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160 Roseline Ijeoma Okorji

glaring as Nwachukwu (1995:53) also observes, that indeed, tone is an
indispensable phenomenon in Igbo syntax.

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NSUKKA JOURNAL OF THE HUMANITIES, NO. 9, 1998
1. Introduction: Parallels in Diversities

"A little learning makes the whole world kin".

The above quotation demonstrates the awareness, the realisation and the satisfaction that could be derived in an attempt at a devotion of a little time to the study of foreign languages or languages other than mother-tongues.

German has been described by many, including native speakers, as a language very difficult to study and very difficult to grasp. One scholar, a German, would rather go in for the study of all the sciences in the world than go in for the study of Germanistics. The reason for the choice above is no other than the difficulty in studying the German Language.

Mark Twain, in an attempt to describe how difficult it is to study and grasp the German language summarised his write-up by maintaining, that "a gifted person ought to learn English in thirty hours, French in thirty days and German in thirty years". This is of course an exaggeration.

For scholars of German, the difficulty lies mainly with the declensions. One scholar "would rather decline two drinks than one German adjective." This declension of adjectives is a tricky affair even for native speakers. There are also criticisms of the maintenance of three genders in the language. The difficulty here lies in the fact that animals do not simply assume their biological genders, nor is the neuter reserved for non-living things alone.

The case of pronouns like the three-letter word "Sie" which assumes many meanings depending on the context also confuses a lot of beginners in the language. This situation is also believed to denote poverty of vocabulary in the language.

German is also criticised for its separable-prefix verbs which
when they separate from their prefixes send the said prefixes to the end of the sentences making the quick understanding of the sentences difficult particularly long ones. There are other characteristics of German, which are believed to make it elusive and too slippery to grasp.

Some characteristics of Igbo language have also earned the language the reputation of being an elusive and slippery language.

Igbo is a tonal language. A word can assume two or more tonal patterns giving it two or more meanings. In other words, certain words in Igbo do not just have one pronunciation and more than one meaning as in many European and other languages. Rather, many Igbo words assume different meanings according to their pronunciation. For the above reason, Igbo has been criticised as a language lacking in vocabulary. The tonal characteristic of Igbo language is a difficult task for foreigners and even for native speakers when reading Igbo texts. It is this characteristic that often results in a foreigner saying the word "buttocks" in Igbo when he means "strength", "power" and "energy".

Igbo has been criticised by non-experts for "igbonising" foreign words. This "igbonisation" of words has been blamed on poverty of vocabulary in the language.

Without delving into all the peculiarities of Igbo and German, we have chosen to study the indigenisation patterns in Igbo and German with a view to gaining some useful insights into the differences and similarities of languages which are so far away from each other. This in turn will be of some didactic use in language teaching.

We have maintained from the start that no characteristic of any language per se is peculiar. There are language universals as ascertained by linguists (Bach & Harms, 1968).

2. Indigenisation as a characteristic of living languages

Borrowing in language means taking a word or concept from one language to use it in another language. The word so taken is referred to as a loan-word. Indigenisation is a step further in the process, whereby the loan-word is naturalized to fit into the morphological and phonological make-up of the borrowing language. But indigenization may also mean taking a word as it is, and articulating it either, as it is articulated in the original language, or, it is articulated with the phonetics of the borrowing language. (Sturtevant, 1967: 142ff). An example of...
the above view of indigenisation is the English word 'job' which has been taken into the German language, but articulated by many German as [dʒɒb] as opposed to [ʃɒb]. Indigenisation is therefore not a new phenomenon but is seen as something old and universal. In her paper Ikekeonwu maintains that Igbo has borrowed from other languages just like any other living language (Ikekeonwu, 1982). Similar ideas are expressed by Jeffreys in his work (Jeffreys, 1932: 503-506). In his discussion on the German language, Harold von Hofe has this to say:


("The German language has also changed very much in the process of its development. It has borrowed from Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Spanish and in the last decades especially from English.")

