

**The Use of Mobile Phone Related Terminologies
among the Tumbuka People of Lundazi District of
Zambia**

by

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Abstract

Word building and formation is a continuous process which allows languages to grow and maintain their linguistic value. A language with majority speakers always undergoes language maintenance while the language of the minority speakers undergoes language death. Tumbuka being a language of the majority speakers in Lundazi district seems to have maintained itself through lexical building. This paper discusses how the Information Communication and Technology

(ICT) phone related lexical terminologies have been integrated in the Tumbuka language of Lundazi district of Zambia. Through group discussions and interviews with the local people regarding phone usage, the study revealed that Tumbuka language has relied on the process of borrowing and loan translation or calque to develop its vocabulary in phone technology. The two processes are the most common processes even the English and other language adopted to build its vocabulary. In conclusion, Tumbuka language of Lundazi has updated its ICT phone terminologies through the normal word building process which meets the required international processes of linguistic word formation. The study recommends that many words be investigated on how they are being used in all ICT related usable gadgets and other sectors like health and engineering to enable the country build a linguistic dictionary in the Zambian languages for use in our country.

Key words: (ICT) phone terminologies, Tumbuka language, Lundazi district.

Introduction

Changes in cultural diversity and technological advancements have been seen in different parts of the world. These changes have had an impact on the social, economic and political lives of societies. Technological advancements highly contribute to language development through vocabulary expansion which in turn affect cultural practices because language and culture are inseparable as the latter is a vehicle through which culture is

transmitted (Mkandawire, 2015 :191). Developments in either language or culture can be triggered by technological discoveries which, many times, come with neologisms or new words to represent and name the discoveries. This partly explains why culture and language are considered dynamic as they change with time due to various factors (Mkandawire and Daka, 2018).

While other languages are undergoing language death due to the linguistic force of the new languages in which they are found, Tumbuka language is actually undergoing language maintenance through a known processes of word formation. This article will discuss on the different lexical items which have entered the Tumbuka vocabulary from the new phone technology being used in Lundazi district. The word integration process will be linked to the word formation process which various linguists have discussed like clipping, compounding and derivation among others.

Terminological practice is moving into a world where computers of all kinds, television, the Web, telephones, music media, graphic design and electronic books are evolving toward a seamless and yet heterogeneous environment in which information flows across platform boundaries to guarantee instantaneous terminological access anywhere anytime (Wright 2001). Albert (2002) add that the electronic means of creating, sharing, re-using and coordinating terminological knowledge for multilingual and transcultural content management paved the way for mobile terminology. It is already possible for terminology users abroad to access various termbanks by means of personal diaries and mobile phones (cell phones). For instance, in South African has the National Termbanks where agreed upon were terms are stored and used by the population on any web platform. The terms are collected through various translations and term building to enable people to use their local language in the ICT world.

In a study by Legere (2006), it was indicated that mobile phone companies computer sales managers almost entirely operate in English or codeswitch when technical issues are dealt with. This provides an informative insight into the on-going process of informal term coinage. These terms are necessary for a smooth interaction between the mainly Swahili speaking costumers and the service providers, for informing the public about new achievements, selling the products, facilitating the mobile phone use. Even the phone repairs use the locally coined words to execute their work and provide effective communication to their clients who are either literate or not. What is significant is that there is no language barrier in the usage of phones in the communities since they all use localised words in ICT and phone communication.

Through local ICT word coinage which was compiled and then be used by the local community in the communication in relation to their daily needs, Anyanzwa (2004) records that Microsoft Corporation unveiled the Swahili Technology Glossary as part of effort to bridge the digital divide. Patzel (2005) added that there was a high number of English loanwords and English expressions as well as calques, hybrid verbs of the structure class 15 prefix “ku- “plus English verb stem, but also genuine Swahili terms that clearly demonstrate the great potential of the language. Lacey (2004) opined that the number of the Swahili users was a factor which enabled the company to consider adding the language to their company platform. The language translation stated slowly yet it yielded beneficial fruits to the semi-literate in the community. It is then a lesson enough to see how Zambian languages are developing in this digital world and are using the new phone terminologies.

Language is usually symbolic in nature and mainly represents ideas, concepts, images and reality in its own form (Mkandawire,

2018). In the exploration on theory of the symbolic function of language, Evans and Green (2006) holds that language has the role of expressing thoughts and ideas and that language encodes and externalises our thought through symbols. The duo further state that symbols are bits of language which might be meaningful as individual words, phrases and sentences. Linguistic symbols consist of forms which may be spoken, written or signed and meanings with which the forms are conventionally paired to. Langacker (1987) says a symbol is better referred to as a symbolic assembly as it consists of two parts that are conventionally associated. This brings about a form of meaning pairing. Evans and Green (2006) add that a symbol is attached to a meaning and goes to state that meaning is a convectional ideation or sematic content associated with the symbol. Through the symbolic theory, it can be argued that different languages have come to name the new symbols which they are in contact with so that they can convey meaning appropriately in the right context.

