**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**FRENCH LOANWORDS AND THEIR AREAS OF INFLUENCE IN KIHAVU LANGUAGE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Kihavu, like many other languages in contact, has adopted foreign words to meet the needs of its speakers’ daily life vocabulary and activities. This work discusses and analyses how and why French loanwords have been distributed to specific areas of influence in the nominal class system of Kihavu. The result is that some alien words have been allocated to Kihavu noun class system rather than other parts of speech. Therefore, they have acquired kihavu native words morphology by means of addition or reduction of suffixes prefixes or affixes. The data were collected from bilingual kihavu native speakers’ conversations. To deal with this socio-linguistic survey, four sections have been developed. The introduction presents the background, aim, hypotheses, research methodology, justification, and scope of the research. Chapter one deals with the literature frame and socio-linguistic presentation of Kihavu language. Chapter two presents the allocation of loanwords per areas of influence. The last section gives the conclusion.

**Key words:** Loanwords, Areas of Influence, Donor Language, Kihavu Language, Buhavu.

**INTRODUCTION**

Kihavu language has hosted a wide range of words from foreign languages over many years from the time it came into contact with other languages. This paper researches on French loanwords and their areas of influence in Kihavu language. French has lent more words to Kihavu than any other foreign language. Thus, this work will mainly deal with loanwords from French. This language has exercised a remarkable influence on Kihavu lexicon. The main focus in this study is to research why and how loanwords from French have been allocated to different domains of the Bahavu’s daily life and have been adapted to fit the nominal class system of Kihavu. A great number of French loanwords exist in Kihavu and this clearly indicates the real need to supplement the Kihavu lexicon. Some areas are very likely to absorb more loanwords than others. This study aims to research key areas which have hosted foreign words and find out why and how these words fit in the Kihavu noun class system. Some specific areas have adopted more French words to cope with the reality of culture contact. The distribution of loanwords in Kihavu has obeyed the noun class system. Thus, loanwords have been allocated to nominal classes. It is curious that some noun classes have been more hospitable than others. Apart from the general introduction and general conclusion, this study contains two chapters. The introduction introduces the background of the research. It presents the aim, hypotheses, research methodology, justification and the scope of the research. Chapter one deals with the literature frame and socio-linguistic presentation of Kihavu language.

Chapter two presents the allocation of loanwords in the areas of influence in Kihavu. The last section gives the conclusion of this work.

**2. SOME CONCEPTS**

2.1. Loanword: A loanword is a word borrowed from another language, usually called donor language. The speaker of the borrowing language, also called recipient/beneficiary language, partially or totally integrates a foreign word in his or her own language system. This depends on the degree of language competence the speaker has. Danesi (1985:110-113) states that the whole process of the adoption of a loanword by a native is what some linguists call “nativization”. A study of Canadian Italian has shown that the receiving language (Italian) has nativized the words of the source language (English) in its phonological, syntactic, and morphological system. He comments as follows: As the loanwords pass into general currency among the members of the immigrant community, they are adjusted unconsciously and systematically to the pronunciation and grammatical patterns of the receiving language. This process is referred to generally as nativization. Simply put, the foreign words are not accepted in their original shape, but rather restructured to conform to the articulatory and grammatical features of the receiving language whence they become indistinguishable from native words, often displacing native items with the same referents [1]. In Webster’s Dictionary, a loanword is defined as “a word taken from another language and at least partially or completely naturalized.” It is the most frequent sociolinguistic phenomenon which results from the contact of two languages [3, 5]. Hockett (1958:410, 411) gives six reasons for lexical borrowing: He finds it a privilege to use a foreign word, Need-filling of objects, persons, places, concepts, institutions. Pernicious homonyms; Low frequency of words: use of a foreign word to replace a regional or dialectal form.
Tendency of affective words: need for synonyms in relation to talking, cooking, sleeping, beating. Cacophemisms: need for euphemisms. [3]. Trask (1999: 175, 176) explains that there are several motivations for borrowing a word but he comments on two major ones: need and prestige [4,5].

2.2. Loanwords areas of influence: In this work “areas of influence” mean key activities which have adopted loanwords to fill the lexical gaps. This is the primary purpose of borrowing alien words [4].

