LEXICAL INDIGENIZATION STRATEGIES IN CONTACT LANGUAGES: A CASE STUDY OF EDO LANGUAGES

BY

PEACE AZEGBOBOR
MAT NUMBER: ART2100737

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.

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A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS, LINGUISTICS STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE

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APPROVAL PAGE

I approve that the project was carried out by **PEACE AZEGBOBOR** (ART2100737) in the Department of Linguistic Studies, University of Benin, Benin city.

PEACE AZEGBOBOR (AUTHOR)	**DATE**
MR. G.O AGHARUWA (PROJECT SUPERVISOR)	**DATE**
DR. (MRS) P.O. SOLOMON-ETEFIA (HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)	**DATE**
EXTERNAL SUPERVISOR	**DATE**

PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **PEACE AZEGBOBOR,** with the matriculation number ART2100737, declare that this work titled "**LEXICAL INDIGENIZATION STRATEGIES IN CONTACT LANGUAGES: A CASE STUDY OF EDO LANGUAGES**" has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test and does not violate any copyright regulations.

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DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to God Almighty for his provision and grace. And to the prestigious department of linguistics studies, faculty of Arts. University of Benin City, And to all linguistics lecturers and student and most importantly to Edo speakers.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates lexical indigenization strategies in contact languages, using the Edo language as a case study. The study explores how foreign lexical items are adapted into Edo through various phonological and morphological processes to suit the linguistic and cultural structure of the language. Chapter One presents the background of the study, outlining the influence of language contact on lexical borrowing, and highlights the significance of indigenization as a means of preserving linguistic identity while accommodating new expressions. Chapter Two provides a detailed review of relevant literature, examining scholarly contributions on borrowing, language contact, phonological modification, and indigenization strategies in African languages. The review reveals that contact-induced change is a universal linguistic process influenced by sociolinguistic and phonological factors. Chapter Three discusses the theoretical framework adopted for the study, which is based on the descriptive linguistic approach. This framework enables the analysis of borrowed lexical items at the phonological level, focusing on modifications such as insertion, substitution, deletion, and extension. Chapter Four presents the data analysis and discussion of findings, showing that borrowed words in Edo undergo systematic phonological adaptation to conform to Edo phonotactic rules. Examples illustrate how sound patterns are adjusted to ensure natural pronunciation within the Edo linguistic system. The study also reveals that lexical indigenization is a creative process that reflects both linguistic necessity and cultural integration. Finally, Chapter Five provides a summary of the major findings, emphasizing that lexical indigenization not only enriches the Edo lexicon but also demonstrates the dynamic and adaptive nature of language in contact situations. The study concludes that lexical indigenization serves as a vital mechanism for linguistic survival, identity preservation, and cultural continuity in multilingual societies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Language contact has always been a central phenomenon in sociolinguistics and historical linguistics, arising whenever speakers of different languages interact and exchange elements across linguistic boundaries.. One of the most visible outcomes of such contact is lexical borrowing—the adoption of words from one language into another. However, borrowed words rarely remain unchanged; they are often reshaped, adapted, or indigenized to fit the phonological, morphological, and semantic structures of the recipient language. This process is referred to as lexical indigenization.

According to Windford (2003), borrowing is the adaptation of words or other lexical items from a donor language into the recipient language, often adaptation in pronunciation, morphology, or semantics. Borrowing involves speakers importing features from another language into their native while still maintaining their native language. Thamason and Kaufman (1988 but used in definition from - 2001) further stress that borrowed items undergo naturalization, where phonological, morphological, and even semantic adjustments ensure that foreign words conform to native patterns. Indigenization thus serves both as a linguistic strategy and a cultural mechanism, ensuring that external linguistic elements become part of the local speech community's identity.

The Ẹdo language, spoken predominantly in Edo State, Nigeria, provides a fertile ground for examining lexical indigenization due to its long history of contact with other

languages. Historically, Ẹdo speakers interacted with Portuguese traders from the 15th century, leading to the introduction of several Portuguese loanwords. Later, with British colonization and missionary activities, English became a dominant source of lexical borrowing.

In Ẹdo, lexical indigenization strategies often include phonological adaptation (e.g. insertion of vowels to break consonant clusters), morphological integration (e.g., attaching native affixes to foreign stems), semantic extension (broadening or narrowing meanings of borrowed terms), and orthographic modification to reflect local sound systems. For instance, foreign words are often nativized to conform to Ẹdo's syllable structure, tonal system, and morphological rules.

This reflects not just linguistic necessity but also a conscious or unconscious effort to preserve linguistic identity in the face of external influence.

In the case of Ẹdo, indigenization demonstrates resilience, adaptability, and the negotiation of identity through language. Studying these strategies therefore provides insights not only into the structural dynamics of the Ẹdo language but also into broader sociolinguistic processes of language contact, identity, and change in multilingual societies.

Ẹdo is a generic name given to the group of people who have a common ancestor and a common language. Ẹdo is the language of the Ancient Benin Kingdom. According to Ọmọzuwa(2003:246), 'History has it that the term Ẹdo came into use during the reign of Ọba Ẹwuare (1440-1473). Thus, the land became known as "Otọ Ẹdo", the people as "Ivbi Ẹdo" and the language as "Ẹdo" respectively. The language is spoken in seven out of the eighteen

Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ẹdo State with its standard form spoken within the Benin Metropolis where the palace of the Benin Monarch is situated. The seven LGAs are: Orẹdo, Ikpoba-Ọkha, Egọ, Ọvia-South-West, Ọvia-North-East, Uhunmwuọdẹ and Orhiọnmwọ.

Ẹdo is largely a homogenous language but varieties of it exist in some of the LGAs listed above, Ọmọrẹgbẹ (2012). The varieties include Ọza Nogogo, Ọza Aibiokunla, Ọza Nisi, Ọdiguẹtuẹ, Errua, Ehọ, Oke, Urhonigbe, and others. Ọza Nogogo is in Ika South LGA in Delta State, while Ọza Aibiokunla and Ọza Nisi are in Orhiọnmwọ LGA; Ọdiguẹtuẹ, Errua, Ehọ, Oke, are in Uhunmwuọdẹ LGA all in Ẹdo State. These varieties are however intelligible.

The Ẹdo language is an open syllable language type manifesting the simple syllable structure pattern. It is considered the core language of the Ẹdo area. The language was first written down by the Portuguese when they first had contact with the Ẹdo people (Imasuẹn 1996:3). However, with the influence of the British colonial masters, the language has been written with English alphabets. The orthography used in this work is one that captures all the sounds in the language as shown in Ọmọzuwa (2010:10-11).

Various attempts were made to classify the Ẹdoid languages. The first attempt was made by Williamson (1968) and (1970) after which Hoffman (1974) followed by Elugbe (1989). The Ẹdo language belongs to the Kwa sub-group of the Niger-Congo phylum (Greenberg 1963). Williamson (1968; 1970) classification is based on word lists collected

from a number of languages in the Ẹdoid group. She however affirms that the classification is not fully developed.

In the above classification, the Ẹdo language is identified as ‘Bini' and considered as a member of the Central Ẹdo sub group. Hoffman (1974) classification of Ẹdoid languages is not very different from Williamson’s classification. The only difference is that this classification has two subgroups namely southern Ẹdo and northern Ẹdo. In this classification, the Ẹdo language is referred to as ‘Bin’ and comes under the Nothern Ẹdo sub group.

Elugbe (1989) classification of Ẹdoid languages holds a different view from its hpredecessors. Elugbe (1989) divides the Ẹdoid area into three which he further subdivides into four groups, these three areas are: South-Western, North-Central and North-Western. While the four subgroups are Proto Delta Ẹdoid, Proto South-Western Ẹdoid, Proto North-Central Ẹdoid and Proto North-Western Ẹdoid. The Ẹdo language is classified here as a member of the Proto North-Central Ẹdoid group.

The present study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one entails the general methodology, the purpose of the study, and the significance and justification of the study. Chapter two is the literature view. It entails sections on the conceptual, the concluding chapter detailing the findings and the conclusion. This is the introduction with sections on the background information to the study, the review, previous studies and concerns of the present study. Chapter three is concerned with the theoretical framework adopted for the study. Chapter four is the data analysis and discussion of findings. This is followed by chapter five which is followed by the references.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In this study, the data collection method primarily involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive understanding of lexical borrowing in the Edo language. The primary source of data was through fieldwork conducted in various Edo-speaking communities, where native speakers were engaged in interviews and conversations. These interactions were recorded with the participants' consent, allowing for an authentic representation of language use in natural contexts. Additionally, elicitation sessions were organized to gather specific examples of lexical borrowing, with participants prompted to create new words using various phonological and morphological processes. Supplementing this primary data, existing literature, including dictionaries, ethnographic studies, and previous linguistic research on the Edo language, were also be reviewed to provide a well-rounded perspective on its morphology and lexicon.

