'My Madam is Fine': The Adaptation of English Loans in Chichewa

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It is well known among sociolinguists that in any language contact situation one language tends to have sociopolitical dominance over the other, and that linguistic borrowing tends to flow from the more dominant to the less dominant language. This paper presents evidence from English loans in Chichewa (Bantu) which shows that the recipient language is not a passive participant in the borrowing process: the borrowing language makes various modifications to the loan words to make them fit the grammatical structure as well as cultural requirements of the recipient language. As a result of these modifications some loan words assume new grammatical categories, meanings and usage.

Preliminary

Linguistic borrowing occurs in nearly every speech community of the world, and in Anglophone Africa borrowing from English is a very common phenomenon. In the Southern African country of Malawi, the effects of borrowing from English are most noticeable in urban areas where conversations and other forms of interaction amongst Chichewa speakers typically consist of utterances like those depicted in (1)–(3).[1]

(1) Masiku ano zinthu zikungobedwa pano.
Days these things are-just-getting-stolen here
Kukhala ine, ma-*watchmen* onse ndi-nga-wa-chite *fire*.
Stay me PL- all I-can-them-do
'These days, items are just getting stolen here. If I were in charge, I would fire all the watchmen'

(2) Mada, akuumbuzatu a-*daddy* ako
will thrash you HON- your
'Mada, your daddy will give you a thrashing'

(3) Atata, Masozi dzulo ndi- na- mu- *pinch* -a ?
Daddy, yesterday SB-PST-OBJ-pinch-FV
'Daddy, did I pinch Masozi yesterday?'

These utterances are taken from different settings: (1) was uttered at a tertiary college in the city of Blantyre by a lecturer who was dissatisfied with the state of security on the campus; (2) was uttered in a domestic setting by a mother who was warning her disobedient son of the consequences of his behaviour; (3) was also uttered in a domestic setting by a boy aged three and half years. Of interest to the present investigation is, *inter alia*, how forms from one language are incorpo-

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rated and used in another language. Note that in (1) the English plural noun *watchmen* is inflected with the Chichewa plural prefix *ma-* whereas the verb *fire* occurs as a bare infinitive after the Chichewa verb *chita* 'do'. In (2) the noun *daddy* is prefixed with an honorific marker *a*, which is required by the norms of Chichewa culture when one is referring to or addressing a person whose social position commands respect such as a parent or someone older. In (3) the verb *pinch* is inflected with Chichewa prefixes as well as the suffix vowel *-a* which is mandatory on the verb since Chichewa, like a number of other Bantu languages, follows a strict open syllable structure. I will return to explicate the significance of these observations below. Suffice to note here that the three examples are taken from everyday situations in which the language of interaction is Chichewa.

Introduction

Studies on language contact and the concomitant language change abound in the literature, going as far back as the 1950s and beyond (see, for example, Haugen, 1950, and references in that work). It has long been established that with language contact comes an element of bilingualism by speakers of one or both language communities which, in turn, usually results in codeswitching. Codeswitching itself often leads to borrowing; that is, forms from one language are adopted by the other language such that speakers of the recipient language (both bilinguals and monolinguals) consider the foreign forms as part of their own language. Mutual borrowing by the contact languages is likely to result in language convergence, whereby previously dissimilar languages mutually change and become more alike. A classical case of language convergence occurred in Kupwar, India, in which four contact languages became more alike over time (see Gumperz, 1971). When borrowing is unidirectional, language shift may occur; that is, the recipient language may, as a result, become more like the donor language. Examples of instances of language shift include the case of Ma'a, an originally Cushitic language in East Africa, that is now Bantu-like (see Myers-Scotton, 1993b; Nurse, 1988; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988) as well as Pennsylvania German in the United States, which has become in various respects English-like over time (see Fuller, 1996).[2]

The term 'borrowing' is, strictly speaking, a misnomer and it is used in the literature only as a convenient label for the process involved. As Haugen (1950) rightly points out, there is no consent on the part of the source language, nor are the 'borrowed' features subsequently returned to their source. Haugen observes that other related terms such as 'language mixing' or 'language hybrid' are not without problems either, since the introduction of elements from one language into another does not create a 'mixture' but merely an alteration of the second language and, in any case, the term 'language mixing' implies that speakers draw freely from the two languages when, in fact, they do not. Haugen adds that the term 'hybrid', on its part, erroneously implies that there are other languages which are 'pure' when, in fact, no such languages are known to exist. Thus, for lack of a better word, the term 'borrowing' is still used in the literature to refer to instances in which one language acquires features from another. In Malawi, like in other former British colonies, the indigenous languages have acquired many features from English, particularly in the lexical component of the grammar. The

three examples above only provide us with a glimpse of the features Chichewa has acquired from English. It is very unlikely that in the foreseeable future Chichewa speakers will shift to English, but the manner in which speakers of Chichewa use forms from English in their daily interactions offers an interesting area for investigation.

