Morphophonological Features of Lɛtɛ Loanwords from English

Mornica Apenteng Obiri Yeboah and Mercy Akrofi Ansah

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is two-fold: to describe the phonological and morphological features of English loanwords (nouns and verbs) which appear in Lɛtɛ lexicon and to identify and account for the largest semantic class of English loanwords. Lɛtɛ (Kwa: Guan) is spoken in Larteh, a town in southeast Ghana. The language has not received much attention, and as such, there has been no study to investigate the phenomenon of lexical borrowing in the language. The linguistic situation in Larteh is characterized by trigglosia, a situation where three languages with distinct communicative functions are in use. Akuapem Twi is the second language of most Lɛtɛ speakers. The paper distinguishes between codeswitching from borrowing to initiate the discussion from the right perspective. Motivation for borrowing from English primarily stems from the need to fill lexical gaps in Lɛtɛ. Consequently, data for the study suggest that the semantic class of science and technology is the largest of all the semantic domains of English loanwords. Data sources include bilingual wordlists of English and Lɛtɛ; focus group discussions and Lɛtɛ folktales. Upon analyzing the data, we observed that English loanwords undergo morphological and phonological alterations such as epenthesis and vowel harmonization to become nativized. The study is underpinned by the Matrix Language Frame Model (MLFM) (Myers-Scotton, 1997; Myers-Scotton *et al*., 2002), a model which is designed to account for bilingual speech. Following the MLFM, lexical items which enter Lɛtɛ lexicon are expected to take up morphological and phonological features of the language. Our study however found out that not all loanwords exhibit morphophonological features of Lɛtɛ; in the case of loan nouns, the Akuapem Twi number markers are rather employed. The paper adds to existing literature on borrowing and points out that a matrix language does not always dictate new linguistics features that are borne by the loanwords, but the linguistic situation of the recipient language community, coupled with the language repertoire of speakers play a role.

Keywords: cultural borrowings, Lɛtɛ, morphology, phonology.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to describe the phonological and morphological features of English loanwords found in the lexicon of Lɛtɛ[1] (Kwa: Guan), and to account for the largest semantic domain of English loanwords. The research questions upon which the current study is conducted are the following:

1. what are the phonological features of English loanwords that are found in Lɛtɛ lexicon?
2. what morphological features are exhibited by English loanwords which are found in Lɛtɛ?
3. which semantic domain of loanwords is the largest, and why?

Haugen (1989) puts lexical borrowing simply as the adoption into a language of a linguistic feature previously used in another. It has been noted that borrowing is usually from a more prestigious into a socially subordinate language (Myers-Scotton *et al*., 2002). The phenomenon predominantly involves a phonological and morphological adaptation of the foreign features to conform to the patterns of the recipient language. Lexical borrowing is motivated by contact situations in various forms and varying degrees; need and prestige are no exception (Weinreich, 2010). The need to fill lexical gaps in a language may arise due to the introduction of foreign concepts into the culture of the recipient or borrowing language. Regarding prestige, speakers of a native language may want to borrow from a more esteemed language to identify with the culture of that purportedly esteemed language. Myers-Scotton *et al*. (2002) categorize borrowings into two kinds: cultural borrowings and core borrowings. The former comprises words for objects and concepts which are new to the culture of the recipient language. In their estimation,

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[1] In this paper, Lɛtɛ refers to the recipient language, whereas Larteh represents the town where Lɛtɛ is spoken. In the literature and elsewhere, the language is written as Lɛtɛ, Leteh or Larteh.

these appear abruptly in the language, and they become accepted and recognized when influential speakers in the communityuse them. The latter type, core borrowings, refers to those words which replace already existing words in the first language (L1). Myers-Scotton *et al.* (2002) assert that such borrowed items come into the recipient language gradually through code-switching. In this paper, we focus on core borrowings, words for objects and concepts which are new to the culture of the recipient language, Lɛtɛ.

