level to enrich the vocabulary of the Yoruba language. The study aims to explore the innovative and creative development of hybrid lexis in Yoruba due to its contact with English. The paper is devoted to Linguistic Borrowing in Yoruba with a view of exploring the richness and diversity of such loan words or hybrid words in Yoruba and to expose the contributions of English to Yoruba morphology by examining the various processes of transfer and shift, compounding and contraction, blending and adaptation of English words and morphemes evident in the Yoruba language.

Specifically, morphological processes borrowed from English into Yoruba to be explored here include prefixation, suffixation, reduplication and compounding.

It is hoped that findings from this study will be instructive with respect to the process of Linguistic Borrowing in Yoruba; the richness and diversity of loan morphemes in Yoruba and also deal with such questions as the loan morpheme contribution of specific languages like English to Yoruba.

## 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study. The corpus of the study consists of mainly of spoken texts such as media programmes, advertisements, conversations, speeches and songs and partially of written texts such as drama texts and students' project works.

On methodology, the three important linguistic theories applicable to the study of word formation processes in language are: *Items and Arrangement (IA)*, *Items and Process (IP)* and *Word and Paradigm (W.P)*.

Items and arrangement theory is credited to Nida (1966) and Bloch (1966). The theory as explained by Hockett(1966:387) is as follows:

any utterance in a given language consists wholly of a certain number of minimum grammatically relevant elements, called morphemes, in a certain arrangement relative to each other. The structure of the utterance is specified by stating the morphemes and the arrangements in which they occur relative to each other in utterances – appending statements to cover the phonemic shapes which appear in any occurrent combination.

Thus, the theory proffers that an utterance or a word can be arranged syntagmatically into its combinatorial morphemes, as in the following:

- (1) *Read + er, boy + s, write + er, arrange + ment + s, walk + ed, read + ing, child + en, etc.*

Next to be explained is the Item and Process theory which can be traced to Hockett (1966). In explaining the theory, Hockett (1966:386) says that:

IP has nothing to do with historical change or process through time; it is merely a process through the configuration, moving from one to another or larger part of the pattern..

Hence, IP theory is a process of word formation which yields one form out of the other. It is an attempt at explaining the process a particular root or base undergoes rather than representing a morpheme with a morph as is done within the IA theory.

The third theory is the Word and Paradigm (WP) theory which was first applied to the analysis of highly agglutinating languages such as Latin and Greek but not to an isolating/inflecting language such as English.

Asiyanbola (2003:49) on word and paradigm model states as follows:

The word is its central unit, and the grammatical words (the vocative singular of BRUTUS, for example) are the minimal elements in the study of syntax. At the same time, the intersecting categories form a frame work or matrix within which the paradigm of a lexeme may be set out.

In the above excerpt, the significant item in word and paradigm theory is the word through which the various inflections can be added to the verb stem to reflect number and tense.

From the foregoing, the first two theories explicated here are the ones relevant to English grammar and the obvious models of approach in English Grammar books (see Nida 1965, Quirk et al 1972, Tomori 1974, Katamba 1993, Matthews 1993, Fromkin, et al, 2007). Thus, the present data gained insights from the two theories without necessarily being tied to either, since such flexibility is required in handling the complexities of a hybrid item.

In addition to the approaches above which according to Aronoff and Fudeman(2005), are analytic, the synthetic approach (see Koopman, et al, 2009) that gives the derivational history of a complex word of three or more morphemes within Chomsky's transformational theory was also incorporated. 'The linguist needs both' (Aronoff and Fudeman, 2005:12). This second approach (synthetic) to Aronoff and Fudeman is more often associated with theory than with methodology. On the other hand, the analytic approach has to do with breaking words down. In sum, the synthetic approach basically says:

I have a lot of little pieces here. How do I put them together?' This question presupposes that you already know what the pieces are. So in a sense, analysis in some way must precede synthesis.  
(Aronoff and Fudeman, 2005:12)

Thus, since the two approaches are complementary to morphology, the two, namely analytic and synthetic were adopted for the analysis.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS

In Nigeria today, there are some features of hybridization of lexical items that are evident in some mother tongues depending on ethnic or regional languages in contact with English. These features are exhibited by the Yoruba language which has been in contact with English since 1842 (Dada, 2007).

Our findings on this is handled in two sections, namely section 4.1 which is on morphological derivations i.e. the morphemes and the arrangements in which

they occur relative to each other. The other section, that is 4.2 is devoted to social and discourse motivations responsible for the formation of these lexical hybrids. The different morphological processes a linguistic item could undergo to become a hybrid item are: prefixation, suffixation and compounding.