Traditionally it was believed that languages borrowed lexical items from other languages to fill lexical gaps; that is, there were concepts for which a particular language lacked the necessary terminology and so speakers had to go beyond the boundaries of their own language to find the appropriate lexical items. The logic behind this belief was that while cultural borrowing was necessary, a language could not borrow core vocabulary items since there was no need to: the availability of indigenous expressions would render borrowed forms superfluous to the language in question (see Myers-Scotton, 1993b, for the distinction between 'core' and 'cultural' borrowing). Empirical studies however, (e.g. Bernsten, 1990; Bernsten & Myers-Scotton, 1993; Mougeon & Beniak, 1991; Poplack *et al.*, 1988, and related works) have revealed that languages do not obey laws of logic or economics: borrowing of core lexical items occurs even when indigenous equivalents are available in the language to encode the relevant concepts. Such type of borrowing, which at first sight creates unnecessary duplication in the inventory of the recipient language, is accommodated by the various adjustments which occur in the systems of the recipient language (see Linguistic Consequences of Borrowings below).

There are different types of lexical borrowing identified in the literature, the classification of which is determined by the degree to which a borrowed item is assimilated into the phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic patterns of the host language (see, for example, Gumperz, 1982; Haugen, 1972; Romaine, 1995). Some lexical items are fully assimilated into the host language, others are only partially assimilated, and others still are not assimilated at all. Poplack and her associates (see Poplack *et al*., 1988; Sankoff *et al.*, 1990) distinguish between 'established' borrowings, i.e. those which exhibit complete assimilation in the host language, from 'nonce' borrowings which exhibit no assimilation at all. Poplack *et al*. (1988) note that the same lexical item may exhibit different degrees of assimilation depending on how frequently and widespread the item is used in the speech community. In general, borrowed items tend to be more assimilated into the host language when they occur in the speech of monolingual speakers, and are less so when they occur in the speech of bilingual speakers.

The goal of this study is threefold: first, it is to sketch out why Chichewa (a language that is spoken by a vast majority of Malawians) has borrowed from English (which is spoken by a tiny minority of Malawians); second, it is to examine the extent to which lexical borrowing from English into Chichewa supports current theories on language contact (e.g. the Matrix Language Frame Model (Myers-Scotton, 1993b)); third, and more importantly, it is to examine what happens to both the foreign and indigenous forms after borrowing has occurred in a language. As will become clear below, borrowing of lexical items does not only result in the enrichment of the lexical inventory of the recipient language; it also leads to a variety of modifications to both the loan words and the indigenous expressions themselves.

The data

The data for this study were taken from a corpus of naturally occurring discourse that I built up over a period of more than ten years. The data were collected in part by taping conversations with friends and family in my home and other places in the city of Blantyre, Malawi, with participants usually unaware at the time that the conversations were being taped. These conversations were subsequently transcribed for analysis. The data are also based on my observations of people's utterances in natural conversations from which I noted down those stretches of discourse which contained features from two different languages. I made sure speakers were not aware at the time of speaking that I was interested in their use of language. That is, I tried as much as possible to be the anonymous observer in collecting the data just to make sure that my presence itself did not become an important factor in determining the type and quality of the linguistic output. The third source of data was from personal correspondence (both by conventional letters and, more recently, e-mail) with Chichewa-speaking friends.

The samples discussed in this study come from twenty different speakers, most of whom are educated adults aged between 20 and 45 years. The majority of the speakers have had at least twelve years of formal education: six of the speakers have university qualifications; seven have attained high (or secondary) school education; three have primary school education (one of them is a youth in his early teens); two are children of pre-school age; and there is one adult speaker, a woman who was riding a bus, whose educational background could not be established. Overall, the speakers in this study are highly educated and thus highly competent in both Chichewa and English: these speakers frequently engage in codeswitching, especially when conducting informal interactions in Chichewa. The two pre-school children for example, come from families whose parents are highly bilingual.

The Borrowing of English into Chichewa

The introduction and subsequent integration of lexical items from one language into another depends on a number of factors: these include the sociopolitical relationship between the contact languages as well as the length and intensity of the contact (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). It is therefore necessary to compare the status of English in Malawi to that of Chichewa, and to examine the nature of contact Chichewa speakers have had with English over the years.