Some of the research done on lexical borrowing in African languages are (Simango, 2000; Eze, 1998; Owino, 2003; Adomako *et al.*, 2008; Apenteng & Amfo, 2014). These have centred on the linguistic adaptation of foreign features into indigenous African languages and their impact on their structures. In these studies, the donor languages were the languages of colonial states, whilst indigenous languages acted as recipient languages. Whereas lexical borrowing reported in the studies demonstrated the impact of the recipient language on the structures of the loan words, the present study reports that English loan nouns in Lɛtɛ are not nativized by Lɛtɛ structures, rather, the features they manifest are those of Twi[2], the second language of almost all Lɛtɛ speakers (Johnson, 1973; 1975). Consequently, in the course of borrowing nouns from English, Lɛtɛ borrows grammatical items from Twi in the form of singular and plural markers to nativize the English loan nouns. This departure from the expectation of the MLFM makes the present study interesting. Furthermore, even though studies on lexical borrowing and nativization on related languages have been carried out, the phenomenon has not been studied with regard to Lɛtɛ. This study on Lɛtɛ is therefore novel; findings will add to knowledge in the area of lexical borrowing.

The remaining part of the paper is arranged as follows: section II is a discussion of the distinction between code-switching and borrowing. In section III we provide sociolinguistic information on Larteh. In section IV, we discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the study, followed by the methodology of the study in section V. In sections VI, there is a description of the phonological and morphological features exhibited by English loanwords, detailing nativization processes. This is followed by a discussion of semantic categorization of the loan words, and an account of the largest semantic domain in section VII. In section VIII, we summarise the discussion and draw conclusions.

II. DISTINGUISHING CODE-SWITCHING AND BORROWING

Language contact situations produce various linguistic phenomena, among which are code-switching, code mixing, borrowing and the long time effect of language loss. We attempt to distinguish between code-switching and borrowing to put the latter phenomenon in the right context. Borrowing could be more wide spread in the community than code-switching. In code-switching, people who switch back and forth between languages are more or less aware of their behavior, or at least they know that they make use of two or more languages. But in loan words study, we realise that the speakers of the target language use elements from other languages when they think, or are even sure, that they use only one language. This point is made by Wohlgemuth (2009, 53) when he states that "well-established, "old" loan words, for example, may not even be perceived by speakers of the recipient language as something that originated in another language." Another difference is that while borrowing is concerned with words, code-switching is not necessarily concerned with single words but rather structures. Finally, in code-switching the speaker who switches must be necessarily a bilingual, but loan word usage does not require the users to be bilinguals, although bilingual speakers also use loan words. Monolinguals are well able to use loan words, but this cannot be said about code-switching.

III. SOCIOLINGUISTIC BACKGROUND OF THE LARTEH COMMUNITY

Larteh is a town in the south east of Ghana, located on the Akono Hills, the range of hills which cross Akuapem from the South-east to the North-west. It is bordered in the north by the Mamfe-Akropong road; in the south by the Shai Hills, in the east by the towns of Abɔnse and Aseseɛso, and in the west by the Apopoano Hill, near Dodowa. The closest neighbors are Mamfe and Akropong where Akuapem Twi is spoken, and Dodowa and Ayikuma, where Dangbe is spoken. Her closest Guan community is Abiriw, about 10 kilometers away, where Kyerepɔn is spoken. Interactions among these language groups are through inter-marriages, celebrations of traditional festivals, trade, and education. Consequently, on a typical market day in Larteh, the multilingual skills of the traders within Lɛtɛ and those from neighboring towns are utilized. Furthermore, during the celebration of traditional festivals, it is common to find people from neighboring communities in attendance to lend support. Short distances between Larteh and neighboring towns allow school children to enroll in schools outside Larteh.

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[2] In this paper, Twi and Akuapem Twi refer to the same Akan dialect; the two terms are used interchangeably.