Yoruba has three level tones. In this analysis, high tone is marked as [´], mid is unmarked, low is marked as [˘]. Again, tones have not been marked on the English part of the hybrid compounds since these parts remain largely English.

#### 4.1 MORPHOLOGICAL DERIVATIONS

##### 4.1.1 Prefixation

###### 4.1.1.1 Negative Prefixes: **dis-** and **un-**

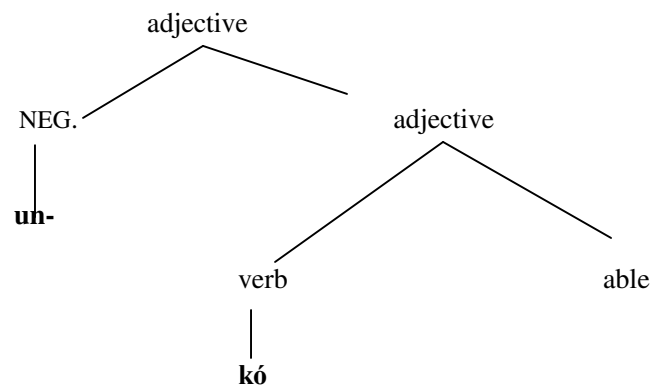
###### Prefix + Adjective → Adjective

The prefixes borrowed from English to form new items in Yoruba are just two: **dis-** and **un-** as in **disfarahàn** ‘disappeared’; **unkóable** ‘great/unfathomable’. These two prefixes are markers of NEGation (not) in these Yoruba items just as they function in English. The resulting words are adjectives. The derivational history of these items is as follows:

**Dis-** has been prefixed to a Yoruba verb phrase which is **fi ara hàn** ‘please present yourself/show up’ to form a NEGative verb, **disfarahàn**. Thus, **ó disfarahàn** (it disappeared) is a possible sentence in Yoruba with **disfarahàn** occurring in the verbal position. Whereas **un-** has been prefixed to a hybrid stem **kó + able** ‘able to be packed’. That is, the Yoruba verb **kó** ‘pack’ has been prefixed to the English morpheme ‘able’ before being prefixed again with the English **un-**. For instance, in Yoruba, we can say **ó wà unkóable** (it is unpackable, i.e. it impossible to pack).

In order to show clearly the hierarchical organization of the three morphemes composing the word, we present it on a tree diagram as follows:

Figure 1



On the other hand, Yoruba morphemes prefixed to English roots/stems evident in the data are of four types: **àì-**, **a-**, **àtí-** and **oní-**. Examples are as follows:

## 4.1.1.2 Negative prefix: ài-

ài- + Verb → N (gerund)

- (2) a. àibless 'refusal to bless'  
 b. àimarry 'refusal to marry'  
 c. àilate 'not coming late'  
 d. àibrise 'not bribing'  
 e. àiring 'refusal to ring'  
 f. àipopular 'not being popular'

The prefix ài- in Yoruba is a marker of negation in words formed with it. Indeed, it functions just like 'not' in English, e.g..

- (3) àimarry ọmọ yẹn ní fún òbí rẹ ní àibàlẹ̀ ọkàn  
 NEG.marry child DEM PROG give parent her ART restless heart  
 'The child's inability to marry in time is giving her parents concern'

- (4) àibrise rẹ̀ ní kò jẹ́ kí ó dááhùn  
 NEG.bribe 3sg FOC. NEG be CP 3sg answer  
 'Failure to bribe him made him not to answer'

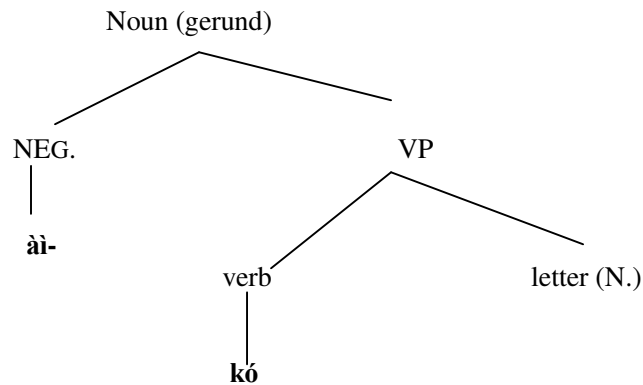
Again, ài- can be prefixed to a hybrid stem such as:

- (5) a. ài + kó + letter 'failure to collect mails'  
 b. ài + ní + photo 'having no photo'  
 c. ài + ní + pictures 'having no pictures'  
 d. ài + ní + motor 'having no car'  
 e. ài + ní + reason 'having no reason'  
 f. ài + dé + town 'not getting to town'  
 g. ài + fọ́ + bank 'not robbing a bank'  
 h. ài + jẹ́ + boarder 'failure to be a boarder'

In these examples, kó means 'pack/collect', ní means 'have', dé means 'reach', fọ́ means 'break' and jẹ́ means 'to be'.