For data analysis, a mixed-methods approach was employed. The qualitative data gathered from interviews and conversations were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and categories related to lexical borrowing. The transcripts were annotated to highlight significant examples and extracts of the lexical borrowing. Meanwhile, quantitative data involved counting the frequency of different word formation strategies identified during the qualitative analysis, allowing for a statistical understanding of how prevalent various strategies are within the language. This dual analytical approach enabled a detailed exploration of the grammatical rules governing lexical borrowing and provide insights into the cultural implications of these processes within the

Edo community. The findings from this analysis contributes to a richer understanding of the Edo language as well as the broader implications for linguistic diversity and preservation.

1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the Ẹdo language adapts and integrates foreign lexical items through various indigenization strategies. Specifically, the study seeks to provide a systematic analysis of the phonological, morphological, semantic, and orthographic processes involved in the naturalization of borrowed words in Ẹdo.

By doing so, the research aims to highlight the dynamic ways in which the language negotiates external influences while maintaining its structural integrity and cultural identity. The study is also intended to contribute to a broader understanding of language contact phenomena in Nigeria and Africa at large, thereby enriching discussions on linguistic change, language development, and cultural preservation.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to examine the various strategies of lexical indigenization employed in the Ẹdo language as a result of contact with other languages, with a view to understanding how borrowed lexical items are adapted, integrated, and sustained within the linguistic system of Ẹdo.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to:

1. Identify the sources of lexical borrowings in the Ẹdo language (e.g., Portuguese, English)

2. Analyze the phonological, modification used in indigenizing borrowed lexical items in Edo language.
3. Determine the extent to which borrowed words have been fully integrated into the Ẹdo language system.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Language in contact do not remain static they influence each each other through borrowing of words. When languages come into contact, borrowed words usually undergoes changes to fit the sound, structure, and culture of the receiving language. In Edo language many words from Portuguese and English, have been indigenized, but there are little detailed research on how this process take place. Most studies only mention borrowing in general, without explaining the exact strategies used by Edo speakers to adapt foreign words. This create a gap in understanding how lexical indigenization shapes. The vocabulary and development of Edo. This study therefore investigated the strategies used in indigenizing borrowed words in Edo and their impact on language change.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The study of lexical indigenization in Edo is significant because it provides insight into how languages adapt and evolve when they come in contact with other languages. By examining the strategies used to indigenized borrowed words, this research will reveal how Edo speakers maintain the integrity of their language while incorporating foreign vocabulary. This contributes to a better understanding of the process of language change, adaptation, and cultural preservation in a multilingual contact.

Furthermore, the study is justified because research on lexical indigenization in Nigeria languages often focus on widely spoken languages like Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa, leaving minority languages like Edo under explored. Investigating Edo language will fill research gap and offer valuable data on how less studied language respond to linguistics and cultural influences. The finding will be useful to linguist, lang planners, educators, and cultural scholar who are interested in language development, preservation, and the impact of globalization.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focused on examining existing works of different author and scholar whose work are related to this study. This chapter will be divided into three sections namely: conceptual review, previous studies which will give rise for the motivation for the current study, and the present study and it is concerns (concern of the present study).

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The concepts to be reviewed and extensively discussed are:

- Language contact
- Phonology
- Phonological processes

2.1.1 LANGUAGE CONTACT

According to thomasom and Kaufman (2001) "Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics" studied how languages influence each other when speakers are in contact. They argued that language contact can cause changes at all levels of a language—from words to sounds, grammar, and syntax—but the type and extent of change depend mainly on social factors, especially the degree of bilingualism and the intensity of contact. They distinguished between lexical borrowing, which is the adoption of words and is relatively easy, and structural borrowing, such as grammar or word order, which is harder and usually occurs only under intense, prolonged bilingual contact. It also emphasized that social conditions like prestige,

dominance, and bilingualism are more decisive than purely linguistic factors in determining what changes occur.

Thomason and Kaufman also studied creoles and pidgins as extreme examples of contact-induced change. Creoles often form in situations of intense contact and imperfect bilingualism, where speakers of different languages need a common means of communication. In these cases, structural features can be simplified, mixed, or reorganized, showing that contact can lead to the creation of entirely new languages.It also introduced a scale of borrowing and interference based on contact intensity: lexical borrowing occurs easily, phonological changes require moderate contact, and morphological or syntactic borrowing requires high-intensity, long-term contact. Their approach combined historical linguistics, sociolinguistics, and typology, using case studies to show how social and structural factors together shape language change. This work is considered a cornerstone of modern contact linguistics because it provides a predictive model for understanding how contact influences languages. While some critics say their model is too rigid and underestimates individual creativity, it remains highly influential in studies of borrowing, interference, language shift, language death, and creole formation. In short, they showed that social context, bilingualism, and intensity of contact determine which features a language borrows or changes, making their work essential for understanding how languages evolve through contact.

According to Thomas (2001) studied how languages influence each other when their speakers interact. She argued that language contact is a major source of linguistic change, but the type and extent of change depend mainly on social factors and the degree of bilingualism.

Casual contact often results in lexical borrowing (adopting words), while more intense, prolonged contact can lead to structural changes in grammar, morphology, or syntax. Thomason emphasized that social conditions—such as prestige, dominance, bilingualism, and the domain of use—are often more decisive than structural similarities in determining which features are borrowed or changed.

This study also examined creoles and pidgins as examples of extreme contact situations, showing that when speakers of multiple languages need a common language and have limited proficiency in the dominant language, rapid restructuring can occur, resulting in new grammatical patterns. Thomason's approach combines historical linguistics, typology, and sociolinguistics, focusing on systematic analysis of bilingual speech and social context to predict likely outcomes of language contact. This is base on clarifing the mechanisms of interference and borrowing, distinguishing between lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic borrowing. It also highlighted that intense bilingualism and social pressure are required for deeper structural changes, while vocabulary borrowing happens more easily. Thomason's framework is influential in the study of language shift, language death, code-switching, and creolization, linking social realities with linguistic outcomes and providing a predictive model for understanding how languages change in contact situations.

In World Lexicon of Grammaticalization (2005), Heine and Kuteva studied how language contact drives grammatical change. They argued that contact does not only affect vocabulary, but can also lead to the emergence of new grammatical structures. Through bilingualism and prolonged interaction, borrowed words from a source language can gradually become

grammatical markers in the recipient language, a process known as grammaticalization. For example, a borrowed noun or verb may develop into a tense marker, auxiliary, or prepositionunder the influence of the recipient language's grammar.

They emphasized that both social and structural factors determine the outcome of contact. Social factors include prestige, dominance, bilingualism, and the domains in which the languages are used, while structural factors involve compatibility between the source and recipient languages, which makes some grammatical elements easier to borrow than others. This study identified predictable pathways of contact-induced grammaticalization, such as content words becoming function words, full verbs turning into auxiliaries, or borrowed markers acquiring new grammatical meanings.Their methodology is typological and comparative, using cross-linguistic and historical evidence to show how grammatical structures evolve under contact. Heine and Kuteva's work extends contact linguistics from lexical and phonological borrowing to deep grammatical change, providing a framework for understanding how contact influences grammar and functional morphology. Their research has influenced studies of pidgins, creoles, language shift, and language evolution, demonstrating that language contact is a major driver of structural innovation in languages worldwide.

In The Handbook of Language Contact (2010), Hickey provides a comprehensive overview of how languages influence each other when their speakers interact. He emphasizes that language contact affects all levels of language, including vocabulary, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Hickey builds on earlier work by scholars

like Weinreich, Thomason & Kaufman, and Myers-Scotton, showing that contact-induced change is shaped by both social conditions and structural compatibility. Hickey identifies the main outcomes of language contact: lexical borrowing (adoption of words), phonological influence (changes in sounds or accent), morphosyntactic borrowing (adoption of grammatical structures), semantic shifts (changes in meaning), and code-switching (alternating between languages in discourse). He notes that lexical borrowing occurs more easily, while structural borrowing requires intense, prolonged bilingual contact.

Social factors play a central role: prestige and dominance influence which language contributes features, bilingualism determines the likelihood of structural change, and the domains and intensity of contact shape which elements are adopted. Structural compatibility also matters, as features that fit easily into the recipient language are more likely to be borrowed. Hickey also discusses extreme cases like creoles, pidgins, and language shift, where intense multilingual contact or language replacement leads to rapid structural change. One of the important of his study demonstrates that language contact is a major driver of linguistic change, with predictable patterns shaped by both social conditions and structural factors, and that extreme contact situations like pidgins and creoles illustrate the most dramatic outcomes of multilingual interaction.