Previous studies have recorded that in Larteh, Lɛtɛ is the first language, and Akuapem Twi is also spoken by almost everyone as the second language (Author, 2015; Brokensha, 1966; Johnson, 1973, 1975), a phenomenon which is corroborated by the present study.

The linguistic situation in Larteh has been described as triglossic; three major languages with varied and overlapping functions interrelate, generating a triglossic situation (Johnson, 1973, 1975). Lɛtɛ, which is the L1 of the people, is used in the homes and in traditional domains mostly. Akuapem Twi is the L2 of almost everyone and serves as the language for instruction at the lower basic level. It also functions as the language for Christian religion. English is the official language of Ghana and therefore used by the educated folks. Furthermore, in the educational sector, English is the medium of instruction from Primary 4 onwards (Anamoah-Mensah, 2004). With this linguistic landscape, the L1 is bound to be influenced by the L2, and then the L3, which is English. Since English occupies a somewhat powerful position, it functions as a donor language in the borrowing process.

Lɛtɛ is unwritten and does not possess an official orthography. The language is mostly used in the homes, among the speakers, and as a means of communication at traditional gatherings, such as funerals, festivals, marriages, and naming ceremonies. The 2021 Population and Housing Census of Ghana put the population of Larteh at 11,523 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). This clearly does not represent the exact number of speakers, because of the presence of immigrants in the town. Yet another difficulty in arriving at a specific number stems from the fact that there are many Lɛtɛ speakers who reside outside of Larteh. Brokensha (1966, xvii) sums up the linguistic situation in Larteh in the following words:

Three languages are in common use in Larteh- Guan, Twi and English. Guan is generally the domestic language, children learn it as their first language and use it in their early years. At school, children learn English and they also have lessons in what is called 'Vernacular', which is in fact Twi, for Guan is not taught at any school. Akuapem Twi to some extent occupies the position of a prestige language, as does English on other occasions.

IV. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

The present study is done within an adaptation of the Matrix Language Frame Model (MLF) (Myers-Scotton, 1997; Myers-Scotton *et al.*, 2002), a model which is designed to account for bilingual speech. The argument of the model is that where a linguistic utterance which involves two distinct languages is made, the languages in question do not have equal status. One of the participating languages is described as the Matrix Language (ML) whereas the second one functions as the Embedded Language (EL). The MLF model postulates that the ML dictates the morphosyntactic frame or grammatical structure for the mixed constituents. In this sense, the ML plays a more dominant role. Applying the model to lexical borrowing, we can say that the donor language acts as the embedded language whereas the recipient language functions as the matrix language. Consequently, with regard to this study, English is the embedded language, and Lɛtɛ, the matrix language. It is therefore expected that Lɛtɛ dictates the phonological and morphological features of the English loans that enter Lɛtɛ lexicon.

The utterance in example (1) illustrates the application of the Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model. The statement was made by a 20-year-old lady during a focus group discussion about the use of mobile phones. The English loanword *yuusu* 'use' which is a common loan verb in Lɛtɛ is employed (the modified form in bold[3]). The English (EL) loan verb receives Lɛtɛ (ML) verbal inflection, the negation prefix *bé*. Secondly, the syllable structure of the English lexeme 'phone' is modified to suit that of Lɛtɛ. (read a full discussion in sections 6 and 7).

1) *Ntsekpebi bé-**yuusu** foonv.*
   old.women NEG-use   phone.

   Gyi   nkatsibi   ne enyinɛbi   ete.
   COP.be young women and young.men thing
   'Old *women* do not use phones. They are for young women and young men'.