Thus, kó + letter 'collect mails' a contracted hybrid VP in Yoruba can become a word when prefixed with ài-. The tree diagram showing the derivational history of such a complex word is as follows:

Figure 2



Sentence examples:

- (6) àinímotor è ni ó fi iyà jẹ  
 NEG.motor 3sg FOC. 3sg be suffer feed  
 'His inability to own a car is making him to suffer'
- (7) àidétown wa kó jẹ kí a ríran wò  
 NEG.reach.town we NEG permit it 3pl sight see  
 'Our inability to get to town prevented us from sightseeing'

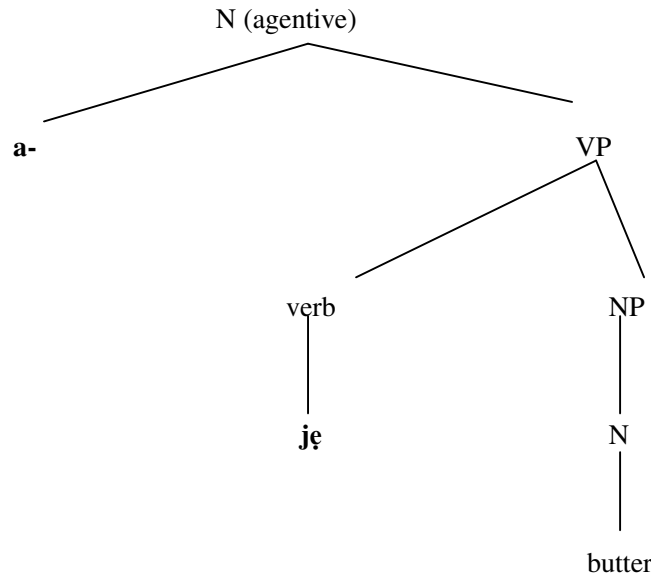
4.1.1.3 Agentive Prefix: a-

a + jẹ (Verb) + butter (N) → N (agentive)

The Yoruba hybrid verb phrase **jẹ+ butter** 'feed on butter' can be prefixed with the agentive morpheme **a-** to become the lexical hybrid: **ajẹbutter** 'born with silver spoon in his mouth'. Again, the Yoruba morphemes **a- + jẹ** can come together to become **ajẹ-** 'eater of ...' and this can be prefixed to English nouns as in:

- (8) **ajẹ-** + butter → **ajẹbutter** 'born with silver spoon in his mouth'  
 i.e. **a- + jẹ-** + N; diagrammatically represented as follows:

Figure 3



Moreover, the Yoruba agentive morpheme **a-**, can be prefixed to so many other hybrid verb phrases in Yoruba like **kóletter** to become **akóletter** 'mail runner'.

Thus, one may say;

- (9) Ajẹbutter kó lè □isẹ yẹn  
 Nickname NEG Mod to work DEM  
 'A gentle guy cannot do the work'



copying of that stem and association to the template.’ This implies that reduplication is an affixation process that copies material from the stem unto the affix. Thus, the copied item could be everything in the stem (i.e. full reduplication) or some of the elements in the stem (i.e. partial reduplication). Observe that these two methods are fully exploited in Yoruba morphology. English however employs only the full reduplication technique which is usually treated as compounds (see Quirk and Greenbaum ,2000; Asiyanbola, 2003)

Incidentally, the present data features only the partial reduplication technique, probably in line with Yoruba inventory. Indeed, full reduplication in English is either identical or only slightly different in initial consonants or in medial vowels, e.g. ‘goody-goody’, ‘walkie-talkie’, ‘seesaw, wishy-washy’, is not as accurate as that of Yoruba e.g. **darandaran**, ‘herdsman’, **pejapeja** ‘fisherman’, **gbomogbomo** ‘kidnapper’, **woléwolé** ‘sanitary inspector’.