In Language Contact (2009), Matras provides a comprehensive overview of how languages influence each other when speakers interact. He emphasizes that language contact is a central factor in language change, affecting all levels of language, including vocabulary, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Matras integrates social, structural, and

typological perspectives, showing that both linguistic structures and social conditions determine the outcomes of contact. He identifies the main mechanisms of contact as borrowing (adoption of words, sounds, or grammatical features), convergence (structural similarity between languages over time), interference (cross-language influence in bilingual speech), and code-switching (alternating between languages in discourse). Borrowing typically introduces discrete elements, while convergence reflects systematic structural adaptation.

Social factors are central: prestige and dominance affect which language contributes features, bilingualism increases the likelihood of structural change, the domains of use determine which features are adopted, and intensity and duration of contact influence how deeply languages affect each other. Structural compatibility also matters—features that fit naturally into the recipient language are more easily borrowed, though intense contact can lead to more radical adaptations even between typologically different languages. He uses a multidisciplinary approach, combining case studies, historical evidence, and cross-linguistic comparison, emphasizing the interaction between social and structural factors. This work clarifies mechanisms of borrowing, convergence, interference, and code switching, provides a predictive framework for understanding contact-induced change, and has influenced research on language change, bilingualism, creoles, pidgins, and minority languages. This study shows that language contact drives linguistic change, shaped by both social conditions and structural compatibility. Borrowing introduces discrete elements, convergence leads to systematic structural adaptation, and interference affects performance in bilingual speech. His work

provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing how languages change in contact situations worldwide.

2.1.2 PHONOLOGY

In “The Study of Language” (2010), Yule presents phonology as the branch of linguistics concerned with how sounds function and are organized in particular languages. He emphasizes that phonology is not just about the physical properties of speech sounds (phonetics), but about the systematic patterns and rules that govern how sounds are used to convey meaning.Yule highlights the central role of phonemes, which are abstract sound units that can distinguish meaning between words. For example, in English, /p/ and /b/ are separate phonemes because they differentiate pat from bat. He also explains the concept of allophones, which are context-dependent variations of a phoneme that do not change meaning, such as the aspirated [p^h] in pin versus the unaspirated [p] in spin.

According to Yule, phonology involves rules and predictable patterns in a language. For instance, the English plural morpheme /-s/ is pronounced [s] after voiceless consonants, [z] after voiced consonants, and [ɪz] after sibilants, demonstrating systematic phonological behavior. These patterns show that sounds are organized in ways that are functionally meaningful for communication. Yule also distinguishes phonology from phonetics: while phonetics focuses on the physical articulation and acoustic properties of speech sounds, phonology studies how these sounds are abstractly represented and patterned in the language system. The functional perspective he provides emphasizes that phonology is concerned with the role of sounds in distinguishing meaning and structuring words and sentences.

Yule (2010) presents phonology as the study of sound systems and their functional organization, focusing on phonemes, allophones, and the systematic rules that govern pronunciation and sound patterns. His approach makes phonology accessible and highlights its essential role in understanding how speakers mentally organize sounds to convey meaning.

Phonology is the branch of linguistics concerned with how sounds are organized, patterned, and function in particular languages. Both Katamba (1996) and Yule (2010) emphasize that phonology is distinct from phonetics: while phonetics studies the physical properties and articulation of speech sounds, phonology focuses on the abstract, systematic, and functional patterns of sounds that convey meaning.

According to Katamba (1996), phonology studies how sounds interact and are organized to distinguish meaning. Central to his explanation are phonemes, the smallest sound units capable of differentiating words, such as /t/ and /d/ in ten vs. den. He also discusses allophones, which are context-specific variants of a phoneme that do not change meaning, for example, [p^h] in pin and [p] in spin. Katamba emphasizes phonological rules, which describe

regular sound alternations like assimilation, elision, and vowel harmony. For instance, the English plural morpheme /-z/ surfaces as [s], [z], or [ɪz] depending on the preceding sound. He also highlights the use of distinctive features—binary properties like [±voice], [±nasal], or [±continuant]—to generalize rules across classes of sounds, providing a systematic and explanatory framework. Katamba's approach portrays phonology as rule-governed, systematic, and functional, bridging theoretical description with practical observation.

Similarly, Yule (2010) presents phonology as the study of how sounds function and are organized within languages, including rules of pronunciation and sound patterns. Yule emphasizes phonemes as abstract units that distinguish meaning and allophones as context-dependent variants that do not alter meaning, like the aspirated [p^h] in pin versus the unaspirated [p] in spin. He also stresses that phonology involves predictable sound patterns, such as the English plural /-s/ being realized as [s], [z], or [ɪz] depending on the final consonant of a noun. Yule clearly distinguishes phonology from phonetics, highlighting that phonology studies abstract sound organization rather than physical articulation. His functional perspective emphasizes the role of sounds in distinguishing meaning and structuring words and sentences.

Together, Katamba (1996) and Yule (2010) provide complementary views of phonology. Both scholars agree that phonology is concerned with phonemes, allophones, and phonological rules, focusing on the systematic, functional, and meaning-bearing organization of sounds in language. Their work underscores that phonology is not random but structured, rule-governed, and essential for communication, offering tools to analyze sound systems across different languages.

In “A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics” (2008), David Crystal defines phonology as the branch of linguistics concerned with the rules and patterns governing the sound system of a language. Unlike phonetics, which studies the physical articulation and acoustic properties of speech sounds, phonology focuses on the abstract, systematic, and functional organization of sounds and how they are used to convey meaning. Crystal emphasizes the importance of

phonemes, which are abstract sound units capable of distinguishing meaning between words. For example, in English, /p/ and /b/ are separate phonemes because they create a difference in meaning, as in pat versus bat. He also highlights allophones, the context-dependent variants of a phoneme that do not change meaning, such as the aspirated [p^h] in pin versus the unaspirated [p] in spin.

Phonology, according to Crystal, involves rules and patterns that govern how sounds combine and alternate in a language. These include rules for assimilation, deletion, insertion, and syllable structure. For instance, the English plural morpheme /-s/ is pronounced [s], [z], or [ɪz] depending on the preceding sound, demonstrating systematic phonological behavior. Crystal also stresses the functional perspective of phonology: sounds are organized in ways that convey meaning and distinguish words and morphemes. This shows that phonological patterns are not random but are structured to serve communication effectively.

Crystal (2008) presents phonology as the study of sound systems, patterns, and rules in a language, emphasizing the role of phonemes, allophones, and phonological rules in organizing sounds to convey meaning. His work highlights the systematic, abstract, and functional nature of phonology, distinguishing it clearly from the purely physical study of phonetics. Trask (1996), in "A Dictionary of Phonetics and Phonology", defines phonology as the branch of linguistics concerned with the systematic organization of sounds in languages. Unlike phonetics, which focuses on the physical articulation and acoustic properties of speech sounds, phonology deals with the abstract, mental representation of sounds and how they function within a language to convey meaning. Trask emphasizes that

phonology studies sound patterns and sound systems rather than individual speech sounds, centering on phonemes, the smallest units of sound capable of distinguishing meaning, rather than allophones, which are contextually variant pronunciations of phonemes.

Central to Trask's phonology are phonemes, which are contrastive units in a language. For example, in English, /p/ and /b/ are separate phonemes because the words pat and bat have different meanings. Allophones are variants of a phoneme that do not change meaning; for instance, the aspirated [p^h] in pin versus the unaspirated [p] in spin are allophones of /p/ in English. Trask highlights that allophones often occur in complementary distribution, which is key to phonological analysis.

Trask also introduces the concept of distinctive features, which are properties that differentiate phonemes, such as voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation. These features help describe phonological rules—systematic descriptions of how phonemes are realized as different allophones in specific contexts. For example, the English plural morpheme /-s/ is pronounced [s], [z], or [ɪz] depending on the final sound of the noun, as in cats [s], dogs [z], and horses [ɪz].

Another key aspect is syllable structure, which refers to the organization of sounds into syllables. Trask highlights the roles of onset, nucleus, and coda, important for understanding phonotactics, or the rules governing permissible sound sequences in a language. Beyond segmental features, Trask also addresses suprasegmental features—prosodic elements such as stress, tone, and intonation—which operate above individual phonemes but significantly influence meaning and grammatical structure.

Trask's approach is descriptive and structural, focusing on how sounds are systematically organized, and functional, emphasizing the role of sounds in distinguishing meaning. He treats phonology as rule-based, showing that phonological phenomena often follow predictable patterns. He clearly distinguishes phonology from phonetics (physical articulation) and from morphology and syntax (word and sentence structure).

Overall, Trask's work is significant because it provides a clear, concise, and accessible framework for understanding phonology. He bridges theory and practical analysis, helping learners and linguists understand how sound systems operate and interact within languages. His emphasis on phonemes, allophones, distinctive features, phonological rules, syllable structure, and suprasegmental features makes his account a foundational reference for both students and scholars of linguistics.