V. METHODOLOGY

Data for the study were collected over a period of six months, from August 2018 to January 2019 from three sources. Three hundred and fifty English lexemes (nouns and verbs) were extracted from the Summer Institute of Linguistics Comparative African Wordlist (SILCAW, Snider & Roberts, 2006) to constitute a bilingual English/Lɛtɛ wordlist. An additional English/Lɛtɛ wordlist of 45 items was

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[3] In this paper, loanwords that occur in stretches of Lɛtɛ discourse have been boldened.

compiled from the focus group discussions to make up for semantic fields that the SIL comparative wordlist did not cover. These were vocabulary related to Information and Communication Technology (ICT); sports and entertainment; transport; media; clothing and fashion. Elicitation sessions were held with fourteen speakers (seven males and seven females) spanning six age groups to compose the bilingual wordlists. Each age group was represented by two speakers: 11-20; 21-30; 31-40; 51-60; 61-70; 71-80. The basic educational qualification of the participants was the Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC). All the participants were fluent speakers of English, Akuapem Twi and Lɛtɛ. They were required to produce the Lɛtɛ equivalents of the English words on the list of 395 words during elicitation sessions. The sessions were audio recorded and were later transcribed phonetically. We studied the phonological and morphological features of the English loan words. The second data source was focus group discussions held in the language community in three sessions. We constituted five age groups of five members each to discuss five topics. Each age group (Table 1) discussed a topic based on their interest. They spoke Lɛtɛ.

TABLE I: Focus Group Discussions

Age	Group	Topic for discussion
10-15	1	Keeping pets
16-25	2	The usefulness of mobile phones and internet cafés.
26-35	3	Sports and entertainment at Larteh
36-60	4	Should we trust politicians, why or why not?
61-80	5	An experience at the hospital you will always remember.

With the exception of Group 3, each group was made up of 3 males and 2 females. Group 3 was constituted by 4 males and 1 female; their topic was 'Sports and Entertainment at Larteh'. The discussions, moderated by the researchers were audio recorded and later transcribed with help from two of the discussants. The discussants spoke Lɛtɛ. The transcripts were analysed to pick English words, nouns and verbs to study their morphological and phonological features. We needed to ascertain whether those words were loanwords or they had occurred as a result of code switching or code mixing (cf. section 2). Loan words which were identified were grouped into rough semantic fields such as animals; sports, media, and entertainment; transportation; ICT; politics; health and diseases (Table V). Our interest in categorizing the loanwords on the basis of semantics was to ascertain that they were, indeed, cultural borrowings.

Finally, we recorded folktales from Lɛtɛ speakers who fell between 70-80 years. Our motivation was to get the names of animals and plants which have been borrowed by Lɛtɛ speakers, and to identify their morphological and phonological features. The narrations were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim. From the narratives we identified a few names of plants and animals which were in English. Extracts of the stories are used in the discussion section. Stories of the following titles were narrated:

    i. Lion, the king of all animals.
    ii. Ananse, the medicine man.
    iii. How wisdom spread throughout the entire world.

VI. Findings and Discussion

A. Phonological Features of English Loanwords in Lɛtɛ

Our data indicate that Lɛtɛ has borrowed English nouns and verbs. This may be largely due to the need to fill lexical gaps created by concepts bordering on modern technology which are foreign to the Larteh culture. In Table II, we present examples of English loan nouns found in our data.

TABLE II: English Loanwords (Nouns) in Lɛtɛ

English	Lɛtɛ variant
2. phone	*foonʋ*
3. internet	*ntanɛtɪ*
4. number	*nɔma*
5. sim (card)	*siim*
6. video	*fiidio*
7. text	*tɛs*
8. shirt	*hyɛɛtɪ*
9. trousers	*trɔsa*
10. plate	*pɪrɛtɪ*
11. cup	*kɔɔpʋ*
12. bread	*burodo*
13. school	*sukuu*
14. doctor	*dɔkɪta*
15. nurse	*nɛɛsɪ*
16. paracetamol	*palasitamɔ*
17. credit	*krediiti*

Generally, loanwords are recast into forms consistent with the phonology of the borrowing language (Diffloth *et al*., 1992). Data in Table II show that when English loanwords enter Lɛtɛ lexicon, they are adapted to the various aspects of its phonology, for example, sounds systems and syllable structure. Our consultants pronounced the English loanwords differently as they spoke Lɛtɛ. The different features are brought about through certain phonological processes such as vowel lengthening, epenthesis, syllabification, and substitution. Moreover, these borrowings obey the principles of the Tongue Root Vowel Harmony of Lɛtɛ. The loan nouns therefore become nativized.