In addition, tones of reduplicated words in Yoruba must be identical. Again, this feature of identical tones of reduplicated compound words distinguishes such compounds from ideophones. The focus here which is partial reduplication according to Oyebade (2007:247):

is used in Yoruba as a prefixation process, whereby a CV-prefix template is attached to a stem. In Yoruba, the V of the template is prespecified as ‘high, front, unrounded vowel’(i.e. i ) and the C part of the template copies the first consonant of the stem:

- (16) **lọ** → **lílọ** ‘going’  
**rìn** → **rírìn** ‘walking’  
**ga** → **gíga** ‘tallness’

The current derivation follows the Yoruba pattern above except that the stem is English while the prefix is Yoruba, e.g.:

- (17) a. **delay** → **dídelay** ‘delaying’  
 b. **direct** → **dídirect** ‘directing’  
 c. **reject** → **ríreject** ‘rejecting’  
 d. **miss** → **mímiss** ‘missing’  
 e. **mark** → **mímark** ‘marking’  
 f. **replay** → **ríreplay** ‘replaying’  
 g. **record** → **rírecord** ‘recording’  
 h. **misplaced** → **mímisplaced** ‘misplacing’  
 i. **repeat** → **rírepeat** ‘repeating’  
 j. **disgrace** → **dídisgrace** ‘disgracing’

The process as applied to hybrids in (17) may be stated as follows:

Copy the first syllable of an English verb, add this to the front part of that word, then change the vowel to **i** → **Gerund**.

The next affix in the list is suffixation which is discussed in the next section.

#### 4.1.2 Suffixation

In Yoruba, suffixes seldom change the word class of the root/stem to which they are prefixed (cf. Taiwo,2006:165). This is evident in the following examples in spite of the fact that the suffixes under analysis here were borrowed from English.

## 4.1.2.1 Noun → Noun

(18)	Initial word/ root		suffix	New word	
a.	<b>gàri</b>	food name	-ion	<b>gàrion</b>	'gari'
b.	<b>gàri</b>	food name	-um	<b>gàrium</b>	'gari'
c.	<b>omọ</b>	child	-logy	<b>omọlogy</b>	'pregnant'
d.	<b>Bólá</b>	proper name	-intin	<b>Bòlintin</b>	'Bola'
e.	<b>Kólá</b>	proper name	-intin	<b>Kòlintin</b>	'Kola'
f.	<b>Lékan</b>	proper name	-son	<b>Lèkinsòn</b>	'Lekan'
g.	<b>Shínà</b>	proper name	-mania	<b>Shínàmania</b>	'Shina's fans'
h.	<b>ámẹ̀bọ</b>	a gossip	-ism	<b>amẹ̀bọism</b>	'gossiping'
i.	<b>afẹ̀fẹ̀yẹ̀yẹ̀</b>	fashion monger	-ity	<b>fẹ̀fẹ̀rity</b>	'fashion mongering'
j.	<b>Dàda</b>	proper name	*-uz	<b>Dàduz</b>	'proper name'
k.	<b>Ayọ</b>	proper name	*-uz	<b>Ayuz</b>	'proper name'
l.	<b>Gbénga</b>	proper name	*-uz	<b>Gbenguz</b>	'proper name'
m.	<b>áwò</b>	(from <b>Awólówọ</b> )	-ite	<b>áwóite</b>	'followers of Awólówọ'
n.	<b>áwò</b>	(from <b>Awólówọ</b> )	-ism	<b>Àwóism</b>	'of qualities of Awolowo'
o.	<b>Yorùbá</b>	name	-oid	<b>Yórúboid</b>	'of Yoruba'
p.	<b>Ámẹ̀bọ</b>	a gossip	-oid	<b>Ámẹ̀boid</b>	'of Amebo'
q.	<b>Àjúwà</b>	name	-(i)an	<b>Àjúviàn</b>	'Ajuwa students'
r.	<b>Fẹ̀bí</b>	(from <b>Fẹ̀bísará</b> )	-(i)an	<b>Fábíàn</b>	'name'
s.	<b>búkà</b>	local restaurant	-teria	<b>bukateria</b>	'local restaurant'
t.	<b>Níkẹ</b>	proper name'	-y	<b>Níky</b>	'proper name'

The asterisked items are lacking in English, hence we consider them as coinages in line with the English inventory of suffixes since Yoruba does not even operate the suffix morpheme of this type until now.