Statement of the problem

The local people of Lundazi district are using the new technology in their community with less difficulties yet it was manufactured, developed and commissioned elsewhere and in a non-Zambian language. The phone technology is both symbolic and abstract. What is not known is how the Tumbuka people are using mobile phone related terminologies among themselves in Lundazi district of Zambia.

General Objective

The objective of the study was to investigate the use of mobile phone related terminologies among the Tumbuka people of Lundazi district of Zambia.

Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- (a) to establish the names the Tumbuka community has given to the phone communication technology they are using in order to convey meaning.
- (b) to determine the linguistic process which has been used to integrate the new words used in the Tumbuka community.

Research Questions

- i. What names have the Tumbuka community given to the phone communication technology they are using in order to convey meaning?
- iii. What linguistic process has been used to integrate the new words used in the Tumbuka community?

Method

The researchers used a case study design to respond to the questions under study. The study adopted a case study. Merriam (1998) notes that this would help the researchers to interact with the respondents and have their views narrated, recorded and reported. Observation and group interviews were conducted with 65 residents of Lundazi central district so as to understand the different technological words they have adopted in their language and are actively used in the community. The two instruments were used because they enabled the researchers to observe how the people used the phone terminologies in their social environment. Respondents were picked from public places like church gatherings and markets. These were purposively sampled because these areas provided a rich meeting place for different people whose experiences were of use to the study. Data was analysed

thematically. Permission was sought from the respondents in order to collect data and the benefits were explained to them before the data collection process begun.

Findings

The findings for the question “what names have the Tumbuka community given to the Phone communication technology they are using in order to convey meaning?” The findings were categorised into two groups. a) the phone software technological terminologies and b) hardware technological terminologies. Chris (2011) defines hardware as the physical device used in and with your machine which include the touchable parts which can be moved within the electronic device. Examples are the body, monitor, keyboard, mouse, the screen, its protectors and the connectors it accepts like flash disks, memory cards, Simcards, power cables and ear pieces. On the other hand, software is defined by Thomas (2013) as the collection of codes installed onto the electronic gadget like Microsoft suite products, internet browser, music software, online communication like skype, WhatsApp, messenger and YouTube. Therefore, the phone hardware and software used in this study are the actual technological jargon used in ICT but are only related to the phone and its use in the language of computer science.

(a) The phone software technological terminologies

The software technological terminologies included those terminologies which were connectivity related and those which are not tangible in nature. The findings were then matched with the current English used terminologies to what the local people in the villages know, use and call the software technological terminologies. The following were the findings in the table below

Table 1: English and Tumbuka used phone software technological terminologies

Sn	English Terms	Tumbuka Software Terms
1	Network	Netiweki
2	Wifi	Netiweki/ wayifayi
3	Bluetooth	Bulutufi
4	Whatsapp	Watisapu
5	Message	Uthenga
6	Viber	Vayiba
7	Messenger	Mesenja
8	Facebook	Fasibuku
9	Google	Gugo
10	Camera	Chokopela/Kamera

From the findings in table 1, it is evident that the English and Tumbuka used software technological terminologies used in the district are taken from the original English or brand names. The words used in the local language are mainly taken from the brands of the companies and the providers. The other words were in line with the technological hardware.

(b) The phone hardware technological terminologies

The words in this article do not amount to the actual meaning of hardware in information and technology, but the physical parts of the information and communication technology which the local people of Lundazi are exposed to and are using. The common terminologies are below and are compared to the original words in English.

Table 2: English and Tumbuka used phone hardware technological terminologies

Sn	English Terms	Tumbuka Hardware Terms
1	Phone	Foni
2	Sim card	Simukadi
3	Charger	Chajala/chaja
4	Head sets	Vupulikira mumakuthu
5	USB cable	Nthambo yo tholera uthenga pamakina
6	Screen	Silikini
7	Smart phone	Tachi sikilini
8	Memory card	Mosungila uthenga

The findings from the two charts have similar interpretations in that they have common derivation. The Tumbuka words are used communicatively to suit the daily needs of the phone users in the various villages and communities.

(c) Findings from the group discussion

Findings from the group discussion revealed that the Tumbuka community used foreign words according to the way they were denoted in their language. They also explained that the common words they have come to learn and use are those words which are attached to the challenges and friendliness they have encountered in the process of interacting with the phones. One respondent said, “I came to know of WIFI when I went to town and I was asked to open my Wifi and connect my phone. Here in the village we don’t know of such and they don’t exist.” Another respondent said, “ivivinyake vama vayiba nama watisapu tukuvimanya makora viwi cha, kwene wanawithu. Tukuvisanga waka mu foni pala tagula.”