In "An Introduction to Language" (11th Edition, 2018), Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams define phonology as the branch of linguistics that studies how sounds function within a particular language or languages, focusing on the systematic organization of speech sounds rather than their physical properties. Unlike phonetics, which examines the articulation, acoustics, and perception of sounds, phonology is concerned with how speakers mentally represent sounds and how these sounds interact to produce meaning. Phonology analyzes patterns of sounds, how they are combined, and the rules governing their distribution in a language. Central to their account is the concept of phonemes, the basic units of sound capable of distinguishing meaning in a language. For example, in English, /p/ and /b/ differentiate pat from bat. Phonemes are abstract mental representations rather than concrete

speech sounds. Allophones are contextual variants of a phoneme that do not change meaning; they are predictable and often occur in complementary distribution. For instance, the [p^h] in pin versus the [p] in spin are allophones of the English /p/. Phonological analysis examines these patterns to understand how phonemes are realized in different contexts.

The authors introduce distinctive features as the properties that differentiate phonemes, such as voicing, place of articulation, and manner of articulation. These features provide a systematic way to describe phonemes and are essential for formulating phonological rules. Phonological rules explain how phonemes are realized as allophones in various environments. For example, the English plural morpheme /-s/ is pronounced [s] in cats, [z] in dogs, and [ɪz] in horses, demonstrating the predictable alternation of sounds in specific contexts.Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams also discuss syllable structure as a unit of analysis, consisting of an onset, nucleus, and coda. Phonology examines phonotactic constraints, or rules governing permissible sound sequences. For instance, English allows the consonant cluster /str/ at the beginning of words (street), but not all clusters are permitted. Beyond segmental features, they highlight suprasegmental or prosodic features such as stress, tone, and intonation, which operate above the level of individual phonemes but are critical for conveying meaning, marking grammatical distinctions, or signaling emphasis—for example, English stress differentiating nouns and verbs (record as a noun vs. record as a verb). The authors emphasize that phonology is central to understanding how language is mentally represented, processed, and produced. It provides insights into language acquisition, speech disorders, and language change. Phonology is distinguished from phonetics by its focus on abstract,

systematic patterns rather than physical articulation, making it a foundational area of linguistics that combines description and analysis to understand sound systems across languages.

2.1.3 PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSES

Crystal (2008) – A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics on Phonological Processes Crystal's A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (6th edition, 2008) is a comprehensive reference work that explains the major concepts and terminology in linguistics and phonetics. On the subject of phonological processes, Crystal provides clear definitions and examples, making the complex field of phonology accessible to both specialists and non-specialists. His explanations focus on how sounds are systematically modified in natural speech, highlighting the ways in which phonological processes reflect universal tendencies of language as well as language-specific rules.Crystal defines phonological processes as the regular and systematic modifications that occur in the structure of sounds when words are spoken in connected or rapid speech, or when they are adapted to conform to the phonological system of a language. Theseprocesses are not random or accidental; they follow patterned, rule-like behavior that speakers unconsciously apply. He emphasizes that phonological processes operate at different levels: segmental (affecting individual sounds), suprasegmental (affecting stress, tone, or intonation), and prosodic (affecting rhythm or syllable structure). Some of the key phonological processes described by Crystal include:

1. Assimilation – This occurs when a sound becomes similar or identical to a neighboring sound. Crystal notes that assimilation can be partial or complete, progressive or regressive. For example, in do language under assimilation will have nasalization. Unu —[unu͂]"mouth"

2. Dissimilation – The opposite of assimilation, where a sound becomes less similar to a neighboring sound. An example is the change from Latin anma to Spanish alma, where the nasal [n] changed to [l] to avoid repetition of nasal quality.

3. Elision (Deletion) – The omission of a sound, often in rapid or casual speech. For instance, the word camera is frequently pronounced [ˈkæmrə] instead of [ˈkæmərə]. Crystal observes that elision reflects the tendency of speakers to simplify articulation in fast or informal contexts. For example Edo language under elision we have vowel elision (where a vowel is deleted)

/ɛse # Osa/ —[ɛsosa] "God's gift"

4. Epenthesis (Insertion) – The addition of a sound to ease pronunciation or to conform to the phonotactics of a language. For example, some English speakers pronounce athlete as [ˈæθəˌliːt], inserting a schwa. Epenthesis is also common in loanword adaptation, when foreign words are adjusted to fit native phonological patterns.

5. Metathesis – A process where sounds change places within a word. For instance, ask is sometimes pronounced [æks]. Crystal notes that while this may seem like a “mistake,” it is actually a common historical process found across languages.

6. Coalescence (Fusion) – Two adjacent sounds combine into one new sound. A classic example in English is did you → [ˈdɪd͡ʒu], where [d] and [j] merge into [d͡ʒ].

7. Neutralization – The loss of contrast between two sounds in certain positions. For example, in German, voiced and voiceless consonants contrast word-internally (e.g., Rad /raːd/), but the contrast is neutralized at the end of words, so Rad is pronounced [raːt].

8. Vowel Reduction – Unstressed vowels tend to be centralized, usually to schwa [ə]. Crystal highlights this as a very common process in English, evident in alternations such as photograph [foʊtəgræf] vs. photography [fəˈtɒgrəfi].

9. Prosodic processes – Crystal points out that phonological processes also occur at the suprasegmental level, such as stress shift (‘record vs. record), tone sandhi (tone changes in tonal languages), or rhythm adjustments in connected speech. Importantly, Crystal stresses that phonological processes are shaped both by articulatory factors (ease of pronunciation) and perceptual factors (clarity and intelligibility). For instance, assimilation reduces effort by aligning articulatory features, while vowel reduction maintains speech rhythm. These processes strike a balance between efficiency in production and comprehensibility in perception.

Crystal also notes that phonological processes are crucial in areas such as Language acquisition, where children simplify complex words through processes like cluster reduction (spoon → [pun]).Sociolinguistics, since processes like elision and assimilation are often more common in informal or dialectal speech.

Historical linguistics, where phonological changes accumulate over time through processes like metathesis or assimilation.Language contact, where borrowed words undergo adaptation through epenthesis, deletion, or vowel changes. Crystal (2008) presents

phonological processes as systematic sound modifications that reflect the natural interaction between the physiology of speech, the structure of language, and the communicative needs of speakers. Processes such as assimilation, dissimilation, elision, epenthesis, metathesis, coalescence, neutralization, and vowel reduction are not random but highly patterned, forming an essential part of the phonological system of every language. His work shows that these processes play a critical role in shaping speech variation, language learning, and linguistic change, thereby making phonology a central area of linguistic inquiry. in David Crystal's (2008) view, phonological processes are rule-governed, systematic, and universal phenomena that help explain how languages simplify, modify, and organize their sound systems in everyday communication. Phonological Rules and Processes Crystal, influenced by generative phonology, explains phonological processes using rules. A phonological rule expresses the systematic way in which a sound changes in a particular environment. The general form is:

$A \rightarrow B / X \_\_ Y$

meaning "A becomes B in the environment between X and Y."

For example:

$V \rightarrow [+nasal] / \_\_ N$

This rule states that vowels become nasalized before nasal consonants.

Crystal emphasizes that these rules are ordered. One process may apply before another, and the order determines the surface form. For instance, in English plural formation, the plural

morpheme /-z/ surfaces as [s], [z], or [ɪz], depending on ordered rules of devoicing and epenthesis.

A major innovation of crystal (2008) is the idea of rule order phonological processes are not applied randomly but in a specific sequence, where one rule may feed or block another for example in the derivation of electric [il∈ktrik] a electricity [il∈ktrisiti], vowel alternation and stress assignment rules must apply in a particular order to yield the correct forms. This demonstrated that Phonological process interact in structured ways for the study phonological process are not simply surface adjustment but part of a speaker's linguistic competence. They are mental rules applied unconsciously by all native speakers of a language forming part of the inmate grammar that organized sound systems. This view makes phonology a cognitive systems, not just a description of sound change. One of the significance of phonological process is that it provide the foundation for later theoretical development such as lexical phonology, Autosegmental phonology, and optimality theory. Lastly phonological processes are rule governed, systematic, and universal phenomenal that helps explain how languages simplify, modify, and organize their sound systems in everyday communication.

