

PHONO-SEMANTIC MATCHING BETWEEN IGBO AND IGALA

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines Phono-Semantic Matching (PSM) between Igbo and Igala where several words of these languages have similar phonetic/semantic imports. PSM has taken diverse dimensions since its introduction 2003 by an Israeli linguist, Gila'd Zuckermann. It has been seen as a form of camouflaged borrowing and a multisourced neologism in which new words are derived from two or more sources at the same time, and are phonetically and semantically alike. A qualitative method of data analysis is adopted in this study; hence it is a pure descriptive research. There are factors responsible for the phonetic-semantic similarities between a good number of Igbo and Igala words. Genealogical and language contact factors play great roles in this respect. When two or more languages are traced to same genealogical background, it becomes obvious, linguistically, that they will have many things in common. This is the case of Igbo and Igala which are traceable to same language family, the New Benue-Congo family of languages. However, when different languages come in contact irrespective of their similar or different genealogical tracings, they are bound to influence one another. It is discovered that there are strict phonetic convergence and partial phonetic divergence between several words of Igbo and Igala using PSM.*

KEYWORDS: Phono-semnatic matching, Linguistic borrowing, Language convergence, Language contact, Genealogical factor.

INTRODUCTION

Phono-Semantic Matching (PSM) is a linguistic term which refers to camouflaged borrowing whereby a word in one language is matched with a phonetically and semantically pre-existent word/root of another language (Zuckermann, 2003). It is the entry of a multisourced neologism that preserve both the meaning and the approximate sound of the parallel expression in a language, using pre-existent words/roots of another language. Zuckermann (2003) challenges Einar Haugen's (1950) classic typology of lexical borrowing. where Haugen (1950) categorized borrowing into either substitution or importation, camouflaged in the form of PSM is a case of "simultaneous substitution and importation". Zuckermann proposes a new classification of multisourced neologisms; words deriving from two or more sources at the same time. Examples of such mechanisms are phonetic matching, semanticized phonetic matching and phono-semantic matching. PSM is different from calquing. While calquing includes semantic translation, it does not comprise phonetic matching. Similarly, PSM is different from homophonic translation, which retains only the sound, and not the semantic import.

According to Zuckermann (2003), PSM in Mandarin is common in brand names, computer jargon, technological terms and toponyms. Bloomfield's (1933) assertion that a language remains the same irrespective of the system of writing used, was challenged by Zuckermann (2003:11), and he says "[i]f Chinese had been written using Roman letters, thousands of Chinese words would have been coined, or would have been coined with completely different forms". Sapir and Zuckermann (2008) examine PSM in Icelandic. In their findings, they say that Icelandic camouflages many other languages' words. The Icelandic word *tækni* meaning (technology, technique) derives from *tæki* meaning (tool) combine with the nominal suffix – *ni* which is a PSM of the Danish *teknik*, meaning (technology, technique).

In the words of Lewis (1999), the most famous Turkish PSM is the one whose current form is *okul* (school). This was originally based on French *ecole* (school) which also was influenced with by Latin *schola* (school). Lewis says that Turkish *okul* constitutes a successful creational PSM because Turkish children of this generation no longer use Turkish *mektep* which originally meant (school) in Turkish. Mailhammer (2008) adopts the concept of multisourced neologisation and, more generally, camouflaged borrowing to Modern German. Mailhammer notes a twofold aim in this respect, which are firstly to underline the significance of multisourced neologisation for language contact theory and secondly to demonstrate that in conjunction with other forms of camouflaged borrowing, it remains an imperative borrowing mechanism in Modern German. Zuckermann (2009) examines the evolution of the word *artichoke*. He begins his analysis with Arabic *al-xarshūf* (the artichoke), which was adapted into Spanish Arabic *alxarshofa*, then Old Spanish *alcarchofa*, the Italian *alcarcioffo*, then internationally phonetically realised in English as *artichoke* – meaning “ a round vegetable with a lot of thick green leaves”. Zuckermann (2009) opines that PSM has been tested to have various advantages from the point of view of the puristic language planner. He says that PSM recycles obsolete lexical items, camouflages foreign influence for the native speaker in the future and facilitates initial learning for the contemporary learner or speaker.

This work examines the extent to which PSM operates between Igbo and Igala, and the factors responsible for the phonetically/semantically similarities between some words of these two languages.

DATA PRESENTATION

The data are presented in groups (according to their types) for clarification and objective purposes.