Translation

These other things like viber and whatsapp we don't know them, but our children do. We just find them in the phones installed after we purchase the gadgets.

With regards to the origin of the words they were using in interacting with the phones, the respondents mentioned that they heard of the names from the literate and they said them in the Tumbuka way and that was what eased communication for them. One respondent said;

I ask my children on how and what an application is, and I also go to explain to my friends who cannot pronounce the words as accurate as the educated. From the pronunciation, the word is then used and adopted in our Tumbuka way.

Another respondent said,

I like listening to our community radio station where Thembachako (local presenter) tries to teach us new and old words in Tumbuka. From this, I learn some new words especially to do with health and technology.

Other respondents mentioned that they made their own pronunciation of the words they heard from the phone repairs and users so as to suit the Tumbuka communication. Other respondents mentioned that they asked the people selling regarding the names of the pieces they got from the packet and they oriented them on their use. From their explanation, we coin words and use them in accordance with their work. One respondent said, "I didn't know that I am supposed to use ear pieces as an antenna for the radio not until I asked" another respondent added that, "*I did not know*

that a charger can be carried in pieces until I saw a power bank.”

All these words were pronounced in Tumbuka as soon as they were heard and experienced by the community members when they used their new phones.]

Discussion

The linguistic process used to integrate the new words used in the Tumbuka community

It has been realised and accepted by different scholars that word formation in a language takes specific processes. These include; coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, affixation, derivation, calquing and conversion among others. From the different forms of word formation, the new phone terminologies adopted into the Tumbuka vocabulary seems to have been formed through the process of borrowing and calquing. Borrowing is the process in which a word is borrowed directly into another language. Calquing is the word formation process in which a borrowed word or phrase is translated from one language to the other and used in the same way as the original word. There are words which have been borrowed from English to Tumbuka and they have maintained the meaning. From the phone software technological terminologies in table 1, it is clear that most of the words are borrowed and are used in their main form. The only difference is that the words which have been borrowed into Tumbuka have adopted a similar pronunciation. This is the same situation in table 2.

Lexical borrowing from one language to the other enables languages to develop and build on their local languages so that they can match the changes in language use currently prevailing. The words which have been borrowed into Tumbuka have similar

characteristics. These include maintaining the same phonology and semantics while the phonetics changes. This is not different from the English words borrowed from other languages. For instance, Yule (1996:65) says that English borrowed words like piano from Italian, tycoon from Japanese and zebra from Bantu languages. These words are used as they were borrowed. He further states that other words were borrowed and changed into English spelling like *suupaamaaketto* from Japanese to “supermarket” in English, *rajo* to radio, *klub* to club and *futbal* to football. This kind of borrowing is the one which has happened to most of the phone software technological terminologies. As for the phone hardware technological terminologies, there is a mixture of borrowing and other processes of word formation.

The second process Tumbuka adopted in enriching its language with the phone related technological terminologies is through loan translation or calque. Loan translation or calque involves the direct translation of the elements of the word into the borrowing language. A calque is a type of borrowing in which each morpheme or word is translated into the equivalent morpheme or word in another language while a loan translation maybe a word, a phrase, or even a short sentence translated from one language to another with its complete meaning (Richards and Schmidt, 2002:314). The Tumbuka language has also demonstrated that loan translation is possible in its word building which deals with phone technology. The terminologies which have undergone loan translation include; USB cable, memory card, head sets and duo sim phone under the hardware chart. As for the software words, the calque words include USB and memory card. These words have been given a descriptive meaning which has stood to be used in the Tumbuka language. The speakers have not borrowed the words as a whole, but have loaned the words in order to suit the purpose and communication.

From the two strands of words in the two tables, there are no words which been adopted into the Tumbuka language through affixation, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, affixation and conversion. This does not mean that all the words which are adopted into the Tumbuka language commonly undergo calque or borrowing. It can be said that the ICT phone related lexical terminologies in the Tumbuka language of Lundazi district of Zambia have consistently used the three-word formation processes in making the language modern and catch up with the technological lexicology of other languages.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to discuss and provide the word formation process under the ICT) phone related lexical terminologies in the Tumbuka language of Lundazi district of Zambia. The Tumbuka spoken in Malawi and other countries have not been included because they have their own linguistic diversity that they enjoy. Tumbuka language has continued to undergo language maintenance through word borrowing from other languages. This has been demonstrated through the borrowing and loan translation or calque which the ICT phone lexemes have undergone to suit the Tumbuka speaking populace in Lundazi district.

Recommendations

The study then recommends that there is need to have a thorough documentation of the new words being used in the various communities around Zambia so that a linguistic dictionary can be composed which will provide a guided orthography for the writers in various sectors of our economy. Universities and their language departments have to work hand in hand with the government departments so that sponsorship is sought to help

build the national language bank like other countries. This will also assist the local languages to continuously under go “language maintenance” instead of facing “language death.”

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