2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Adegbija (2004, 2009) makes a significant contribution to the study of language indigenization within the framework of language contact, using Nigerian English as a primary example. Nigeria is a highly multilingual country with over 500 indigenous languages, yet English has remained the official language due to colonial history. However, as Adegbija argues, English in Nigeria has not remained a “purely foreign” code. Instead,

through constant interaction and contact with indigenous languages, it has been adapted, domesticated, and naturalized into a distinct variety known as Nigerian English. He describes this process as indigenization (sometimes also called domestication or nativization).Adegbija defines indigenization as the adaptation of a foreign language to suit the socio-cultural, communicative, and pragmatic needs of its new environment. In his view, Nigerians did not merely adopt English passively; rather, they actively appropriated it, embedding it with local norms, idioms, and cultural expressions, thereby making it "our own." Indigenization is therefore a direct result of language contact between English and the numerous Nigerian Language.

According to Adegbija, there are several key mechanisms through which English becomes indigenized in Nigeria. First is lexical indigenization, which involves borrowing and integrating Nigerian words into English. Examples include agbada (a traditional attire), okada(commercial motorcycle), tokunbo (second-hand goods), and mammy market (a Nigerian military term). These terms fill cultural and semantic gaps that English alone cannot express. Second, there is semantic shift or extension, in which existing English words acquire new, locally relevant meanings. For instance, in Nigerian English, trek means "to walk a short distance" rather than "to go on a long journey," go-slow means "traffic jam," and escort often means "to accompany." Such shifts show how contact with indigenous conceptual frameworks reshapes English semantics.

Another mechanism is phonological indigenization, where English pronunciation reflects transfer from local languages. For example, some Nigerian English speakers

substitute the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ with stops, producing tink for think. Similarly, Nigerian English tends to carry accents influenced by the phonology of mother tongues. There is also syntactic indigenization, whereby Nigerian languages shape English sentence structures and expressions. Examples include the extended use of sorry to show empathy rather than apology, greetings like How far?, and reduplication patterns such as small small or shine-shine, reflecting indigenous grammatical influence. Furthermore, Adegbija emphasizes pragmatic and cultural indigenization, where English is molded to suit Nigerian politeness norms, cultural idioms, and discourse strategies. This is visible in the incorporation of Nigerian proverbs, honorifics, and culture-specific ways of expressing solidarity and respect.

From these processes, Adegbija draws several core arguments. He insists that English in Nigeria is no longer a foreign language; it has become part of Nigerian identity. Nigerians do not merely "learn" English but reshape it to reflect their socio-cultural realities. Nigerian English therefore embodies a hybrid identity that is at once global (since it is English) and local (since it reflects Nigerian culture). This transformation is a direct product of language contact, which has led to borrowing, restructuring, and domestication. Adegbija also stresses that indigenized English varieties like Nigerian English are legitimate dialects, not corruptions or deviations from British English. They should be recognized as valid World Englishes, on par with Indian English, Singapore English, and others.

Adegbija's works in 2004 and 2009 both revolve around this theme but with slightly different emphases. His 2004 writings focus more on describing the process of

indigenization—how English was acculturated and modified in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context. His 2009 work extends this by emphasizing language planning, cultural ownership, and identity, arguing that English in Nigeria is now fully "our property." By then, he asserts, Nigerian English had matured into a stable variety capable of expressing both everyday needs and intellectual discourse. In terms of language contact theory, Adegbija's work shows that when two languages come into sustained interaction, the foreign language does not remain static. Instead, it undergoes structural, semantic, and cultural change to reflect the communicative needs of its speakers. In Nigeria, this meant English was enriched with Nigerian vocabulary, redefined through semantic shifts, restructured by local grammar, and infused with cultural meanings. The outcome is Nigerian English, a distinct and legitimate variety born out of contact and indigenization.

Ayo Adegbija (2004, 2009) presents language indigenization as the process by which English, once a colonial language, was domesticated in Nigeria through continuous contact with indigenous languages. He shows that indigenization operates at lexical, semantic, phonological, syntactic, and pragmatic levels, producing a unique Nigerian English that reflects local realities while remaining globally intelligible. For Adegbija, Nigerian English is both a symbol of cultural identity and a product of language contact, proving that indigenized English varieties are not defective but authentic outcomes of linguistic adaptation and cultural creativity.

Mufwene (2015) provides a theoretical framing of language indigenization within what he calls the ecology of language model. He argues that languages, much like biological

species, adapt to their environments in order to survive, spread, and function. For him, indigenization is the process by which a transplanted language such as English becomes reshaped under the influence of new social, cultural, and linguistic ecologies. This framework is especially useful for understanding the rise of new English varieties, including Nigerian English, Indian English, and Singapore English.

Mufwene begins with the idea that a language does not evolve in isolation. Instead, its evolution is tied to its ecology, which includes the speakers, the demographic balance of languages in contact, the socio-economic and political forces that shape communication, and the cultural practices of the community. When English was introduced to colonies like Nigeria, it entered a linguistic environment that was radically different from Britain. The Nigerian ecology included over 500 indigenous languages, strong cultural traditions, new communicative needs, and the legacy of colonial administration. In such contexts, English could not remain unchanged; it adapted to fit local realities, giving rise to Nigerian English.

In Mufwene's model, indigenization is not corruption or error but adaptation. Just as species evolve by adjusting to new habitats, English in Nigeria evolved by absorbing and accommodating local features. This adaptation occurred at multiple levels. At the lexical level, new Nigerian words entered English to capture local realities—such as okada (motorcycle taxi), tokunbo (second-hand goods), or agbada (traditional attire). At the semantic level, familiar English words acquired new meanings, as seen in Nigerian English uses like go-slow for "traffic jam," trek for "walk a short distance," or escort meaning "to accompany." Phonologically, Nigerian English reflects transfers from indigenous languages,

such as substituting /θ/ with [t] (think → tink), while syntactically and pragmatically, English in Nigeria incorporates structures and usage norms from local languages, for example the extended use of sorry to express sympathy rather than apology, or greetings like How far? According to Mufwene, these changes are outcomes of the contact ecology in which English operates. In Nigeria, the large number of indigenous languages, the multilingual competence of most Nigerians, and the socio-political role of English as a language of education, governance, and prestige all shaped the particular form English took. Nigerian English is therefore an ecologically legitimate variety of English, born from specific pressures and needs of its environment. It is not less authentic than British English but simply a different adaptation of the same linguistic species.

2.3 CONCERN OF PRESENT STUDY

The study on lexical indigenization strategies in Edo investigates how the Edo language, spoken in Nigeria, adapts foreign words—particularly English loanwords—to conform to its phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic norms. Lexical indigenization refers to the processes by which a language modifies borrowed items to fit its own linguistic system. Edo, due to extensive contact with other languages like (English, Portuguese, Nigeria language Yoruba and Igbo) has developed systematic strategies for integrating loanwords while preserving its linguistic identity. Phonologically, English words often undergo modifications such as vowel insertion (epenthesis) to break consonant clusters, substitution of English sounds with the closest Edo equivalents, deletion of incompatible sounds, and syllable structure adjustments to align with Edo's preference for open syllables

and simple consonant-vowel patterns. Morphologically and syntactically, borrowed words are often modified through affixation, reduplication, and syntactic reordering to ensure they function naturally within Edo's grammatical framework. Semantically, loanwords may undergo shifts to reflect local cultural contexts, allowing borrowed terms to resonate meaningfully with Edo speakers' experiences.

The study also explores sociolinguistic dimensions, including the prestige of English, language maintenance, and the impact of lexical borrowing on Edo's evolution. Using a descriptive-analytical methodology, data were collected from native Edo speakers through interviews and surveys, and a corpus of English loanwords was compiled to identify patterns of adaptation. The findings demonstrate that lexical indigenization is a rule-governed, systematic process that preserves the integrity of the Edo language while facilitating the incorporation of foreign lexical items. This research contributes to understanding language contact, change, and maintenance in multilingual societies, offering insights that are valuable for language policy, education, and the preservation of linguistic heritage.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the theoretical foundation for the present study. The research is situated within the field of contact linguistics, focusing on how borrowed words are systematically adapted into Edo through various indigenization strategies. Since the study seeks to describe the actual processes by which Edo speakers reshape foreign words, the descriptive linguistic approach is adopted as the primary framework. The descriptive approach emphasizes objectivity, neutrality, and systematic observation of linguistic behavior, making it particularly suitable for examining contact-induced changes. In addition, this chapter situates the descriptive approach within the broader field of linguistics, briefly engages alternative frameworks, and explains the relevance of descriptivism to the current research.

3.1 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The descriptive approach is rooted in the works of early structuralists and descriptivists. Saussure (1916) established the foundation for modern linguistics by

distinguishing between langue (the abstract system of a language) and parole (actual speech). His insistence on analyzing language as it is used paved the way for empirical and systematic linguistic inquiry.