It has been observed that some vowels which occur in the middle syllables of English loanwords are lengthened; see Table II examples (2) */foonʊ/* 'phone' (8) */hyɛɛtɪ/* 'shirt' (11) */kɔɔpʊ/* 'cup' (14). Likewise, in 'nurse', the long medial vowel is realized by lengthening the sound /ɛ/ to become */nɛɛsɪ/* (15).

With regard to epenthesis, it has been documented that the canonical form of a Lɛtɛ syllable is constituted by a consonant and a vowel(CV) which is the basis of most word structures in Lɛtɛ (Author, 2009). When English loanwords enter Lɛtɛ lexicon, one way by which constraints on syllable structure are typically maintained is the insertion of vowels, known as epenthesis. To introduce open syllable structures in English loanwords, consonant clusters are broken by the insertion of vowels, mostly, high vowels /i, u, ʊ/. For example, the word 'bread' in (Table II, (12)) undergoes complete modification to become */burodo/*. To begin with, the word-initial cluster /br/ is broken up by inserting the vowel /u/ between /b/ and /r/ and anothervowel /o/ is suffixed after the word-final consonant /d/ to ensure that the open syllable pattern of Lɛtɛ is maintained. Furthermore, the medial vowel sound is substituted by /o/. A similar modification process goes for 'doctor' (14) where the word-medial cluster /ct/ is interrupted by the introduction of /ɪ/ to become */dɔkɪta/*. Again, 'school' becomes */sukuu/* in the Lɛtɛ lexicon when 'sc' is inserted with /u/. See also (10). In the process of inserting and adding vowels, syllabification also takes place. In examples (2, 3, 8) CV syllables are formed by adding /ʊ and ɪ/ to the word final consonant sounds in the loanwords */fo.o.nʊ/* 'phone'; */in.ta.nɛ.tɪ/* 'internet'; */hyɛɛtɪ/* 'shirt'.

When English nouns are borrowed into Lɛtɛ, certain phonemes which are absent in the Lɛtɛ phoneme inventory are substituted with homophones. In Table 2 examples (6, 7, 10), the English phonemes /v, l, x/ which are absent in the Lɛtɛ sounds system are substituted by /f, r, s/ which are found in the consonant sounds inventory. Consequently, we have */fiidio/* 'video', */prɛtɪ/* 'plate' and */tɛs/* 'text'.

English loan nouns which enter Lɛtɛ discourse conform to the principles of Tongue Root Vowel Harmony. The Tongue Root Harmony principle in Lɛtɛ requires that for every Lɛtɛ word of two or more syllables, vowels that occur must share phonetic properties in terms of tongue root position[4] that is assumed during their production. In examples (12, 13) for instance, it is observed that when the loanwords are phonologically adapted, the vowel harmony principle is adhered to. The Lɛtɛ versions of (12) 'bread' and (13) 'school' are pronounced with advanced tongue root [+ATR] vowels as in */burodo/* and */sukuu/* whereas those for 'doctor' and 'nurse' are produced with retracted tongue root vowels [-ATR] as in (14) /dɔkɪta/ and (15) */nɛɛsɪ/*.

Table III shows examples of English loan verbs. These were mainly identified in our focus group discussions and are related to modern technology and foreign concepts. We noted that similar to the loan nouns, they are nativized through phonological processes such as epenthesis (18) *dʊraafʊ* 'drive'; syllabification (6) *dʊrɔwʊ* 'draw'; vowel lengthening (19) *foonʊ* 'phone' and vowel harmonization (21) *bɪraabʊ* [-ATR] 'bribe; (24) *peenti* [+ATR] 'paint'.