The status of English in Malawi

English was introduced into Malawi by a few British missionaries, explorers, and colonial administrators towards the end of the 19th century. Although the country was under British rule for a period of over 70 years, the number of English speakers did not grow to significant levels: the British did not establish a settler community in Malawi which would have served as a numerically noticeable ethnic group (see Kayambazinthu, 1998, for a more detailed discussion of the historical background to the linguistic situation in Malawi). Thus Malawi differs from other countries in the region such as Kenya, Zimbabwe and South

Africa, in which large numbers of English-speaking communities settled prior to and after the establishment of colonial rule. However, as Edwards (1994: 33) notes, 'moving' a language from one location to another does not necessarily require large numbers of people to physically move: all that is required is military and economic pressure on the other speech community; and this pressure only requires 'a handful of soldiers, merchants and bureaucrats'.

Thus, notwithstanding the small number of British nationals in Malawi, in just a little over a hundred years English has become the most dominant language in the country with respect to its domain of use and social prestige. To start with, English is the official language for business and administration in the country: official government records are written in English; parliament conducts its deliberations in English; and the laws of Malawi are written in English. In this connection mastery of English has also played a role in the destiny of aspiring politicians in Malawi: from the 1980s it was required by the Banda administration that anyone without documentary proof of proficiency in English be excluded from running for parliament unless she or he passed a specially administered proficiency test. Second, English is the medium of instruction at virtually all levels of education; in fact English is the single most important subject for anyone wishing to advance in the field of education. This is supported by the following: (1) a pass in English is a necessary condition for a candidate to be awarded a Junior Certificate of Education which enables one to advance from junior to senior secondary school; (2) a pass in English is required for a candidate to be awarded the Malawi School Certificate of Education; and (3) anyone seeking admission into the University of Malawi needs to have achieved at least a credit pass in English in the Malawi School Certificate examination. Since knowledge of English guarantees academic advancement in Malawi, mastery of the language is indicative of one being educated and, therefore, knowledgeable. Further, as Myers-Scotton (1993a) points out, English has the status of being an international language; the language of science and technology and, by extension, the language for expressing forms of advancement and modernity.

For these reasons, no single Malawian language rivals English for prestige. Although Chichewa was chosen alongside English as the official language of the country, mastery of Chichewa does not seriously affect one's political and socioeconomic destiny. In this regard, it is interesting to note that nearly all the newspapers in Malawi are published in English: the so-called bilingual papers, in fact, are for all intents and purposes published entirely in English since they only contain at most a two-leaf Chichewa supplement inserted for convenience (this Chichewa supplement is significantly buried in the middle of the paper). It is clear that although publishers are aware that nearly all their readers are non-native speakers of English and probably spend very little time speaking it, they believe that English is the language for conveying and receiving important news. In Malawi then, like in most Anglophone Africa, English serves as a vehicle for political as well as socioeconomic mobility for most people. There is thus every reason for Chichewa speakers to positively evaluate English and to desire to speak it.

Thomason and Kaufman (1988) point out that the type as well as speed of borrowing in any contact situation is determined by social as well as linguistic factors. The critical social factors are: the amount of contact between the two

languages, the length of that contact, and the sociopolitical dominance of the source-language speakers over the borrowing-language speakers. With respect to amount of contact, Thomason and Kaufman propose that the speed and amount of borrowing increases with the intensity of contact between the two languages. The intensity of contact itself is likely to be greater in cases where source language speakers outnumber the borrowing language speakers. In the Malawi case, as noted above, the number of English speakers never at any point came anywhere close to outnumbering Chichewa speakers; as a result the intensity of contact between English and Chichewa can be characterised as having been 'casual to light' in the sense of Thomason and Kaufman. This suggests that the amount of borrowing from English into Chichewa must have been very minimal in the initial stages. Up to now this borrowing seems to be restricted mostly to the lexical component of the grammar.

With respect to the effect of length of contact on borrowing, Thomason and Kaufman point out that there should be enough time for bilingualism to develop and for foreign features to make their way into the borrowing languages. Over time the number of Chichewa speakers receiving formal education has increased, resulting in a gradual increase in the number of bilingual speakers: speakers who have the capacity to engage in codeswitching and thus introduce novel forms into Chichewa. Those who are educated almost invariably migrate to urban areas in search of jobs and a better quality of life, which has resulted in urban centres becoming more and more bilingual (with English as one of the languages) whereas the rural areas have remained relatively monolingual. Due to this migration there is now a new generation of speakers, mostly young people, who are raised in a bilingual milieu. These speakers acquire some form of English at very early stages in their lives, and although they are not exposed to English in the same way as, say, immigrant children living in England (Wei, 1994) or New York city (Zentella, 1997) their use of Chichewa reveals noticeable traces of English. Further, it should be noted that over the years the country has witnessed the introduction of new technology which has brought with it a plethora of new English terminology that has made its way into people's mental lexicons. This means that the average Malawian encounters more English now than was the case in the past. And, of course, there is the sociopolitical dominance of English which continuously exerts pressure on speakers of Chichewa to borrow forms from English. These factors have created an environment in which borrowing from English has become an almost inevitable process.