Building on this foundation, Sapir (1921) argued that the role of the linguist is to describe language as it is spoken by a community without interference from prescriptive rules. Similarly, Bloomfield (1933) promoted a scientific and objective study of language, emphasizing observable data. Unlike prescriptivism, which imposes rigid standards of correctness, descriptivism recognizes all language varieties as valid and systematic. Labov (1972) confirmed this perspective in sociolinguistics by showing that even "non-standard" forms follow consistent grammatical rules. In the African context, Bamgbose (1991) and Adegbija (2004 2009) emphasized that descriptive linguistics is essential for capturing the realities of multilingual societies, where borrowing and adaptation are part of everyday communication.

3.2 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

The descriptive approach operates under a number of principles that guide its orientation:

1. Empiricism – linguistic analysis must be based on actual usage data, not prescriptive rules (Sapir, 1921).

2. Systematicity – all linguistic changes, including borrowing and adaptation, follow regular and rule-governed patterns (Bloomfield, 1933).

3. Neutrality – the descriptive approach avoids value judgments about "good" or "bad" language use (Labov, 1972).

4. Cultural Sensitivity – linguistic change must be understood in the context of the cultural and social realities of speakers (Adegbija, 2009).

5. Adaptation and Dynamism – languages are not static; they evolve through processes of contact, borrowing, and indigenization (Mufwene, 2015).

3.3 THEORITICAL RELEVANCE

i. It provides an objective method for analyzing Phonological modification such as insertion, deletion, substitution, and extension in Edo language borrowing.

ii. It allows the researcher to focus on actual data (attested lexical items) rather than abstract generalization.

iii. It situate lexical indigenization within the socio- linguistics realities of Edo speakers, showing how linguistics forms adapt to cultural needs.

3.4 THEORETICAL APPLICATION

The descriptive linguistic approach is a theoretical orientation in linguistics that focuses on analyzing and documenting how language is actually used by speakers, rather than prescribing how it should be used. Its core concern is the scientific observation of linguistic data as it occurs naturally in context, which makes it a powerful framework for studying contact languages and other dynamic linguistic phenomena. The application of this approach cuts across several levels of language study. In phonological studies, the descriptive approach is applied to record and analyze the sound systems of languages, including their phonemes,

tone patterns, and distribution. For instance, in Edo or Yoruba, descriptive analysis can uncover how native speakers employ tones and sound combinations, and how borrowed words undergo phonological modification such as insertion, substitution, deletion, or extension.

At the morphological and lexical level, the approach is applied to describe how words are formed, inflected, or adapted in real usage. This is especially relevant to the study of lexical indigenization in Edo, where loanwords are reshaped to fit the phonological and morphological patterns of the language without being judged as "corruptions." In syntax, the descriptive method is used to analyze sentence structures, word order, and functional categories, showing the actual patterns of WH-questions, focus constructions, and case assignments as spoken by native speakers. Beyond structure, the approach is also applied in sociolinguistics to document language variation across regions, age groups, and social classes. For example, it provides insights into code-switching, borrowing, and hybrid forms that arise in contact situations, reflecting natural language use in diverse communities. Another major application lies in language preservation and documentation, particularly for endangered languages. Through descriptive methods, vocabularies, grammars, and oral texts can be recorded and archived, ensuring that languages without written traditions are preserved for future generations. The descriptive approach is also valuable in applied fields such as education, where it informs curriculum development by aligning teaching with the varieties actually spoken by learners.

In lexicography and translation, it provides the data necessary for building accurate dictionaries and glossaries, while in computational linguistics, descriptive analysis supplies the raw material needed for natural language processing models. In summary, the descriptive linguistic approach is theoretically applied in the analysis of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and sociolinguistic variation. It is particularly useful in studying contact languages like Edo, where it helps to explain lexical indigenization strategies, while also contributing to language documentation, education, and applied linguistics. Its overall strength lies in providing an objective and scientific description of how language is used in practice, rather than prescribing how it ought to be used.

3.5 THEORITICAL APPLICATION TO THE STUDY OF LEXICAL INDIGENIZATION STRATEGIES IN CONTACT LANGUAGES

The descriptive linguistic approach is particularly applicable to the study of lexical indigenization strategies at the phonological level because it provides a systematic framework for analyzing how borrowed words are reshaped to conform to the sound system of the recipient language. In the case of Edo, borrowed lexical items from English and other contact languages undergo consistent modifications that reflect the phonotactic rules and syllable preferences of Edo speakers. Since the descriptive approach emphasizes recording and explaining language as it is actually used, without judging forms against prescriptive norms, it is well suited to account for the ways in which these borrowed words are adapted.

One major phonological strategy in Edo is vowel insertion. This occurs when vowels are added to break up consonant clusters or to avoid word-final consonants, which are generally

disallowed in Edo. For example, the English word school becomes esuku. In this cases, the added vowels make the words conform to Edo's preference for open syllables. Another common strategy is consonant substitution, which involves replacing sounds absent in Edo with their closest phonetic equivalents. For instance, the English word plate is indigenized as piliti, where the /pl/ cluster is broken apart and replaced with sounds that fit Edo's phonological inventory. In many loanwords, the English phoneme /v/ is replaced with /b/ or /f/, reflecting the adaptation of non-native sounds to Edo's system.

Deletion is also a frequent modification, in which consonants that cannot be accommodated in Edo syllable structure are omitted. This often affects final consonants in English words, which are dropped or followed by a vowel in order to avoid closed syllables. Extension, on the other hand, occurs when words are lengthened through the addition of extra syllables or vowels, allowing them to align with Edo's prosodic patterns. For example, single-syllable words are often extended into disyllabic or trisyllabic forms.

By applying the descriptive linguistic approach, these processes are treated not as corruptions of the source words but as natural, rule-governed adaptations. The approach allows the researcher to classify the strategies of insertion, substitution, deletion, and extension and to explain them in terms of Edo's phonotactic restrictions and syllable structure. It further demonstrates that indigenization at the phonological level is systematic, patterned, and motivated by the need to integrate foreign lexical items into the Edo language without disrupting its internal sound rules.

3.6 ALTERNATIVE THEORETICAL APPROACHES

To highlight the strength of the descriptive framework, it is necessary to briefly consider other theories commonly used in contact linguistics.

3.6.1 OPTIONALITY THEORICAL

Proposed by Prince and Smolensky (1993), OT models linguistic outcomes as the result of competing constraints. In loanword phonology, OT can explain why certain forms are modified in specific ways—for instance, why clusters are avoided in Edo borrowings (school → esuku). However, OT is highly abstract and formal, often neglecting cultural and social motivations behind lexical adaptation.

3.6.2 SOCIOPHONOLOGY

As explained by Trudgill (1986) and Ugorji (2012), sociophonology emphasizes the role of social context in shaping phonological change. It accounts for why certain borrowings become widespread due to identity or prestige factors. Yet, while insightful for social motivations, it often under represents the structural detail of phonological and morphological adaptation.

3.6.3 LANGUAGE ECOLOGY

Mufwene (2001, 2015) views language as an evolving ecosystem. Borrowing and indigenization are seen as survival mechanisms, where linguistic forms are reshaped to fit new environments. While broad and useful, language ecology lacks the fine-grained

descriptive detail necessary for analyzing specific phonological and morphological changes in Edo.

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the theoretical framework guiding the study. The descriptive linguistic approach was selected as the most appropriate framework for analyzing lexical indigenization strategies in Edo. By focusing on empirical data, neutrality, and systematic observation, descriptivism provides a robust and holistic basis for examining how Edo speakers reshape borrowed words. While other theories such as Optimality Theory, Sociophonology, and Language Ecology offer valuable insights, the descriptive approach is uniquely relevant because it integrates both the structural and sociocultural aspects of borrowing. This framework will therefore guide the data collection, analysis, and interpretation in subsequent chapters

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the various Phonological modification that occurs in the data, the section will be divided into two. First the analysis of the data which reflect the specific objectives of this research, also we have the discussion of finding.

4.1 ANALYSIS

This section analysis the data into different Phonological modification, and this analysis will be divided into two sections; words with single Phonological modification and words with multiple phonological modification as followed.

4.1.1 WORD WITH SINGLE PHONOLOGICAL MODIFICATION

This are word that only one phonological modification occurs to fit into the structure of Edo language and they are as followed.

4.1.1.1 PHONOLOGICAL INSERTION

Phonological insertion occurs or refers to the process where a sound or a phoneme is added inside a word (a constant or vowel) to break up cluster or ease pronunciation.

In Edo language as a case study most time vowel are inserted in a word to fit into the Syllable structure of Edo and also for easy pronunciation. From the data below, which show the analysis of word with phonological insertion.

From the language Portuguese which came in contact with Edo , we will use a Portuguese word, and how it is borrowed into Edo with the Phonological insertion.