In his own essay, Kenneth Oliver illustrates in detail how the English language has extensively used both Greek and Latin elements to create their own words. He also shows that English has borrowed extensively from all over the world by different means. English speakers have sometimes simply taken over the foreign word as it was, or with minor changes in the ending or in some one or two letters (Oliver, 1962: 87).

Jean-Paul and Rebecca Valette (1976: 28) maintain that French contains many French-English cognates and that about 60% of all English words are of French origin.

In his own essay, J.A. Sheard says.

"The adoption of native names for new objects, products and ideas is not characteristic of English; the objects have made their way into most countries and in majority of cases the native word has been adopted with the object or idea" (Sheard, 1954: 267).

It is therefore clear from the discussions that borrowing of foreign words in any language is a welcome phenomenon. It is a characteristic of a living language. But in this paper, we have taken indigenisation to mean something more than just borrowing.
Factors that influence borrowings in Languages

Studies have shown the existence of language families all over the world. This means that there are languages which have descended from other tongues, and, very often it has been shown that there are several descendants from a single parent language. (Oliver, 1962: 54) and (Levitt, 1959: 60ff). The above studies have also shown that there were dozens of languages, which are becoming or have become extinct. For any language to be living, therefore, it has to keep growing. This growth can be attained by many ways, one of which is by borrowing and indigenisation of foreign words in the language. One of the factors that necessitate borrowing is what the ethnologists refer to as "cultural diffusion". This has made it possible for cultures to borrow not only things and habits but also aspects of language (Bloomfield, 1935). And language is the medium of transmission and preservation of aspects of culture. Migration and exploration have also helped to introduce foreign words into another language. This was how France and Italy came into contact with Latin language and their languages were influenced by Latin.

In African countries, colonisation has been the factor that influenced many indigenous languages. English, French, Spanish, Portuguese influenced African and other languages through colonisation. Literature is a very strong factor that influences languages. People of different national languages describe in literature a confused situation or bureaucratic hurdles and other labyrinthine processes as "kafkasque". Kafkasque is an adjective derived from the name of a well known German literary artist Kafka, who is famous for his literary style of painting the picture of man's life struggle as involving labyrinthine processes. In short, the adjective kafkasque has crept into the vocabulary of literary artists all over the world, for describing such a situation mentioned above. Also from the literary viewpoint, stories and songs were popular entertainment in medieval Europe and were recited from place to place by travelling minstrels. The "troubadours" of Germany, the "Scalds" of the Norselund for instance all travelled widely singing their songs, telling their tales and preserving related traditions of language and culture. Even today, different mobile theatre groups from many parts of Africa
the world travel to different parts of the world indirectly transporting their language and culture.

In ancient Greece, a blind poet by name Homer wrote one story of the tribulations of the Greek and Trojan heroes and of their gods in a war that destroyed the city of Troy, and another story of the return home of Ullysses, a Greek hero. His stories became so popular that they were recited for generations. It is noteworthy to mention, that a poem adapted to the return of Ullysses does today enjoy important place in the Literature syllabus for the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination in Nigeria.

Motion pictures and commerce are other strong factors that influence transportation of aspects of one language into another. The effect of motion pictures, particularly on youths can never be overestimated. Youths nowadays speak and act the language of the movies they watched. It has been said that not less than five thousand English words have crept into the Chinese language through "talking pictures" (Sheard, 1954: 98 ff). The same is also true of other national languages. Both young and old are strongly influenced.

4. Languages go in Families, Languages exchange words.

4.1. The German Language

The German language has changed very much in the process of its development. It is as a result of these changes that studies in German language and literature are divided into different epochs namely: Old High German, Middle High German and New (Modern) High German. It is also the above changes in the language that Harold von Hofe was referring to when he discussed the introduction of new words into the language (Hofe, 1976).