Note: Derivations in **i**, **m**, **o**, **p**, **q**, and **r**, involve deletion in addition to suffixation; that is, deletion of **-a/-yẹ̀yẹ̀**, **-lówò**, **-à**, **-o**, **-wa**, **-sará** before the addition of the suffixes.

## 4.1.2.2 Noun + suffix → Adjective

(19) a.	<b>kọ̀bọ</b>	penny	-less	<b>kọ̀bọless</b>	'penniless'
b.	<b>pátá</b>	pant	-less	<b>pátáless</b>	'naked'
c.	<b>Koko</b>	name	-matic	<b>Kokomatic</b>	'like Koko'

## N + deletion + suffix → Adjective

d.	<b>Làbákẹ́</b>	name	-stic	<b>Làbástic</b>	'like Labake'
e.	<b>bákẹ́</b>	name	-cious	<b>Làbácious</b>	'of Labake's quality'

In examples (d) and (e) above, **Làbákẹ́** is the shortened form of **omọ̀lábákẹ́**, thus, **omọ̀** has been deleted to allow for suffixation, since there is no form such as **\*omọ̀lábástic/ omọ̀lábácious**. The morpheme **omọ̀** means 'child', **lábákẹ́** is the VP part of a desententialized sentence meaning 'should be honoured'. Hence, **omọ̀lábákẹ́** is a name derived from a sentence meaning 'a child should be honoured'.

## N + addition + suffix → Adjective

f.	<b>pẹ̀tẹ̀</b>	'over cooked'	-cious	<b>pẹ̀tẹ̀ricious</b>	'over cooked type'
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Again, in example (f) **-ri-** meaning ‘appears like’ was added to **pètẹ̀** before taking on a suffix.

#### 4.1.2.3 Noun/V +suffix → Verb

These suffixes are used to form verbs from nouns or verbs (with the ‘cause to be/ make like’ meaning).

(20)	Root		Suffix	Derived word
a.	<b>Yorùbá</b>	N ‘name	<b>-nize</b>	<b>Yorubanize</b>
b.	<b>Ìgbádùn</b>	N enjoyment	<b>-lize</b>	<b>Ìgbádùnlize</b>
c.	<b>Kóba</b>	V implicate’	<b>-lize</b>	<b>Kóbálize</b>

#### 4.1.2.4 Inflectional morpheme:plurality Noun + suffix → Noun

(21)	Base	Suffix	Derived word	
a.	<b>Yorùbá</b>	<b>-s</b>	<b>Yorúbás</b>	‘Yoruba people’
b.	<b>Túkétúke</b>	<b>-s</b>	<b>túkétúkés</b>	‘mini buses’

Note: Inflectional plural morpheme **-s**, a property of English morphology, now borrowed into Yoruba, does not change an inflectionally derived word from its basic word class. However, to say **Yorubas** when we mean ‘the Yoruba people’ amounts to anglicization. Moreover, pluralization is achieved in Yoruba through the use of separate words such as **àwọn**, **ẹ̀yin**, etc.

#### 4.1.2.5 Adjective + suffix → Adverb

The English morpheme **-ly** when suffixed to Yoruba adjectives results into Yoruba adverbs of manner, e.g. :

(23)	a.	Base		Suffix	Derived word	
	a.	<b>jẹ́jẹ́</b>	gentle	<b>-ly</b>	<b>jẹ́jẹ́ly</b>	‘gently’
	b.	<b>tẹ̀rùn</b>	satisfactory	<b>-ly</b>	<b>tẹ̀rùnly</b>	‘satisfactorily’
	c.	<b>lọ́fẹ́</b>	free	<b>-ly</b>	<b>lọ́fẹ́ly</b>	‘freely’

#### 4.1.2.6 Anomalous roots/stems Adjective/Adverb → Noun/Adjective

(24)	a.	Base		Suffix	Derived word	
	a.	<b>sọ̀bọ̀lọ̀</b>	protrusion	<b>-ation</b>	<b>sọ̀bọ̀lọ̀ation</b>	‘protruding’
	b.	<b>Kọ̀nkọ̀</b>	irregular	<b>-bility</b>	<b>kọ̀nkọ̀bility</b>	‘pejorative name’
	c.	<b>jágbajàgbà</b>	haphazard	<b>-tis</b>	<b>jágbajántis</b>	‘haphazard’

In the above examples, adjectives/adverbs, depending on the use, were used to derive nouns/adjective. For instance, in **Igi sọ̀bọ̀lọ̀ ni yẹn** (that is a protruding tree), **sọ̀bọ̀lọ̀** is an adjective. Whereas, in **ó rí sọ̀bọ̀lọ̀** (it is protruding), **sọ̀bọ̀lọ̀** is an adverb.