1a Portuguese Edo Gloss

Pipa — épípá " a keg of gun powder, cask,barrel"

From the data above, in Edo language when the word "Pipa" in Portuguese is borrowed into Edo language, the sound /∈ / is inserted into the word to fit into the syllable structure of Edo language, and this happen in Edo language because, all nouns start with vowel in order for the Portuguese word to (Pipa) to fit into Edo syllable structure / ∈/ as to be inserted into the word which changes to "epipa" in Edo language. Consider more data from 1b - 1E in English and Portuguese which came in contact with Edo, and the borrowed word in Edo that as phonological insertion.

1b Tomate — ètòmàtò "tomatoes"

C. School. — èsúkù

D. Remote — èrémòtì

E. Stove — èsítòvù

The above data in (1b - E) are use to show Phonological insertion in (1a) and thesame analysis is also being carried on the above.

4.1.1.2 PHONOLOGICAL DELETION

Phonological deletion refers to the Phonological modification where by a sound is omitted or deleted after it as been borrowed into a language.

From the language English which came in contact with Edo, we will see a English word and how it is being borrowed into Edo language with the Phonological deletion.

Portuguese Edo gloss

1a Aduana àdánà. "a measure for buying palm kernel, garri, and cocoa beans"

As seen from the data above, when the word "Aduana" in Portuguese was borrowed into Edo language, /u/ sound was deleted from the word, which is now represented as "àdánà" in Edo language which shows phonological deletion. Consider more data from English and Portuguese

1b Cigarette — èsígà

C. Goal — ègó

D. Roller — èrólà

The above examples in (1b-d) are use to show Phonological deletion, and the same deletion that occurs in (1a) also occur in the data above.

4.1.2 WORDS WITH MULTIPLE PHONOLOGICAL MODIFICATION

This are words that more than one Phonological modification occur in them (it could be two, three or even four phonological modification) to fit into the syllable structure of Edo language and they are as follow.

4.1.2.1 PHONOLOGICAL INSERTION AND DELETION

This is a Phonological modification where by both insertion and deletion modification occur in one word and this is possible with word that is being borrowed into Edo language; Examples from Portuguese and the borrowed word in Edo language.

Portuguese Ẹdo Gloss

1a Bazar - èbàzà ‘bazaar market’ (trade)

As seen in the data above, we can see the sound /r/ was deleted when the word was borrowed into Edo, and the sound /e/ was inserted into the word when it as been borrowed. Consider other examples from English and Portuguese.

1b caneca — èbíkà

C. Atacado— àtákà " a roll of tabacco"

D motor — ìmòtò

E. Grapefruit — ègírrèpì

From the above date we can that two phonological modification occur in each of the words stated in example 1a.

4.1.2.2 PHONOLOGICAL INSERTION AND SUBSTITUTION.

This is a phonological modification where by a sound is replaced with another sound(substitution) also a sound is inserted in the word ; both phonological modification occur in one word. Examples from Portuguese and the borrowed word in Edo language.

	Portuguese.	Edo.	Gloss
1a	carreta	èkàrrétà	" An indigenized dance from Portuguese "

From the data above we can see the /k/ is use to substitute for another sound because in Edo we do not have/c/, so /k/ is the closes sound to it in Edo language that can be used to substitute for it. We also see the sound /e/ that was inserted in the word. Consider other examples from English and Portuguese

1b faca — èfáká "razor"

C bica — èbìká "earthen water pot"

D cafe — èkófí. " coffee"

E camera – èkáméràà "camera"

From the data above, we can also see two phonological modification (insertion and substitution) that occur in the data stated in example 1a.

4.1.2.3 PHONOLOGICAL INSERTION, SUBSTITUTION, AND DELETION

This is a phonological modification where three modification occur in one word, which are inserting a sound, replacing a sound with another sound, and lastly deleting a sound. And this modification occurs in some of the words that is being borrowed into Edo language. Example from Portuguese and the borrowed word in Edo.

	Portuguese	Edo	Gloss
1a	Capitao —	èkàpítè	War captain

From the presented data above we can see the three phonological modification that occur in the word "capitao" — "ekapite" we can see /e/ is inserted, and /k/ is used to substitute for another sound/c/, lastly /o/ was deleted after the word as been borrowed into Edo language. Consider other data from English and Portuguese.

1b serra — `ọsárà or `ẹsárà "saw for sawing wood"

C caneca — èkàlákà " glass"

D limao — àlìmóì "orange, lemon"

E cement —. èsìm`ẹtí "cement"

From the data above we can also see the three phonological modification that occur in the words as stated in 1a.

4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section will discuss the findings in our data analysis. This section consist of five paragraphs as followed.

Phonological insertion also referred to as epenthesis, involves the addition of extra vowel or consonant sounds into borrowed words in order to align them with the syllable structure and phonotactic constraints of the Edo language. Since Edo, like many Niger-Congo languages, tends to prefer open syllables (CV) and avoids complex consonant clusters or syllable-final consonants, insertion provides a natural mechanism for adapting foreign lexical items. This strategy highlights the systematic nature of phonological repair in contact situations. Instead of directly adopting the foreign phonological form, Edo speakers remodel it to maintain phonological naturalness and ease of articulation within their native system. The process also reflects the principle of phonotactics accommodation, where structural constraints of the borrowing language (Edo) override the phonetic fidelity to the source language (English or others). lastly, it resolves phonotactic incompatibilities, facilitates ease of pronunciation, ensures linguistic economy, and supports sociocultural identity. By inserting vowels or consonants to reshape borrowed words, Edo effectively integrates foreign lexicon into its native system, demonstrating the dynamic nature of language contact and adaptation.

Portuguese Edo Gloss

For example : pipa — èpípà "a key of ground powder, cask, barrel"

English Edo

School— èsúkù

Phonological deletion, which involves the omission of certain sounds from borrowed words that do not conform to Edo phonetic rules or that pose articulatory difficulty. Edo prefers a simple consonant-vowel (CV) syllable structure and generally avoids consonant clusters and word-final consonants, so when words are borrowed from languages such as English, segments that violate these constraints are often dropped. For example, the English word stamp may be adapted as stam with the final /p/ deleted, while cart may become kata, with the final /t/omitted. This process is systematic, as consonants in coda positions or those occurring in clusters not allowed in Edo are the most likely to be deleted, such as final fricatives or stops. Deletion thus serves as a form of structural accommodation, simplifying borrowed forms and making them conform to Edo's phonological system while still retaining enough of the original identity to be intelligible.

Portuguese Edo Gloss

For example: Aduana — àdánà "a measure of buying palm kernel garri, etc."

English Edo

Cigarette èsígà

In Edo as a contact language, some borrowed words undergo a combination of both phonological insertion and deletion as part of their indigenization, reflecting the complex strategies speakers use to remodel foreign items into acceptable Edo forms. This process occurs when a loanword has features that are simultaneously impermissible in Edo phonetic such as consonant clusters, diphthongs, or final consonants, and therefore requires both the

insertion of new vowels and the deletion of certain sounds to produce a form that conforms to the Edo consonant-vowel (CV) syllable structure. This dual strategy highlights the principle of phonological repair, where insertion ensures syllable well- form and deletion eliminates segments that cannot be accommodated by Edo's phonological system. The outcome is a borrowed word that is structurally natural for Edo speakers and easy to articulate, yet still retains enough resemblance to the source form for semantic recognition. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the combined use of insertion and deletion reflects the dynamic nature of language contact, showing how Edo speakers adapt and domesticate foreign words while maintaining the integrity of their phonological identity. Over time, these doubly modified forms stabilize and circulate as standard within the community, becoming fully integrated into the Edo lexicon.

