

Abstract

This study investigates how Hausa, a West Chadic language (Afro Asiatic phyla) remodels loanwords from English (Indo – European) to suit its pre-existing phonology. Loanword adaptation is quite inevitable due to the fact that languages of the world differ, one from another in many ways: phonological, syntactical, morphological and so on (Inkelas & Zoll, 2003, p. 1). Based on this claim, receptor languages therefore employ ways to rephonologize new words borrowed into their vocabularies to fit, and to conform to native structure demands. Hausa disallows complex onsets, preferably operates open syllables and avoids consonant clustering in word-medial positions as at its best can tolerate no more than a single consonant at a syllable edge (Clements, 2000; Han, 2009). On the contrary, English permits complex onsets as well as closed syllables (Skandera & Burleigh, 2005). Such distinctions in both phonologies motivate for loanword adaptation. Hausa therefore employs repair strategies such as vowel epenthesis, consonant deletions and segmental substitutions and/or replacements (Newman, 2000; Abubakre, 2008; Alqhatani & Musa, 2014) to remodel loanwords. For analytical purposes, this research adopts theoretical tools of Feature Geometry (FG) (Clements & Hume, 1995) and Optimality Theory (OT) (Prince & Smolensky, 2004) to clearly illustrate how loanwords are modified to satisfy Hausa native demands (Kadenge, 2012). Vowel epenthesis in Hausa involves two main strategies: consonantal assimilation and default insertions. During consonantal assimilation, coronal and labial segments spread place features unto the epenthetic segment in the process determining the vowel type and/or quality, while in the case of default insertions, fresh segments are introduced context independently. Concerning segmental substitutions, most notably are English consonants /p/ and /v/ maximally replaced with similar ones, [f] and [b] that exist in Hausa on the basis that former and latter segments share same phonation features.