English, German, Dutch and various Scandinavian languages belong to the sub-family of Germanic language, which is a member of a large family of Indo-European languages. All the above mentioned languages have changed very much in the process of development with the result that it is discovered by experts that Old English is much closer to Old High German than Modern English is to Modern High German (Sheard, 1954: 267 ff).

These Germanic languages were divided in the early centuries into North, East and West. North Germanic is spoken by the Scandinavians.
vian tribes in the north of Europe. The West Germanic was the lan-
guage spoken by the original Southern group, which later divided into a
Low German and High German group. The High German is spoken on
the plains of Northern Germany and the shores of the North Sea,
and the Low German is spoken in the Highlands of Southern Germany.

Differences among these related languages exist in the
consonant and vowel shift, which in turn affect the pronunciations of
the words.

The small chart below shows the common heritage of English
and German languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td>Mutter</td>
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<tr>
<td>father</td>
<td>Vater*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brother</td>
<td>Bruder</td>
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<tr>
<td>mouse</td>
<td>Maus*</td>
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<tr>
<td>name</td>
<td>Name</td>
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**"V" in German has the sound of "F" in English.
/au/ in German has the sound of /au/ in English word "mouse".

4.1.1. Patterns of Indigenisation in German

Latin contributed vast stores of words to all European languages
including German, especially during the era of the Roman Empire. For
centuries, German literary writers wrote in Latin, because Latin was
the official and scholarly, or literary language of the vast Empire. Many
Latin terms are therefore still found in the scholarly write-ups in the
German language.

The German language follows essentially two patterns in the
indigenization of foreign words or concepts. Harold von Hofe rightly
summarises the patterns of indigenisation in German when he says:

"... Während die Woerter aus anderen Sprachen meistens
"eingedeutscht" wurden, blieben die begriffe aus dem Englischen
oft unveraender erhalten..." (Hofe, 1976).

"... while the words borrowed from other languages were mostly
"germanised", the concepts or ideas from English were often re-
tained (unchanged in form)...

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Below is a chart showing some of such borrowed and
germanised words from different languages.

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<th>French</th>
<th>German</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Palais</td>
<td>Palast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Platz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oncle</td>
<td>Onkel</td>
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<td>Banca</td>
<td>Cassa</td>
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<td>Kasse</td>
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Examples of words borrowed from English and retained unchanged are: Pullover, Computer, Service. We have only listed few examples in the two patterns commonly found in the indigenisation processes in German. There are many more words from the same and some other languages. These languages have also borrowed from German and from each other, for, as has already been shown, borrowing is characteristic of living languages. From modern German, English has borrowed words like: Kindergarten, quartz, Wanderlust and a lot more.

We would now proceed to look at the Igbo language and the characteristic of borrowing and indigenisation in it.

### 4.2 The Igbo Language

Igbo is a member of the Kwa family of languages (recently also re-classified as a New Benue Congo language) with some other Nigerian and African languages such as: Yoruba, Igala, Nupe, Irama, Edo, Agatu, Ijaw and Ewe. There are dozens of other languages in this group.

About six large groups of language families have been identified in Africa, one of the largest of which is the Bantu group. These language families have been named according to their geographical spread and like-characteristics (Greenberg, 1966: 6). Characteristic of Igbo and other languages in the Kwa group is their tonal nature, whereby many words assume a number of meanings according to their different tonal patterns.

This tonal characteristic of Igbo has been criticised as one of the factors that make the language difficult to learn. However, with set rules, it is always possible for a serious learner to master a foreign language, and, Igbo is not an exception to the above rule of mastery of foreign languages.
4.2.1 Patterns of Indigenisation in Igbo

Igbo has borrowed mostly from English language, especially as a result of long colonial contact between them. It has also borrowed mostly names of food items from other Nigerian languages.

Borrowing and indigenisation of foreign words and concepts in Igbo and other African languages is well summarised by M.N. Okonkwo, where he attributed it to the advent of Western Civilisation, to the fact that we use many foreign materials and ideas which were non-existent in the days of our fore-fathers (Okonkwo, 1981: 170).