2.3. Kihavu Language and Buhavu area: Kihavu language is spoken in Buhavu area, an ancient name for idjwi and kalehe territories together located in the Eastern D.R.Congo. Idjwi territory got separated from Kalehe in 1974 and became an independent territory. Despite this separation, both territories kept the same culture and language. However, it is worth mentioning that people dwelling in the western zone of kalehe speak dialects which are slightly different from kihavu. This is the case of Batembo from Bunyakiri and Bahunde from Minova (Buhunde). Guthrie (1975:12) classifies Kihavu as a Bantu language in the linguistic zone D52 and the Tervuren group (Belgium) as a Bantu language in zone J52 (De Blois, 1970:89). Nurse and Philippson (2003:504) combined both classifications and labeled the language JD52 [2, 6,8]

3. LOANWORDS AND THEIR AREAS OF INFUENCE

Introductory notes: Loanwords are found in very specific areas: commerce, technology, transport, agriculture, education, army, politics, administration, clothing, religion, foodstuff, health, sports, just to mention a few.

3.1 Agriculture and livestock: Loanwords in this area mainly denote industrial crops, modern agricultural and livestock techniques which have been introduced in Kalehe and Idjwi territories since the colonial period. All the loanwords presented below did not exist in Kihavu before the arrival of Europeans. With regard to traditional agriculture and livestock, there is a wide range of vocabulary showing various traditional techniques. For example, there is a vast lexical field of words which denote the concept of crops, goat, and fish, because these realities were highly developed in Buhavu. Words related to imported plants and modern agricultural tools used in farming and cattle breeding were borrowed from foreign languages.

Examples:

3.2 Building: Loanwords in this area comprise those denoting construction materials, parts of a house, and people involved in a house construction. Major traditional housing materials were made of thatch of sorghum and maize, straw, mud, and branches of trees. With the new techniques of building, many new terms were introduced into the daily vocabulary of Buhavu.

Examples:

3.3 Calendar and telling the time: The area of calendar is composed of words denoting religious festivals and public holidays. Before the colonial period, Bahavu have their own ways of designating the days of the week, the months of the year (lunar system), and the seasons. With the contact of foreigners, there was a quick adoption of the Western/Catholic way of counting the days, the months, and the year.

Examples:

3.4 Clothing: Before the arrival of Arabs and Europeans, traditional Bahavu used to wear fine hides of animals and barks of trees. Men regarded their wives with respect in the matter of clothing. For example, a husband would make a cloth out of fine animal hide (sheep or cow hide) while he himself would cover the nudity with a tree bark. Most loanwords denoting clothing, including foot and head wear, have been fully adapted to morphological and phonological language system of Kihavu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
<th>Source word</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>evoka</td>
<td>ama voka</td>
<td>avacat</td>
<td>avocado</td>
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<td>cbisnate</td>
<td>cbanate</td>
<td>pyrethre</td>
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<td>ama divayi</td>
<td>vin</td>
<td>wine</td>
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<td>ama zizeni</td>
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<td>esosya</td>
<td>amosoya</td>
<td>soya</td>
<td>soybean</td>
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<tr>
<td>entomate</td>
<td>amatome</td>
<td>tomate</td>
<td>tomato</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples:

3.5 Commerce and counting: The area of commerce and the modern auxiliaries of trade (banking, advertising, insurance, warehousing, transport, and industry) were non-existent in Buhavu area. Before commercial ties with the external world, there existed in Buhavu the system of barter, whereby goods were exchanged against other goods. Therefore loanwords denoting commerce, banking, marketing, and taxation were introduced when the first trading centres started to operate in DRC.

Examples:

3.6 Education: This area is the most complex one since it absorbed foreign words directly linked with educational systems from different countries, especially French and English speaking countries. This area counts more false friends than any other area. Kihavu borrowed loanwords to fill the gap for its vocabulary denoting school materials, documents, school administration, and facilities.

Examples:

3.7 Foodstuff and cooking: Loanwords classified under this category refer to modern culinary vocabulary for hard and soft food, which were almost non-existent in ancient DRC. Traditional staples comprised beans, sweet potatoes, bananas, cassava, sorgum paste, and vegetables. Modern habits of eating were acquired from foreigners who brought in external food stuff such as rice, cakes, jam, sweets, cream, bread, vegetable oil.