TABLE III: ENGLISH VERBS IN LƐTƐ LEXICON

English variant	Loan word/phrase
18. drive	*dʊraafʊ*
19. phone him	*foonʊ mʊ*
20. text him	*tɛsɪ mʊ*
21. bribe him	*bɪraabʊ mʊ*
22. use	*yuusu*
23. draw	*dʊrɔwʊ*
24. paint	*peenti*
25. charge	*kyaagyɪ*
26. browse	*bɪraawʊsɪ*
27. top up	*tɔɔpʊ*
28. transfer	*tɪransɪfɛɛ*
29. check	*kyɛɛkɪ*
30. send	*sɛɛdɪ*

B. *Morphological Features of English Loan Words*

Data in Table IV were gathered from our focus group discussions. It is observed that English loanwords undergo some morphological adaptations to become integrated into the Lɛtɛ lexicon. In Lɛtɛ, nouns inflect

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[4] Advanced tongue root (ATR) position vowels are [i, e, o, u, ə]
Unadvanced/retracted tongue root position vowels are [ɪ, ɛ, ɔ, ʊ, a]

for number through prefixation and suffixation. The plural markers are a vowel prefix, its form dependent on the form of the singular prefix[5], and the suffix, */-ɛnɛ/*. According to the Matrix Language Frame Model (MLFM), the loan nouns are expected to exhibit the Lɛtɛ number prefixes and suffixes, but our data manifest different features. On the contrary, we noted that English loan nouns in Lɛtɛ exhibit the Akuapem Twi singular prefix */–ni/* and the plural suffix, */- fʋ /* when the noun is [+Human] (see Table IV; 18a-b) and the quantifier, *pii* 'many' may follow the noun, especially when they are [-HUMAN]. About the plural vowel prefix, those used in Akuapem Twi /a-/ are employed in marking the English loan nouns in addition to the suffix when the noun is [+HUMAN].

TABLE IV: NUMBER MARKING OF ENGLISH LOANWORDS

Singular loanword	Plural loanword	English gloss
18 a. poliisi-ni	*a-poliisi-fʋ*	police
b. dɔkɪta-ni	*a-dɔkɪta-fʋ*	doctors
c. nɛɛsɪ-ni	*a-nɛɛsɪ- fʋ*	nurses
d. fon	*foonʋ pii*	phones
e. bɔɔsʋ	*bɔɔsʋ pii*	buses

(18) a. *a*-d**ɔkɪta-fʋ** ne *a-**nɛɛsɪ-fʋ** a boa me paa. Ka me-sere paa.
　　 PL-Doctor-PL and nurse-PL DEF help me very. Then ISG-fear very
　　 'The doctors and nurses helped me a great deal. I was very much afraid'.

　　 b. *Ka* a- ***poliisi-fʋ*** *bʋ* *mfa* *pii*.
　　　 Then policemen-PL at there many
　　　 'There were many police men there'.

With regard to English loan verbs, we observed that they exhibit the Lɛtɛ negation prefix and tense/aspectual markers. The features are therefore in line with the expectation of the MLFM. The verb stems take on the negative prefix, *be´*[6]- when they enter Lɛtɛ discourse. In (19a) for example, the negative morpheme is prefixed to *foonʋ* 'phone' a common English verb which has been borrowed into Lɛtɛ with the inception of mobile phones. Likewise, the borrowed English verb is also inflected for the future tense (19b). Other common English loan verbs are *yuusu* 'use' (19c), *bɪraabɪ* 'bribe' (19d) and *dʋraafʋ* 'drive'. As the examples show, they display phonological features consistent with the recipient language, Lɛtɛ; they are prefixed by Lɛtɛ tense and aspectual markers.