Portuguese Ẹdo Gloss

For example: Atacado – àtákà "a roll of tabacco "

Bazar — èbázà 'bazaar market (trade)'

In Edo as a contact language, some borrowed words undergo a combination of phonological insertion and substitution in the process of lexical indigenization, and this dual strategy reflects how the language remodels foreign items to suit its phonological system. Insertion occurs when extra vowels are added to break up impermissible consonant clusters or to avoid word-final consonants, while substitution takes place when a foreign sound that does not exist in Edo is replaced with the nearest equivalent sound in the language. When both occur in a single word, the result is a borrowed form that is both structurally acceptable

and articulatorily natural for Edo speakers. For example, the English word may surface in Edo: the consonant cluster is simplified by inserting the vowel and at the same time, the foreign vowel is substituted with the Edo-friendly. This shows how insertion and substitution work together—one restructuring the syllable shape and the other adapting the sound quality. Such combined processes highlight the principle of phonological accommodation, where borrowed words are reshaped to fit Edo's CV syllable pattern and native sound inventory, ensuring both ease of articulation and communicative clarity. At a sociolinguistic level, the dual modification emphasizes how Edo speakers domesticate foreign words, reshaping them not only to meet structural constraints but also to reflect their own phonological identity. Over time, these words with both insertion and substitution become stabilized, entering the Edo lexicon as naturalized forms that no longer feel foreign but are integrated parts of everyday speech

	Portuguese	Edo	Gloss
For example :	cafe —	èkófi	"coffee"
	Bica —	èbìká	"earthen water pot"

In Edo as a contact language, there are cases where a single borrowed word undergoes a combination of phonological insertion, substitution, and deletion, demonstrating the multiple strategies speakers use to remodel foreign vocabulary into forms that conform with Edo phonotactics and phonemic inventory. Insertion occurs when vowels are added to break up consonant clusters or to prevent words from ending in consonants, substitution takes place

when foreign sounds absent in Edo are replaced with the closest native equivalents, and deletion happens when certain consonants—especially in word-final position or in complex clusters—are dropped entirely. When all three strategies operate on one word, the result is a heavily modified but naturalized form that is easy for Edo speakers to pronounce while still being semantically recognizable. These combined modifications reflect the principle of phonological repair, where borrowed words are systematically adjusted to satisfy Edo's preference for open syllables (CV structure), avoidance of consonant clusters, and reliance on its own sound inventory. The use of multiple strategies in one word also illustrates how Edo maintains both structural integrity and communicative clarity: speakers can pronounce the forms fluently while listeners still recognize their meaning. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this threefold adaptation shows how borrowed words are domesticated in a way that erases their foreignness and aligns them with Edo cultural and linguistic identity. Over time, such forms stabilize in the lexicon, becoming part of Edo vocabulary and contributing to its ongoing enrichment.

Portuguese Edo Gloss

For example : capitao — èkàpítè "war captain"

Caneca — èkàlàkà "glass"

4.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter focused on data analysis, in Edo borrowed words undergoes systematic Phonological adaptation to conform to the language's phonotactic structure and syllable patterns. This process ensure that foreign lexical items are indigenized and become

naturalized in everyday usage. The data analysis on lexical items that Phonological modification as occur in them, namely ; insertion, substitution, deletion, and extension. Together, these strategies reveal how Edo maintain its phonological integrity while expanding it's lexicon through preference for syllable, it's limited consonant inventory, and it's rhythmic balance. Ultimately Phonological adaptation demonstrate the creative way Edo reshapes foreign forms while preservating it's linguistic identity.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDING, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

This research study was designed to look into the lexical indigenization strategies in contact languages Edo language as a case study.

Chapter one of the study focused on the background of study. It was also noted that lexical indigenization refers to the process by which borrowed words are reshaped or naturalized so that they conform to the linguistic norms of the borrowing language.

Furthermore, the chapter stated the aim and objectives of the study as well introduce the topic and the language of research. Chapter one also looked at the statement of the research problem and the significance of the study. The primary data collection technique used was obtained through interview session with native speakers also proved valuable in determining the validity of the data obtained. Supplementing this primary data, existing literature, including dictionary, ethnographic studies, and previous linguistics research on the Edo language were also reviewed.

Chapter two of the research reviewed some relevant literature on language contact, phonology, and Phonological process. The chapter was divided into three main sub section, they are conceptual review, previous studies, and concern of the present study.

Chapter three of the research focused on the theoretical framework which was used for the research. The theoretical framework used for the research was "A descriptive linguistic approach".

Chapter four has the main concern which is the data analysis. The theoretical framework which is a descriptive linguistic approach was used to analyze the data.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The finds of this research work align with the stated research objectives as followed.

i. Borrowed words in Edo undergo systematic phonological modification such as insertion, deletion, substitution, and extension to conform to the Edo phonological structure. For instance, consonant clusters in English borrowing are often simplified or broken up with epenthetic (insertion) to fit Edo syllable structure.

ii. Some borrowed words undergo semantics or narrow. In Edo certain English or Yoruba borrowing may acquire extended cultural meaning different from their source language. This reflect how indigenization is not just phonological but also socio-semantics, adapting words to local communication.

iii. The process of lexical indigenization highlights identity, prestige, and cultural adaptation in Edo speech communities. Borrowed word are not simply adopted , they are reshaped to reflect Edo linguistic identity while maintaining intelligibility. This shows, how Edo speakers assert both linguistic autonomy and cultural hybridity in contact situation.

iv. Lexical indigenization in Edo language ensure that speaker conform to Edo phonological rule while still retaining a connection to the source forms.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The research work on lexical indigenization in contact languages Edo as a case study is a systematic and rule governed process shaped by the Phonological structure of the language. Borrowed words do not enter Edo in their original form, instead they are modified through insertion, deletion, substitution, and extension ensuring that they conform to Edo syllable pattern and sound system.

These strategies highlight not only the adaptability of Edo but also the dynamic interaction between language in contact situation. By reshaping foreign lexemes, Edo speakers preserve their linguistics identity while simultaneously expanding their vocabulary to accommodate new cultural, social, and technological realities. Ultimately, the indigenization process reflect the creativity of Edo speakers in negotiating between external linguistic influence and internal structure constraints, making it a vital mechanism for language maintenance, growth, and cultural expression.

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APPENDIX

Edo Language Words That Is Borrowed From Portuguese

Portuguese Colher	Edo ekuye	Meaning Spoon
Ouvidor	èvíádó	Inspect of trade
Varanda	èvánrándá	Verander
Farinha	èfènrhìnyèn	meal, flour form cassava,manioc
Tomate	ètòmàtò	tomatoes
Damasco	èdámásì	Damansk
Boi	èbóì	A tough man
Blusa	èbíláosì	Blouse
Bispo	èbísóbú	Bishop
Bazar	èbázà	Bazaar, market (trade)
Barril	èbárrè	Barrel
Flador	èfiádó	Agent or brokers of trade for the oba
Saber	sàbá(mètin,sètín)	To be able
Chave	isánhèn	Key
Silk	èsádà	Silk (clothing item)
atacado	átáká	Roll of tabacco,fioggot bundle
homeograndes	ómégìrándésì	Important men, palace chiefs
Pipa	épípá	A keg of ground powder,cask, barrel
Pincas	èpínsásí	Pincers (instruments or household effect)
Latrina	èlátírrí	Latrine
Faca	èfaáká	Razor or knife
Coqueiro	èkòkòdià	Coconut tree
Serra	èsárà	Saw for sawing woods
Tesoura	ètúhérù	Scissors
Carreta	èkàrrétà	An indigenized from Portuguese
Capitao	èkàpítè	War captain
Cafe	èkófí	Coffee
Caneca	èkàláká	Mug, tankard
Bica	Aèbìká	Earthen waterpot
Portuguese	Ìkpòtòkí	Portuguese

Belo	Ìbèlò	Beautiful
Palavra	èkpálávà	Conference, prolonged discussion
Limao	Òlímà	File (for filing matchet)
Limao	àlìmoí	Orange, lemon
Aduana	ádáná	A measure of buying palm kernel,garri,cocoa beans in benin city
Aba	ábádà	Skirt, part of a garment
Serra	Òsárà	Saw for sawing wood
Caneca	ekalaka	Glass

Edo Language Words That Is Borrowed From English

Father or priest	èfádá
Driver	èdírévà
Photograph/picture	èfòtó
grammar	ègírámù
Gold smith	Ègòsìméti
Grape fruit	egírrépì
Guava	ègùéà
Lawyer	èlóyá
School	Èsùkú
Cheque	èsiékì
Cigarettes	èsígà
Socks	èsókìsì
Church	èsóì
Table	èlébùrù
Television	ètèlìvìsòn/ètívì
Teacher	ètísà
Motor	Imoto
Job	èzòbù
Engine	ézini
Cement	èsìmétì
Sugar	èsúgà
Torch	ètósì
Bread	èbúrrédì
Clerk	èkíléki
Pencil	èpénsò

Flower	Ifulawa
Train	etirreni
Rug	èrógí
Spanner	èsìpànà
Coat	èkòtú
Tea	ètí
Stove	èsítóvù
Goal	ègó
Butter	èbótà
Jeep	èzípì
Hospital	ásíkítò
Fridge	èfirrígì
Christ	èkísì
Catechish	èpásò
Roller	èkémísì
Remote	èrrólà
Cake	èrrìmótì
Bakery	èkékí
Survey	èbékírì
Referee	èsovè
Dozen	èreferrì
Receipt	èdozìn
Camera	èrrìsítì
Camera	èkámérà
Manager	èmánégià
Cupboard	èkòbódì
Linen	èlinénì
Telephone	efoni
Caterpillar, truck	Ekatapila
Carpenter	ekabita
Cocoa	ekokoo
Law-court	ekotu
Kilometers	ekilo
Petrol	epentiro
Whisky	èwìsìkí
Whistle	èwísò
Window	èwíndó
Doctor,physican	èdékítà
Engineer	èzìnníyà

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