Examples:

3.8. Health: The area of health comprises mainly loanwords denoting hospital facilities, medical equipment, drugs, “modern diseases”; medical personnel.

Examples:

3.9. Household

A traditional hut consisted of very rudimentary household furniture and appliances, which sometimes included one or more mats (used as a carpet), sisal or wooden chairs, clay pots, wooden plates. Loanwords under this category denote household appliances, furniture, and cutlery, which were brought in Rwanda by foreigners.
3.10 Military and police

This area comprises all non-civilian related borrowed loanwords denoting the army, the police, military equipment, ranks, and ammunition. Traditionally, the king’s army had rudimentary armour. The most used weapons consisted of spears, shields, bows, and arrows.

3.11 Music: Besides Havu traditional music, liturgy music came alongside Christianity. In the long run, other types of music (classical, reggae, Congolese music) were introduced.

3.12. Politics and administration: Loanwords denoting politics and administration were chiefly introduced under the Belgian colonial rule. Words referring to territorial administrative entities have been changed over and over again for the last four decades, as political regimes in D.R.Congo were unstable.

3.13. Religion: This category represents a wide range of loanwords from Christendom as well as the Moslem world. Most of these loanwords have as their primary source languages such as Latin, Greek, Hebrew or Arabic. They came into Kihavu via French, English, and Kiswahili. Catholic and Protestant missionaries came from Europe and the USA. Each religion used the vocabulary which fits its creed, background, and its way of interpreting the Bible, or else the Quoran. Loanwords of this category may help us to understand how, when, and why these missionaries or Moslems came to Buhavu territory.

3.14. Technology: This area counts more loanwords than any other area. They refer to modern means of transport, automobile industry, mechanics, electricity, plumbing, office supplies, stationery, computer science, broadcasting, telecommunication, etc., which did not exist in the country before the contact with the external world. Before any external contact, Bahavu people used to carry people, goods and some domestic animals on their head, the shoulders, or the back. On rivers and waterways, they especially used canoes for transport. Therefore, from the time they came into contact with Arabs and Europeans a wide range of foreign words denoting technology and transport were introduced.
Observations: In view of the above sample words per area of influence, the areas of technology and religion have the highest rate of loanwords occurrence. This can be explained by the fact that modern technology realities were not developed in Buhavu area before it came into contact with other countries. Therefore, technology terminologies were borrowed from major European languages to cope with the new realities in Buhavu territory. Most religious terminologies originally came from Hebrew (a Semitic language which was spoken by the early Christians) through some European languages. French and English also borrowed those words from Hebrew via Greek and Latin. Many Christian names originated from Palestine, spread over Europe, the new world (America), Oceania, Africa, and other parts of Asia [3,4].

4. CONCLUSION

The coexistence of French and Kihavu has resulted in various sociolinguistic aspects. One of the sociolinguistic phenomena observed in this coexistence is the influx of French loanwords in Kihavu.

The predominant occurrence of French loanwords testifies that French lent to Kihavu more words than any other language. This is understandable because of the historical ties between DRC and two European French-speaking countries: Belgium and France. DRC got independence from the colonial master, Belgium, on 30 July 1960, and continued its diplomatic ties it had enjoyed during the colonial era.

The study results prove that the most borrowed parts of speech are nouns. In all languages, nouns and verbs express more concrete realities than adjectives, articles, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. The allocation of loanwords in Kihavu with its many facets has enriched the noun class system of Kihavu. The vocabulary has been increased so as to cope with modern realities. This survey does not pretend to have exhausted all the aspects of loanword allocation or adaptation in Kihavu. Only sample French loanwords have been addressed, especially nouns. It is rather a work that has been initiated for further studies in order to do more research in the area of sociolinguistics in a broader perspective and come up with more findings. Therefore, further studies may still be conducted about other parts of speech such as adjectives, pronouns, verbs, about other donor languages like English and Swahili loanwords in kihavu, translilngual loanwords in kihavu, deceptive cognate loanwords in kihavu, morpho-semantic analysis of augments in kihavu, other linguistic aspects like phonology and syntax of loanwords.

REFERENCES