The linguistic factor which determines the type and speed of borrowing is the typological distance between languages in contact. Thomason and Kaufman argue that source language features that fit well typologically with functionally analogous features will be borrowed first. They propose a borrowing probability scale which places content, non-basic vocabulary items at the top of the scale and structural features such as inflectional affixes at the bottom. In the absence of a close typological fit between the source language and the borrowing language, they argue, features lower on the scale will not be borrowed before features higher on the scale are borrowed; in other words, vocabulary items are the easiest to borrow and structural items the most difficult. Granted that English and Chichewa are typologically distant and the fact that the nature of contact

between the two languages has been light over the years, it is not surprising that English loans in Chichewa have mostly been confined to vocabulary items.

Bilingualism and Linguistic Borrowing

Any analysis of linguistic borrowing must start with the analysis of the behaviour of bilingual speakers because the introduction of foreign linguistic forms into a language requires some degree of bilingualism. This position is generally accepted among sociolinguists (see, for example Bentahila & Davies, 1983; Haugen, 1950; Hill & Hill, 1986; Myers-Scotton, 1992, 1993a, 1993b; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Poplack *et al*. (1988: 48) succinctly present this view when they state:

> the agents of introduction and, to some extent, transmission of borrowings within the community are more likely to be bilinguals or those in direct contact with the donor language and/or culture, whereas the innovation and propagation of other lexical novelties may, to a greater extent, be due to other subgroups within the community, such as the intellectual establishment, schools, the media, minorities imbued with some measure of cultural prestige, the youth subculture, or the world of science and technology.

Once speakers have achieved some level of mastery of another language they engage in some kind of codeswitching. The reasons for engaging in codeswitching are varied and are well documented in Myers-Scotton (1993a), and will not be discussed here. What is important to note is that when a foreign expression is used repeatedly by a speaker, more speakers of the recipient language come to know the novel expression and, if they positively evaluate it and thus accept it, they too start using it in their conversations. Subsequently the foreign expression becomes part of the vocabulary of the recipient language such that it forms part of the mental lexicon of monolingual speakers.

Granted that each language is an integrated system, the question that is often asked is this: how are features of one language allowed into another language? A related question is: do the borrowed items retain their original categorial features and usage? These questions are quite relevant here considering the typological distance between English and Chichewa. The answer to the first question is in part provided by universal mechanisms proposed in Myers-Scotton's (1993b) Matrix Language Frame Model, to which I turn presently, and the answer to the second seems to lie in the cultural and sociolinguistic practices of the borrowing community.

The Matrix Language Frame Model

The Matrix Language Frame Model developed in Myers-Scotton (1993b) and further expanded and refined in Myers-Scotton and Jake (1995) provides a morphosyntactic basis for explaining how foreign forms first occur in codeswitching, and subsequently become incorporated into the recipient language as borrowed items. The premise of this model is that where linguistic utterances consist of items from two distinct languages, the participating languages are unequal partners: the recipient language, is the matrix language whereas the donor language is the embedded language. Crucially, the matrix language provides the morphosyntactic frame or grammatical structure for the

mixed constituents. An important distinction is made between system morphemes, which roughly correspond to what are traditionally classified as closed-class items, and content morphemes, which roughly correspond to open-class items. The content morpheme versus system morpheme distinction differs from that drawn between open-class and closed-class items in that items from the same syntactic category can be classified differently with regards to whether they are content or system morphemes in a particular language. That is, the distinction between system and content morphemes sometimes cuts across syntactic categories, as demonstrated in a study by Jake (1994) in which some pronouns exhibit properties of content morphemes whereas others fit the description of system morphemes. Further, system morphemes themselves are classified into three types (see Myers-Scotton & Jake, forthcoming), the details of which need not concern us here. Distinguishing between content and system morphemes in this manner allows one to predict which foreign elements can be incorporated into the recipient language.

Two major principles of the Matrix Language Frame Model – the system morpheme principle and the morpheme order principle – explain how forms from two languages occur in a single utterance. The system morpheme principle states that in mixed constituents all system morphemes which have grammatical relations external to their head constituent come from the matrix language. The predictions of this principle are illustrated in (4)–(6) below. The utterance in (4) was made in an office by an adult male with university education; (5) was uttered at home by a mother with university education; and (6) was also uttered in a domestic setting by a mother with high school education.

(4) Kodi [$_{NP}$ ma-*refugee*-*s*-wa] adzabwerera liti kwawo?
Q PL- -DEM will.return when their.home
'When will these refugees return to their home?'