#### 4.1.2.7 Verbs → Adjectives

(25)	a.	Base		suffix	derived word	
	a.	<b>Kó</b>	pack	<b>-able</b>	<b>kóable</b>	‘packable’
	b.	<b>wúlò</b>	be useful’	<b>-less</b>	<b>wúlóless</b>	‘useless’
	c.	<b>fanimóra</b>	inviting’	<b>-ous</b>	<b>fanimórous</b>	‘delicious’

The next word-formation process in the study is compounding. This is the focus of the next section.

### 4.1.3 Compounding

The data presented in this section is that of N+N construction. Usually, In Yoruba grammar, N+N constructions are not treated as compounds. However, Yoruba compounds belong to three types of groups as rightly pointed out by Taiwo (2009:33). The groups are:

- Endocentric compounds - with head
- Exocentric compounds - without a head
- Co-ordinate compounds - sharing both heads

Taiwo (2009:33) best explains the foregoing as follows:

Compounds which have a head are called endocentric compounds while those without a head are termed exocentric compounds (Selkirk 1982: 13; Fabb 2001 : 66-67). Fabb (2001 : 67) identifies another type of compound ‘where there is some reason to think of both words (in a compound) as equally sharing head-like characteristics’. This type is referred to as co-ordinate compounds. Thus, in line with Taiwo (2009) this section discusses co-ordinate compounds.

The current data on hybridized co-ordinate compounds exhibit the coming together of two words with two patterns namely, Yoruba – English compounds (4.1.3.1) and English – Yoruba compounds (4.1.3.2) There is no form of phonological modifications evident in any of these compounds. Thus, lexical hybridization of compounds in Yoruba has probably taken after the procedure available in English, e.g. ‘rocking chair’, ‘deep-sea diver’, ‘laptop’, etc.

#### 4.1.3.1 Examples of Yoruba – English compounds

**N (Yoruba) + N (English) → N (N + N)**

- |         |                                     |   |                        |                              |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------|------------------------------|
| (28) a. | <b>omọ</b> boy<br>child             | → | <b>omọ boy</b>         | ‘young man/ fashionable guy’ |
| b.      | <b>wésè</b> boy<br>name             | → | <b>wésèboy</b>         | ‘the guy called wese’        |
| c.      | <b>èyin</b> boy<br>you (pl.)        | → | <b>èyinboys</b>        | ‘you guys’                   |
| d.      | <b>àkàrà</b> balls<br>baked beans   | → | <b>àkàràballs</b>      | ‘bean cake’                  |
| e.      | <b>Èpẹ̀</b> – city<br>village name  | → | <b>Èpẹ̀ – city</b>     | ‘village name’               |
| f.      | <b>Èdán</b> – boy<br>fashion        | → | <b>Èdán – boy</b>      | ‘personal name’              |
| g.      | <b>Èkìtì</b> – vision<br>state name | → | <b>Èkìtì – vision</b>  | ‘Radio/TV name’              |
| h.      | <b>Tóyìn</b> tomato<br>proper name  | → | <b>Tóyìn tomato</b>    | ‘nick name’                  |
| i.      | <b>tòkunbò</b> - tires<br>offshore  | → | <b>tòkunbò- tires</b>  | ‘fairly used tires’          |
| j.      | <b>wèrè</b> – somebody<br>fool      | → | <b>wèrè – somebody</b> | ‘an idiot’                   |

- k. **bàbá**-commander → **bàbá commander** ‘a musician’s nickname’  
father
- l. **Èwí** – in – Council → **Èwí – in – Council** ‘a traditional council’  
kingship title
- m. **Ọmọ** – àlè – trouser → **ọmọ - àlè – trouser** ‘riotous/funny trouser’  
child..- adulterous partner
- n. **ówò**-blow → **ówò-blow** ‘nick name’  
money bag
- o. **Wéréwéré-past** → **wéréwéré- past nine** ‘a few minutes past  
a little after 9.00 o’ clock’

Observe that by analogy from English regular pattern of pluralizing count nouns by adding the *-s* suffix, Yoruba people have come to add the *-s* suffix to compound nouns like **èyinboys**. Again, the resultant compound in (l) is of three words because it contains a borrowed English compound ‘in – Council’. Whereas in example (m), the resultant compound is also of three words because it contains a Yoruba compound **Ọmọ – àlè** ‘a bastard’.