Group One: Food, Vegetables, Trees, Crops and Fruits

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	úgú	úgwú	pumpkin
b.	òkpà	òkpà	a kind of bean
c.	òkpéí	òkpéí	local magi
d.	òkpàkpa	òpòpá	groundnut
e.	òrómá	ùlòmú (Ibaji)	orange
f.	àkàmù	àkàmù	local custard made from corn
g.	ùbé	ùbé	pear
h.	ókà	ókà (Echonwo)	maize
i.	àbàná	èbìnà	water-yam
j.	àgwà	ègwà	beans
k.	ákpókó(Nsukka)	ákpókó	pepper
l.	̀nkàshì(Nsukka)	̀ikàchì	cocoyam
m.	àgìdí	àgìdí	a kind of food made from corn
n.	úgírí	ígílí	a kind of tree that bears fruit
o.	òfó	òfó	a kind of tree
p.	̀ndùkó	̀ùdùkwú	sweet potato
q.	ògèdè	ògèdè	banana
s.	àchìchà	àchìchà	biscuit
t.	ákpú	ákpú	cassava
u.	̀urókò	̀ùlókó	iroko
v.	àkàrà	àkàlà	bean cake
w.	ófé	óbó	soup

Group Two: Animals

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	ńkítā	úkítā (Ibaji)	dog
b.	éwú	éwó	goat
c.	ézi	éhì (Ibaji)	pig
d.	ákpì	ákpè	scorpion
e.	àkà	àkà	green-snake
f.	ìshá	ihíá	crayfish
g.	ùgò	ùgò	eagle
h.	íjǐjǐ	áchìchì	housefly
i.	òbògwù	ìdàgwò	duck
j.	ápíá	ápíépié	a kind of bird
k.	tòrótòró	tìótìòró	turkey
l.	ábàdù (Nsukka)	ábàdì	monitor lizard
m.	ànyìnyà	ànyà -é-lá	horse

Group Three: Parts of the Body

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	ímí	ímó	nose
b.	ńtì	étí	ear
c.	ónú	álú	mouth
d.	ézé	ényí	teeth
e.	àgbà	àgbà	jaw
f.	àgàdà	àgàdà	in between two legs
g.	ótù	òbù	vagina

Group Four: Objects

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	àkpà	ìkpà	bag
b.	ólóló	ójógo	bottle
c.	òkwútē	òkwútā	stone
d.	gbámgbám	ògbágbám	zink
e.	ògéné	ògéné	a kind of iron drum
f.	ékwé	ékwé	a kind of wooden drum
g.	ùtārì	ìtālè	cane
h.	ìgòdò	ìgèdè	padlock
i.	ìyèrì	ìyèlì	earring
j.	àgbá	àgbá	chain
k.	ákpàtì	Ákpàtì	box
l.	òjá	òjá	a kind of cloth for tithing babe
m.	àngìrì (Nsukka)	àngìnì	a round-like iron inside gun bullet
n.	ànyìnyà-ìgwè	ànyà- ébìjè	bicycle

Group Five: Market Days

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	éké	éké	first market day
b.	áfò	áfò	third market day
c.	̀̀̀kwó	̀̀̀kwó	fourth market day

Group Six: Others

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	m̀̀mírì	ómí	water
b.	ókù	ók̀̀wù (Ibaji)	fishing
c.	ákwá	ákwú	cry

d.	ógù	ógwù	medicine
e.	èjímá	èjímá	twins
f.	òtó	òtó (Ibaji)	nakedness
g.	ńchà	óché	soap
h.	ùdé	ùdé	cream
i.	òkpó	òkpó	boxing
j.	m̀bá	ùbá	boasting
k.	ńné	íyé	mother
l.	ùtábà	àtábà	snuff
m.	òyìbó	òyìbó	Whiteman
n.	bìá	lìá	come
o.	úká	éká	sour
p.	ńnú	ómú	salt
q.	káíkái	káíkái	local hot drink
r.	àni	ánè	land
s.	ùtùtù	òdúdú	morning
t.	ìtó	étá	three

FINDINGS

The method of data analysis in this study is purely quantitative. That is to say that data are analysed descriptively. For easy analysis, the PSM between Igbo and Igala is divided into areas of strict phonetic convergence and areas of partial phonetic divergence.

Areas of Strict Phonetic Convergence

It is evident from section 2 (data presentation) that PSM between Igbo and Igala could be strictly the same. Here a lexical item from Igbo and that of Igala have same sound and same meaning. This can be found in the following words.

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	òkpà	òkpà	cowpea
b.	ùbé	ùbé	pear
c.	ògèdè	ògèdè	plantain

d.	àkà	àkà	green-snake
e.	ùgò	ùgò	eagle
f.	àgbà	àgbà	jaw
g.	ágbá	gbá	chain
h.	èké	èké	first market day
i.	àfò	àfò	third market day
j.	káíkái	káíkái	local hot drink
k.	òkpéí	òkpéí	local condiment

Following from the above, one can say that strict convergence of PSM between Igbo and Igala is possible. Even the tone patterns of these words from the two languages are the same.