(5) Timothy, ta-dza-tenga [$_{NP}$ *slipper*-*s* y-ako]
IMP-come-get 9-your
'Timothy, come get your slipper'

(6) Ngoni, ta- mu- send -er -a mwana [$_{NP}$ *apples* i-modzi]
IMP-OBJ-peel-APPL-FV child 9-one
'Ngoni, peel one apple for the child'

In (4) the noun *refugee* shows double plural marking: the word is inflected with the Chichewa prefix *ma-* and the English *-s*. Bokamba (1988) points out that such forms are only double plural morphologically, but semantically they are not double plural. Note that although the NP consists of system morphemes from both Chichewa (*ma-*) and English (*-s*), the relevant or 'active' plural morpheme, is the one from Chichewa. This claim is supported by the fact the contracted form of the demonstrative morpheme - *wa* 'these' as well as the subject agreement on the verb *a-dza-bwerer-a* 'will return' agrees with the Chichewa plural marker in noun class (Bantu noun class 6). More interesting are the mixed NPs in (5) and (6). In these two utterances, both English lexemes *slippers* and *apples* contain the English plural suffix *-s*; yet each noun is treated as singular in the sentence in which it

occurs. Note that *slippers* triggers singular agreement on the possessive *yako* 'yours' as evidenced by the *y-* on the possessive pronoun which is a class 9 agreement marker (and class 9 denotes singular). Note that *apples* (6) too is counted as a singular item and triggers singular agreement (class 9) on the numeral *modzi* 'one'. It is evident here that although the English plural morpheme is present on both nouns the absence of the Chichewa plural prefix *-ma* makes these lexemes singular. This evidence supports the claim that it is the Chichewa system morphemes that are active in mixed constituents consisting of Chichewa and English forms.

The morpheme order principle predicts that the morpheme order of mixed constituents consisting of singly-occurring embedded language lexemes and any number of matrix language constituents is that of the matrix language. This is illustrated in (7).

(7) Pobwera ndakumana ndi [$_{NP}$ *madam* anu].
When.coming I.have.met with your
'When coming, I met (with) your madam (i.e. wife)'

Here the relevant constituent is the noun phrase ***madam*** *anu* 'your madam' where the head noun is from English and the modifier is from Chichewa. Note that Chichewa morpheme order is followed: the possessive pronoun follows the noun. If English word order were followed the possessive pronoun would precede the noun. Notice also that the NP *ma-**watchen** onse* 'all (the) watchmen' in (1) and *a-**daddy** ako* 'your daddy'in (2) exhibit the same pattern in that, consistent with Bantu word order, nominal modifiers follow rather than precede the head noun.

The two principles show that the matrix language sets the rules for incorporating foreign expressions into a language. In other words, Haugen (1950) was right in saying that when speakers draw from two languages they do not do so freely: the expressions speakers use in their utterances are subject to the rules of the matrix language. The Matrix Language Frame Model claims that the foreign expressions which are allowed to occur in a language are content morphemes, and these only occur in those slots permitted by the matrix language. Having explored how foreign forms are incorporated into another language from a purely morphosyntactic perspective let us now examine more broadly the consequences of borrowing to both the borrowed items and the host language itself.

Linguistic Consequences of Borrowing

The borrowing of lexical items results in a number modifications not just to the foreign words but to the indigenous words as well. Some of these modifications are induced by the linguistic practices of speakers of the recipient languages, which are themselves constrained in part by requirements of appropriateness, whereas other modifications can be explained in terms of universal characteristics of language change. There are up to four types of modifications that have resulted from borrowing from English into Chichewa, and I turn to these immediately.

Categorial modifications

One of the consequences of integrating foreign forms into a language is that the host language modifies or changes the syntactic category of the borrowed expression. For example, some English adjectival expressions are treated like nouns in Chichewa in the sense that they are not used to modify any noun but, instead, are used as substitutes for the very nouns they were supposed to modify. This is exemplified in (8)–(11).

(8) Katenge mpando ku *dining*
'Go get a chair in the dining (room)'

(9) Ndabwera kudzabwereka *ball point*'
I have come to borrow a ball point (pen)'

(10) Tikadzalandira *initial* ndiye kudzakhala kumwa kwambiri
'When we get the initial (allowance) there will be lots of drinking'

(11) Ndikufuna kukagula news
'I would like to go and buy a news(paper)'