We present the tree diagram for a few examples as follows:

Figure 4

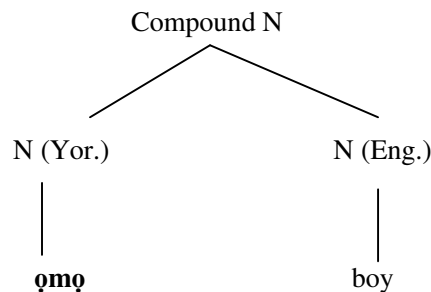
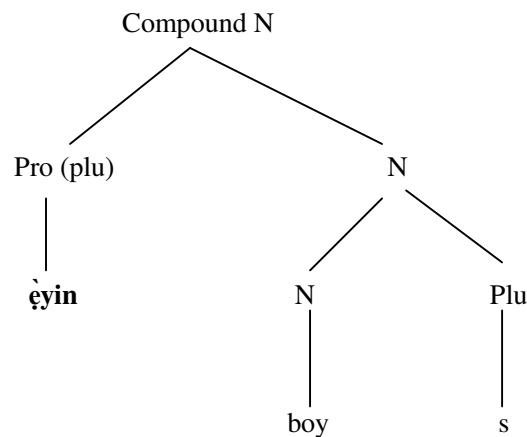


Figure 5



**NB** In **èyinboys**, there are two plural markers, in that **èyin** in Yoruba means a plural you. Hence, Yoruba has only borrowed another plural marker from English. In other words, **èyin** as used here can only be followed by a plural noun whether marked with ‘s’ or not.

Again, full reduplication is involved in **wéréwéré** ‘a few/little’ before being involved in compounding.

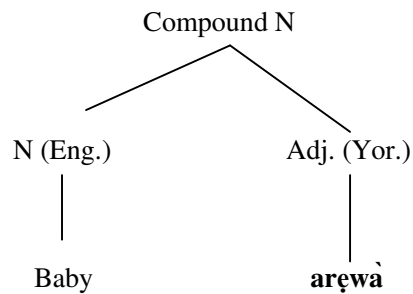
#### 4.1.3.2 Examples of English – Yoruba Compounds

N (English) + Adjective (Yoruba) → N (N+N)

- (29) a. baby- **arẹ̀wà** → **baby-arẹ̀wà** ‘pretty girl’  
beautiful
- b. born- **wùrùwùrù** → **born-wùrùwùrù** ‘fake Christian/ charlatan’  
a fake
- c. love- **wátíntín** → **love-wátíntín** ‘Romeo and Juliet’  
meaning indeterminate
- d. micro-**tíntín** → **micro-tíntín** ‘titbits to aid cheating in exams.’  
small

On a tree diagram, these nouns are derived as follows:

Figure 6



Again, for compounding to occur in the second example here, reduplication as in **wùrùwùrù** ‘fake’ had to occur first. We observe a tonal change here because this word is an ideophone. Blending or partial reduplication is also involved in the realisation of **wátíntín** before being recruited for compounding.

To conclude this section, it needs be stated that in Yoruba, some words are almost meaningless, in that at best they are used as puns with meanings residing either with their authors or the interpreters e.g. **yẹ̀lẹ̀kúyẹ̀lẹ̀kú**, **wátíntín**, etc.

#### 4.2 SOCIAL AND DISCOURSE MOTIVATIONS FOR LEXICAL HYBRIDS

The device of linguistic borrowing is a normal consequence of the contact of languages in multilingual societies. The use of lexical/structural transfer consciously or inadvertently reveals a deeper linguistic problem which is that of lexical gaps. Lexical gaps or accidental gaps feature in all languages. What is more, because of its existence, to add to the vocabulary of a language in many ways becomes possible. Moreover, the use of lexical hybrid gives the variety a local colouration and it often helps at identifying the socio-cultural background of the variety. Lexical hybrids thus constitute a unique linguistic tool for vocabulary expansion as well as discourse comprehension strategy in Yoruba.

Lexical hybrid goes a long way in expanding the lexical stock of the borrowing language. Today, many lexical/affix transfers exist in the Yoruba language. The examples of such words/affixes borrowed from English and incorporated into Yoruba formed the burden of this work. Further more, the use of English words/affixes with Yoruba words has helped to achieve some degree of economy of words. For instance, if the Yoruba words carrying the English adverb suffix *-ly* were to be written and described normally as Yoruba words,

certainly, such words would require much space than what the –ly suffix requires.