Areas of Partial Phonetic Divergence

Partial divergence of PSM obtains between Igbo and Igala. In the case of partial divergence of PSM, one or two sounds may phonetically make a difference between Igbo and Igala words but semantically the same. The difference could be evident at word initial, medial or final. Also, partial divergence of PSM between Igbo and Igala could be found in tone patterns of the two languages.

For the purpose of example, the phonetic differences between the following Igbo and Igala words are just at word initial.

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	àgwà	ègwà	beans
b.	ńtì	étí	ear
c.	̀̀kwó	̀̀kwó	fourth market day
d.	m̀bá	ùbá	scolding
e.	bíá	líá	come
f.	ùtábà	àtábà	snuff
g.	úká	éká	sour

At word medial, the phonetic differences are evident in the following words:

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	úgú	úgwú	pumpkin
b.	ùrókò	ùlókó	iroko
c.	àkàrà	àkàlà	bean cake
d.	òlóló	òjógo	bottle
e.	ìyèrí	ìyèlí	earring

Furthermore, phonetic differences at word final are examined between the following Igbo and Igala lexical items:

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	éwú	éwó	goat
b.	ákpi	ákpè	scorpion
c.	ímí	ímó	nose
d.	òkwúté	òkwútá	stone
e.	ákwá	ákwú	cry
f.	ùdé	ùdé	cream

Note also that Igbo sometimes makes use of the alveolar liquid /r/ where Igala uses alveolar lateral /l/. This is shown in the following words:

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	òrómá	ùlòmú (Ibaji)	orange
b.	úgírí	ígílí	a kind of tree that bears fruit
c.	ùrókò	ùlókó	iroko
d.	àkàrà	àkàlà	bean cake
e.	ùtári	itàlè	cane

It is also important to note that Igala sometimes does labialize velar stops /k g/ where Igbo does not. This can be found in the following words:

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	úgú	úgwú	pumpkin
b.	ógù	ógwù	medicine
c.	ókù	ókwù (Ibaji)	fishing
d.	ndùkó	ùdùkwú	sweet potato

Suffice it to say that Igala uses vowels where Igbo makes use of syllabic nasals /n, m/. This is so because syllabic nasals are not realized in the Igala phonotactics. The following examples demonstrate this fact:

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	ńkíta	úkíta (Ibaji)	dog
b.	ndùkó	ùdùkwú	sweet potato
c.	ńtì	étí	ear
d.	ńkwó	ùkwó	fourth market day
e.	m̀mírí	ómí	water
f.	m̀bá	ùbá	boasting
g.	ńchà	óché	soap
h.	ńné	íyé	mother
i.	ńkàshì(Nsukka)	ìkàchì	cocoyam

Also worthy of note is partial tonal divergence between these two languages. See the following words for example:

	Igbo	Igala	Gloss
a.	ńtì	étí	ear
b.	ńchà	óché	soap

Following from our analysis of partial phonetic divergence between Igbo and Igala so far, one can confidently and objectively say that even though there are little differences between the phonetic-interface of the two languages, their semantic imports remain the same.

Factors Responsible for PSM between Igbo and Igala

It is important to note, at this juncture, that two languages do not have two or more things in common just for the fun of it; there is no reaction without an action. Two major factors are therefore responsible for the phonetically semantically similarities between these two languages. They are genealogical and language contact factors.

Genealogical Factor

Our inheritance is visible in our genealogies, among other things. There are forces among us that pull us towards or away from others, that make us prefer one group to another. At the foundation of our social being, of our being trapped within a network, is our cultural and biological baggage. It is an enormous amount of inherited information that links us to each and every other human being in this dense world, our God given habitation.

According to Okoro (2005), there are Igbo communities along the banks of the Niger that claim Igala ancestry. She says that around the 19th century Bishop Adjai Crowther was told that Aguleri in the present Anambra State was founded by an Igala man. But people of Aguleri also have a history which says that a hunter from Aguleri founded Igala. The Igala influence is evident among the Nsukka Igbo communities especially in their names, titles, dances and masquerades. Okoro (2005) observes that the Igala kingdom, no doubt, played an important role, not only within the territories of the confluence basin, but far beyond the area. The traditions of Nupe, Jukun, Benin, Igbo and Igala and its immediate smaller neighbours indicate time of great antiquity.

The above kingdoms and or/languages have common genealogical tracings. Igbo and Igala for instance belong to the Niger-Congo family of languages which is the largest group of language family in Africa in terms of the number of language that belong to this group.