The utterances in (8) and (9) were made in a domestic setting: (8) was uttered by a man in his early thirties with high school education; whereas (9) was uttered by a youth still attending primary school. Note that in (8) the noun 'room' does not appear at all because *dining* here means 'dining room'. Surprisingly, related expressions such as *bedroom* or *living room*, though regularly used by Chichewa speakers, have not undergone the same kind of modification. In (9) the expression *ball point* denotes the conventional pen whose full name is 'ball point pen' since it has a ball at the tip (though it is doubtful that the average Chichewa speaker is aware of this technical fact). It is interesting to note that the modifying expression is treated as the head noun such that it is not unusual for one to hear the pluralised form *ma-**ball point*** 'pens' in the speech of Chichewa speakers. In (10), which was uttered by a university student, the word *initial* stands for the phrase 'initial allowance' which refers to a lump sum of money paid out to new entrants in the University of Malawi to allow them settle in. This allowance (whose payment was stopped towards the end of the 1980s) marked the biggest pay day yet in the lives of most students and thus they used the money for partying. What is important for the present study is that the word *initial* is used as a full noun. Similarly in (11), which was uttered by an adult male with primary school education, the modifier *news* stands for 'newspaper'. Thus where a native speaker of English would say 'I would like to buy the paper' the Chichewa speaker says 'I would like to buy the news'. The use of the word *news* to refer to 'newspaper' has a fairly long history among Chichewa speakers; instances of such uses date as far back as the early sixties and are cited in the work of Thomas Price (see Shepperson, 1996).

Such modifications, I conjecture, are a direct consequence of speech practices of Chichewa speakers. In the daily usage of Chichewa, speakers often do not mention head nouns in their utterances and, instead, only mention the modifying expressions perhaps because the head noun (or at least its noun class) is recoverable from the agreement features on the modifying expression as well as

the context. As a result nominal attributes can be used by themselves without the nominal which they modify. This is exemplified in (12).

(12) (a) [$_{NP}$ munthu wa mbulanda] anathawa ku ndende
person AGR- naked ran away from prison
'A naked person ran away from prison'

(b) [$_{NP}$ wa mbulanda] anathawa ku ndende
AGR- naked ran away from prison
'A naked (person) ran away from prison'

The two sentences convey nearly the same information, though (b) is less specific. What is important here is that in (12b) the unstated head noun is still understood to denote a person. It would seem that some English noun phrases borrowed into Chichewa have been treated in the same way by Chichewa speakers; as a result the borrowed modifiers occur by themselves without the nouns which they modify.

Category mismatches between the two typologically distant languages may necessitate recategorising borrowed items when they are incorporated into the recipient language. In this regard, it is not only noun modifiers that undergo category change when they are borrowed into Chichewa: English verbs sometimes also undergo this process in that they are treated like syntactic nouns and occur in slots that are reserved for nouns in Chichewa syntax. This is exemplified in (1) above as well as (13) below, which was uttered in a domestic setting by a woman with high school education:

(13) Wandiuza kuti ndi-mu-pang -ire *decide*
he.has.told.me that I- him-make-APPL
'He has told me to decide/ for him' (i.e. make a decision for him)

The verbs *chita* 'do' and *panga* 'make' as used in (1) and (13) respectively, typically take noun complements, which means that the English verbs in these two examples are treated as nouns syntactically. This is borne out by the fact that the speaker who uttered (13) produced an almost identical utterance in another context in which the verb *panga* 'make' was followed by a noun. This is illustrated in (14).

(14) Koma ndiye akundiuza kuti ndi-mu-pang-ire *decision*.
but then he.is.telling.me that I-him-make-APPL
Decision ikhale ya ineyo?
be for me
'But then he is telling me to make a decision for him. Should the decision be mine?'

Expressions in which a verb like *chita* 'do' combine with a verb of the donor language to form a compound verb (Romaine, 1995) are not unique to Chichewa: such forms are widely reported in other contact situations such as Turkish/Dutch (Backus, 1992, 1996), Japanese/English (Nishimura, 1986), Panjabi/English and other language combinations (see Romaine, 1995, and references therein). Myers-Scotton and Jake (1999) observe that the 'do' verb construction is a compromise strategy necessitated by the mismatch between the

requirements of the host language and the loan word. In such constructions the 'do' verb carries all the requisite inflections required by the grammar of the borrowing language whereas the borrowed verb form, which bears the semantic content of the compound verb, occurs as a bare form or infinitive. Invariably, the 'do' (or similar) verb functions like an auxiliary or light verb in the mixed constituents in which it occurs. Although the verbs *chita* and *panga* both function like auxiliaries in the examples cited here, it should be pointed out that the two verbs seem to have different subcategorisations when they occur in exclusively Chichewa structures. Specifically, whereas *chita* 'do' can take an infinitive verb complement and thus function like an auxiliary, *panga* 'make' never functions as such and strictly takes a nominal complement. It should also be noted that when the verb *chita* functions as an auxiliary, it is only inflected with the tense/aspect affix; the other affixes such as the object marker, causative, passive, reciprocal and applicative are borne by the infinitive verb. What is interesting about the verb compounds consisting of both Chichewa and English is that although syntactically both *chita* and *panga* function as auxiliaries, morphologically the two verbs bear the hallmarks of main verbs. This observation is instructive in that it points to the possibility that some partial relexification from English may well have resulted in the restructuring of the Chichewa verb system. The fact that what are morphologically main verbs function as auxiliaries syntactically is evidence that indigenous lexical items are also undergoing structural modifications. Another instance of categorial modification is illustrated in (15), uttered by a youth attending primary school, wherein the English preposition *via* is used as a verb meaning 'go' or 'leave' in Chichewa.