We are therefore interested in finding out the patterns of "igbonisation" of the names of these foreign materials and ideas. Paraphrasing and Loan-translation, as was discussed by Ikpekeonwu constitute methods of vocabulary building and Neologisms in Igbo but do not necessarily belong to what we regard as indigenisation of words in languages. However, the listings in some of her sub-headings follow a pattern similar to one of the identified patterns of indigenisation in German language. This is the case where the English words like, "Carpenter", "mechanic" and "Okro" were integrated into Igbo vocabulary as "Kapinta", "Mekaniki" and "Okwuru" respectively (Ikpekeonwu, 1982: 480ff). This pattern of indigenisation allows natural integration into the borrowing languages and Igbo linguists strongly favour it.

It is mostly from other Nigerian languages that Igbo occasionally borrows and retains words and concepts in their original form and meaning. Examples of such borrowings are words like "Acha" and "Akara", which are respectively Hausa and Yoruba names for the food items so called.

Although there have been strong recommendations for the above complete indigenisation of foreign concepts, the media (radio and television in particular) have not always helped to bring this process to fruition. Newscasters in Igbo have often preferred the system of paraphrasing and loan-translation to loan words in altered or unaltered forms in discussing highly technical terms (Emenanjo, 1974: 1 ff).

Indigenisation is a very welcome method of word-building in languages, particularly where the ideas or concepts represented by the loan-words are foreign to the borrowing language.

Our observation has therefore shown that while the German language has often favoured two patterns of indigenisation of foreign

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words in the language, Igbo has only regularly favoured one pattern. We gave examples of words like "pullover" and "service" which the Germans borrowed from English and retained their meanings, without changing their forms. There are many others. On the other hand, according to SPILC (1978: 18),

"in order to cope realistically with the demands of modern world, the Igbo language must borrow words for concepts etc. alien to indigenous Igbo culture. The first principle that should govern borrowing is that there is no word in any of Igbo dialects for expressing such a concept, otherwise such a word should be preferred to a loan. Where however foreign words are necessary, these words should be Ibonized (spelt in Igbo)...

The above recommendation by SPILC is almost sacrosanct in the indigenisation of loan words in Igbo and, therefore tends to show that Igbo language favours only one pattern of indigenisation, because loan words in Igbo are more often than not written in Igbo spelling.

5. Didactic Suggestions and Concluding Remarks

Linguistic experts have argued that indigenisation in Igbo should be done in such a way as to make it impossible to detect the sources of loan-words in the language (Emenanjo, 1974) and (Ikekeonwu, 1982). We do not agree with the above suggestion.

We believe that knowledge of the source of loan-words in any language is an added advantage for a foreign language learner. It makes the learning of a new language much easier. This is probably the view of Jean-Paul and Rebecca Valette when they said that, because 60% of all English words are of French origin, Americans find French relatively easy to read (Valette, 1976).

The aim of Igbo language experts should therefore not be to conceal the origin of loan-words in the language. There is nothing unusual if a not-so-literate person in English detects English loan-words in Igbo. Our experience in the German language also helped to convince us of the reduced difficulty of vocabulary building in the learning of a foreign language. This reduced difficulty, which of course is more for a multi-lingual, is the result of the tradition of exchange of words among languages of the world. In building up vocabulary in the German lan-
Igbo texts an easy task. There have been changes and additions in the language and a look at such super-rapid growth remains an exhilarating experience. The efforts of the SPILC, through whose efforts most of the modernization in Igbo language takes place, remains ever applauded.

Notes and References

1. The quotation is from Page 1 of the course hand-out of Michiewicz D. for German 201 at Michigan State University, 1975. The hand-out refers to Mark Twain’s “The Awful German Language” for which we have no full reference.
2. Ibid, p.11.
3. Ibid, p.4.
4. Ibid, pp. 4-6.
5. Ibid, p.3.

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