In short, lexical hybridization enables Yoruba bilinguals to express linguistically new and original ideas, in principle in infinitely many ways. Inversely, the phenomenon has enabled Yoruba bilinguals to physically manifest their thoughts or ideas in novel ways.

From all intents and purposes, lexical hybridization facilitates rather than hinders communication in the speech community. One major reason for lexical/affix transfer is the problems associated with cross-cultural translation of English. One of these problems is the lack of equivalent expressions in the target language. Another difficulty is expressing the nuances of the native culture in a foreign language. Thus, while speaking Yoruba language, native speakers do affix some English morphemes to certain Yoruba words in order not to lose the cultural and aesthetic value of such expressions. The effect of such usage may then be cushioned by juxtaposing them with translation equivalents or explanatory lexis from the native language. This is a creative use of language which no doubt stretches the artistic limits of the user of both languages in order to truly present an African lexis that depicts the action equally represented by the English lexis that supplies affix. Finally, we can say that translation and transference, which are forms of text incorporation characteristic of African literature, are some of the techniques employed in the creation of a hybrid item, a word formation strategy inevitable in a second language situation.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present analysis reveals the various word formation processes deployed for use with respect to Yoruba-English hybrid items. The major strategies involved in this Yoruba – English lexical convergence are: prefixation, suffixation, and compounding. Other minor processes are: clipping and blending. The prefixes borrowed from English are just two: **dis-** and **un-**. However, Yoruba morphemes prefixed to English roots/stems evident in the data are of four types: **àì-**, **a-**, **àti-**, and **oní-**. Thus, Yoruba- English hybrid items contain only a handful of English prefixes. No reason can be adduced for this since prefixation is a productive morphological process in both English and Yoruba, except that the major derivational morphemes in English, the source language in this context, appear as suffixes. The foregoing probably explains why English suffixes are the ones profusely exploited by Yoruba language as evident in the data.

The only prominent word formation strategy borrowed from English into Yoruba morphology is suffixation. Indeed in the present data, suffixation is the only method that is very foreign to Yoruba morphology. It should however be observed here how the other techniques harmonize with Yoruba morphological processes.

In all these instances of lexical expansion in Yoruba, the Yoruba user would have to have a good knowledge of English words to make sense of and find humour in such innovations and puns. What is more, it is required of him to have knowledge of the individual morphemes deployed from English for this purpose and knowledge of the rules that combine them.

Lexical hybridization introduces a major landmark with regards to the issue of languages in contact. What is more, lexical hybridization as a morphological process is an inside-out transformation as evident in the present data, unlike

code-switching (CS), which is an outside-in transformation. Again, because of its inside-out formation, lexical hybridization is a process not bedevilled with NEGative connotation, whereas CS carries more often than not a NEGative connotation. Besides, lexical hybrids if left unchecked have the potential of becoming a pidgin language or a distinct language. Thus, lexical hybridization constitutes a unique linguistic tool for vocabulary expansion as well as that of discourse comprehension in Yoruba. The process simply points to the emerging (socio) linguistic realities in Africa. Indeed, if this process goes on unabated then, it may develop into a new language shaped by many of the same linguistic forces that shaped other 'proper' languages of the world. The present paper is a key resource for understanding morphological complexity in some African languages. The above analysis further authenticates the following (socio) linguistic universals:

- (1) That certain word formation processes such as suffixation and reduplication are widespread but not universal;
- (2) 'That the linguistic ecology of any multilingual setting is always in a state of change, even if insignificantly' (Egbokhare, 2004:511). And that 'every language that is spoken continues to change, not just century by century, but day by day' (Millar, 2007:14);
- (3) And that when languages first come into contact with one another, they abhor it, but if they remain in contact with one another for a time, they become accustomed to it and endure it, and if they remain in contact with one another long enough, they finally embrace it and become influenced by this contact (cf. Dada 2007). What is more, the foregoing affirms that language is a living organism- it lives, it moves, it functions and it touches as many other languages as possible.

In conclusion, the paper serves as a prelude towards addressing the implications that morphological complexity has for (i) general linguistic theory, (ii) psycholinguistics, (iii) historical linguistics and (iv) computational linguistics. Thus the paper hopes to stimulate further research on the ramifications that morphological complexity has for linguistic theory and models of grammar.

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