(15) Nd- a-peza madala a-ta-*via* kale
SB-PERF-find old.man SB-ASP- already
'I found (that) the old man was already gone'

Note that the form *via i*s inflected with the requisite Chichewa subject agreement and tense/aspect verbal affixes. In a related study Mulaudzi (1998) notes that a similar verb *vaya* 'go' occurs in Tsotsitaal, a predominantly urban variety spoken in South Africa, and attributes the occurrence of this form to the influence of Afrikaans. Since Chichewa speakers have no direct contact with Afrikaans, it is quite likely that the verb form was introduced in Chichewa as a result of misanalysing the preposition commonly found in expressions such as *Blantyre – Lilongwe via Zomba* which are displayed in front of buses to indicate routes.

The evidence presented in this section clearly indicates that lexical items sometimes undergo categorial modifications when they are incorporated into another language. Myers-Scotton (1993b) notes that where there is lack of congruence between the requirements of the host language and the embedded language, verbs and prepositions (which are potential thematic-role assigners) are likely to have their category changed when they are integrated into the host language. Thus the English verbs which occur in verb compounds are made noun-like so that they are more congruent with the structure of Chichewa. Myers-Scotton and Jake (1999) suggest that there is incongruence between English and Chichewa with respect to their tense/aspect systems which gives rise to the occurrence of verb compounds. However, the fact that other verbs (e.g. *pinch* in (3)) get inflected with Chichewa morphemes suggests that the source of

incongruence may lie elsewhere: it is possible that the incongruence between the two languages is reflected in a particular class (or classes) of verbs. I leave this point open pending further research.

Semantic modifications

Not all loan words are subjected to the same kind of categorial modifications described in the preceding section: some borrowed lexemes retain their categorial status but undergo different kinds of modifications in meaning once they are borrowed. For example, some English expressions which are typically used as terms of address have been modified in such a way that they have added nuances and are now used as terms of reference in Chichewa. This is clearly shown in the use of *madam* in (7) above and *sir* in (16) which was uttered by a barman in a hotel.

(16) Mowa-wu a- ku- gul -ir -a -ni ndi *Sir* awa
beer-DEM he- you- buy- APPL -FV -HON is sir-DEM
'The one who has bought you this beer is this sir' (i.e. this gentleman)

In English both 'madam' and 'sir' are used as address terms to indicate that the speaker respects the addressee. The use of *sir* in (16), however, does not necessarily indicate that the speaker respects the addressee but rather that he respects the person being referred to. In this particular case, the speaker probably does not know the referent by name and thus merely identifies him by his qualities, i.e. that of a gentleman. In (7) the speaker probably considers it somewhat disrespectful to use the Chichewa equivalent for 'wife' and thus opts for *madam*, an expression which seems to carry more prestige. The following anecdote is quite revealing with respect to the prestige associated with the word *madam* among Chichewa speakers. A man in his mid-thirties was hosting guests in his house and, introducing his wife to his friend, said the following:

(17) Mphwanga, amenewa siakazi anga ayi. Amenewa ndi *madam*
'Young man, this is not (just) my wife. She is madam'

The underlying message in the introduction was that the host's wife was someone very special. The suggestion is that the status of the woman had been elevated from that of just being a wife to someone very special and, therefore, she was a very respectable wife. It is thus not surprising that the word *madam* is gaining currency as a substitute for the Chichewa equivalent of 'wife'. Note also that whereas in English 'sir' and 'madam' are terms that only make a gender distinction between addressees, in Chichewa the terms have added nuances. Interestingly, the word 'sir' is not really considered to be the opposite of 'madam' in this respect, such that it is never used to mean 'husband'. The evidence from Chichewa conversations demonstrates that both *sir* and *madam* have undergone semantic shift in that they have assumed meanings that one cannot easily associate with their original meanings.

Some English words, once incorporated into Chichewa, undergo semantic narrowing such that their meanings are less inclusive than was previously the case. Consider the use of the word *sissy* illustrated in (18), uttered by a woman in her early forties with primary school education.

(18) Kodi a- *sissy* adzapita liti ku sukulu
Q HON- will.go when to school
'When will (my) sister go to school?'