Geographic isolation, much more common in preceding centuries than in our globalised present, had fostered diversity among humans. Those populations that remained isolated the longest have cultural features farther from the average than other populations that have sustained regular exchanges. Linguistic diversity is the clearest examples of how the sole factor of geographical barriers that constrain mobility can lead to the emergence of multiple detached communities as far as language is concerned. The effect of such barriers, on the other hand, disappears as soon as regular relations are established between two groups that differ in their languages. This is, no doubt, the case of Igala and Igbo.

Language Contact

The term language contract refers to a situation whereby people from different ethno linguistic backgrounds converge at a particular place for one reason or the other to interact, which leads to contact between languages spoken by these people (Agbedo, 2007). Language contact occurs in a variety of phenomena, which include language convergence and borrowing.

Language Convergence

Two or more languages converge as a result of the following factors: migration, geographical proximity, intermarriage, personal relationship etc.

Migration is an influx of people from one geographic area to another geographic area. This movement of people from one place to another could be as a result of natural disaster or in search for good pasture or trade. Some Igbo people do move from their communities to settle in Igala communities especially for trade; and Igbo people are known for trade world-wide. A pocket of Igala people settle in Igbo communities for economic reasons also. These immigrants knowing or unknowingly learn the language of the host. And as they do this, their own native language is incorporated into the language of their host thereby giving ways for the two languages to influence each other.

Geographical proximity is another factor that brings about linguistic convergence between Igbo and Igala. The Igala people have common boundaries with some Igbo communities. Ibaji Local Government Area which is one of the Igala speaking local government areas of Kogi State, for instance, shares the same boundary with Aguleri and Umuleri communities of Anambra State. Afa, a village in Ibaji has common boundary with Uzuani Local Government Area of Enugu State. This is also true of Olamboro and Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Areas of Kogi State which have common boundaries with Udeni and Nsukka Local Government Areas of Enugu State. These geographical affinities have contributed a lot to the linguistic convergence between Igbo and Igala.

Intermarriage between Igbo people and Igala people has over the years made it possible for the two languages to influence one another. As a result of inter marital relationship between Igbo and Igala people, some Igala people especially from Ibaji axis bear Igbo names like: *Udejuwe*, *Oliakwu*, *Onwakwu*, *Uche*, *Udema* etc. They also imbed Igbo titles, cultural dance and masquerades such as *Ogbefi*, *Ogene Group*, *Igbama Masquerading* etc. Igbo people especially from Nsukka axis, on the other hand, also bear Igala names such as *Agbedo*, *Ojobo*, *Onuogu* etc. Intermarriage, amongst other factors has brought so much linguistic/cultural ties or bonds between Igbo and Igala.

Personal Relationship is yet another factor that has influenced linguistic/language convergence between Igbo and Igala for so long ago. In the modern world, people from different linguistic backgrounds interact for one reason or the other. This is mostly common within academic communities.

Linguistic Borrowing

Linguistic borrowing deals with a situation whereby a lexical item or a word is loaned from one language into another language. The most common way in which languages influence each other is the exchange of words (Artfutura, 2009).

Igbo and Igala had in the past borrowed and still borrowing words from each other, hence linguistic borrowing is a continuous process. Igbo, for instance, borrowed the following words from Igala. They are: *ákpókó* (Nsukka), *nkàshì* (Nsukka), *ògèdè*, *àkpàtì* (Nsukka), *káikái*, *àni* (Aruolo dialect), *ábàdù* (Nsukka) etc.

Igala, on the other hand, had borrowed many words from Igbo. Such words are: *úgwú*, *úkita* (Ibaji), *ókà* (Echonwo), *ókù* (Ibaji), *éhi* (Ibaji), *èjímá*, *ògéné* (Ibaji), *ékwé* (Ibaji), *òtò* (Ibaji), *ákpú*, etc (refer to 2.1).

From the above examples of linguistic borrowing between Igbo and Igala, it is evident that borrowing in these two languages are mostly dialectical. That is to say that linguistic

borrowing from the point of view of PSM between Igbo and Igala is not common, what is obtainable here is camouflaged borrowing (refer to 1.1 for camouflaged borrowing).

CONCLUSION

It is evident in this study that Igbo and Igala have a good number of words which are phonetically and semantically alike. There are, however, areas of strict phonetic convergence and areas of partial phonetic divergence between the two languages. There are two major factors responsible for phonetic-semantic similarities between the languages. They are genealogical and language contact factors. Language planners would find PSM between Igbo and Igala resourceful for their Herculean jobs. Lexicographers and etymologists should always recognize the fact that there are widespread phenomena of camouflaged borrowing and multisourced neologization among world languages.

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