(19) a. *Bé-**foonʋ*** *mɔ* *sɪ!*
　　　 NEG-phone POSS.3SG father
　　　 'Do not phone his/her father'!

　　 b. *Kofi* *bè-**foonʋ*** ***polisi-ni*** *a.*
　　　 PN FUT-phone police-SG DEF
　　　 'Kofi will phone the policeman'.

　　 c. *Nkasɪbi* *nso di-**yuusu*** *intanɛt* *nkensa* *mɔ.*
　　　 Young women also PROG-use internet days these
　　　 'Young women are also using internet these days'.

　　 d. ***a*-p*ɔrɪtɪhyian-fʋ*** *a* *bè-**bɪraabɪ*** Lɛtɛ ɛsɛ pɛɛ.
　　　 Politicians DEF FUT-bribe Lɛtɛ people all
　　　 'The politicians will bribe all the people of Larteh'.

It has been observed that English loanwords in Lɛtɛ resemble those identified in Akan (Adomako 2008; Apenteng 2013). This is most probably due to a high degree of contact between Lɛtɛ and Akuapem Twi, and cultural resemblances.

VII. SEMANTIC DOMAINS OF LOANWORDS

We identified 71 English loan nouns from the bilingual wordlists and categorized them into broad semantic domains. Table V exhibits the concentration of loanwords in the 4 semantic domains.

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[5] For a detailed description of number marking on Lɛtɛ nouns, see (Author, 2021).
[6] The negative prefix form *bé/bé* is selected based on the [ATR] feature of the verb stem. Likewise, the tense and aspectual forms of the future *bè/bè* and the progressive, *dí/dí*.

TABLE V: SEMANTIC DOMAINS OF ENGLISH LOANWORDS

Semantic domains	No. of loanwords
Fashion and clothing	8
Information & Communication Technology (ICT)	32
Sports and entertainment	18
Health and medicine	13

From our data in Table V, the class of ICT loanwords is the largest. It is followed by Sports and entertainment and the domain of health and medicine. The domain which constitutes loanwords of fashion and clothing has the least number of loanwords. With the upsurge of technology, it is no wonder that Lɛtɛ has borrowed many new terms in the area of ICT. The Ghana Education Service (G.E.S), through the Basic School Computerization policy (2011) has introduced the study of ICT in the curriculum of Basic schools, consequently pupils and students are now receiving tuition in ICT, and this has influenced the older generation. Currently in Larteh, the speech community, many people, both young and old own mobile phones. The phones serve many purposes: communication and financial transactions. The use of the internet has also been popularized. There are a few internet cafes in the town which the youth, especially, patronize. In one of the focus discussion sessions, one young man remarked that 'these days, we do not write letters, we send text messages' (translation from Lɛtɛ). Borrowing ICT terms from English is therefore motivated by need.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study set out to describe the phonological and morphological features of English loanwords (nouns and verbs) which are found in Lɛtɛ lexicon. Secondly, it accounted for the largest semantic class of loanwords. The Matrix Language Frame Model (MLFM) (Myers-Scotton, 1993, 2002) was adapted for the study. The study has noted that English borrowing into Lɛtɛ is largely motivated by the need to fill lexical gaps created by the exposure to new technology. Judging from the features of the loanwords we identified, we conclude that contrary to Myers-Scotton *et al.* (2002)'s MLFM, the matrix language does not always dictate the features of the loanwords which enter their lexicon. This has been exemplified by the Akuapem Twi number markers on English loan nouns in Lɛtɛ lexicon. A plausible explanation is the close contact between Lɛtɛ and Akuapem Twi. This is the first detailed study of lexical borrowing in Lɛtɛ. Future studies may have to look at equally interesting phenomena like the syntactic and semantic modifications of loanwords in the language.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

DEF – definite
FUT – future
NEG – negation
PL – plural
PROG – progressive
SG – singular

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in undertaking this study.

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