According to the English dictionary the word 'sissy' can refer to a timid person, a coward or little girl. The word, as one reviewer pointed out, is also used to refer to 'sister' with a diminutive sense attached to it. In (18), however, *sissy* does not just mean 'sister': it means one who is respectable. In most situations the word *sissy* is used necessarily to refer to a sister older than the speaker, and in many Chewa families this word is reserved specifically to refer to the oldest daughter in the family. Note that whereas in English the word 'sissy' can be used to make a disparaging remark about someone; in Chichewa it can only be used to refer to one's kin in a very positive light.

Core lexical borrowing, as opposed to cultural borrowing creates situations in which two words with identical meanings (the loan word and the indigenous word) are concurrently in use in the language. This, in turn, may lead to semantic narrowing for both the indigenous word and the loan word. Consider the English word *dance* in (19) and its Chichewa equivalent *gule* in (20).'

(19) Ndamva kuti ku Zomba kuli *dance*
I.have.heard that at there.is
'I've heard there is a dance in Zomba'

(20) Ndamva kuti ku Zomba kuli gule
I.have.heard that at there.is dance
'I've heard there is a dance in Zomba'

At first sight, it appears that (19) is just another way of saying (20) since *dance* and *gule* mean the same thing, and in the initial stages of borrowing this must have been the case. Currently, however, it turns out that the two expressions do not refer to exactly the same concept. The word *dance* in (19) refers to a modern type of dance (usually held in a dance hall) in which Western-style musical instruments are in use. Thus a speaker who utters (19) necessarily implies that people will be dancing to disco music or to live music from a Western-style band. The word *gule* in (20), on the other hand, refers to a typical traditional African dance in which dancers are expected to be in traditional regalia and dancing to traditional-style music. The existence of two identical terms in the same language then necessitates the differentiation in usage. What we see here is that both the loan word and the indigenous word have undergone semantic narrowing and become more restricted in their meanings. Similar patterns are observed in the contrast between *order* and *gula* 'buy' in (21) and (22) respectively.

(21) Ndi- na- ka-gula ***bredi*** ku Sachers
I- PST-go-buy bread at
'I went to buy bread at Sachers'

(22) Ndi- na- ka-*order* *bredi* ku Sachers
I- PST-go- bread at
'I went to order bread at Sachers'

The Chichewa verb *gula* 'buy' is used to refer to retail purchases whereas the English verb *order* necessarily refers to wholesale purchases. More importantly, (22) implies that the speaker made a wholesale purchase with intent to resell as a retailer. The following incident which took place on a city bus offers some insight into the distinction that is made between *gula* and *buy* amongst Chichewa speakers. Two women were sharing a seat on a bus from Blantyre to Limbe. One of the women was carrying a plastic bag containing fresh peanuts she had bought from a supermarket just before boarding the bus and, probably due to the large quantity of the peanuts in the bag, the other woman assumed that the peanuts were for sale. Part of their conversation is presented in (23).

(23) **First woman:** Mtedza uwu mwaugula kuti
'Where did you buy the peanuts?'

Second woman: Ndagula ku Kandodo
'I've bought (the peanuts) from Kandodo'

First woman: Ndiye mukugulitsa bwanji bwanji?
'So, for how much are you selling (the peanuts)?'

Second woman: Siwogulitsa ayi
(*sounding disturbed*) 'It's not for sale'

First woman: Pepani. Kani mwangogula; ndimayesa mwa-*order*
(*apologising*) 'I'm sorry. So you just bought; I thought you've ordered.'

Note that the woman who initiates the topic initially uses the *gula* 'buy' and later contrasts it with *order* to explain that her initial assumptions were mistaken. It is interesting that whilst in English 'order'can be considered as part of the process of buying (be it retail or wholesale), in Chichewa *ordering* is considered as a complete process, and can thus be contrasted with retail purchase. Here again we see that semantic narrowing has occurred to both the loan word and the indigenous item.

Morphological modifications

English kinship terms undergo the sort of morphological modification that is induced by the cultural requirements of Chichewa. Typically, these terms are inflected with an honorific prefix *a-* as we have noted in the case of *daddy* (2) and *sissy* (18) above. A further example is provided in (24).

(24) a-*mummy* mu-bwera nthawi yanji?
HON- SB-come time what
'Mummy, what time are you coming?'

In Chichewa and other related languages, the relationship between a person and anyone in the parental group such as mother, father, etc., is appropriately expressed by attaching this prefix (which also denotes plurality) to the relevant term because it is required by custom that one shows respect to such people. Since the English terms in their original form do not morphologically encode this respect, morphological modification is required for the speaker's utterances to be deemed appropriate.

Phonological modifications

Borrowing of English lexical items seems to have had an indirect effect on the phonological system of Chichewa: it has introduced phonological novelties into the language. Chichewa typically has open syllables and avoids consonant clusters, such that most speakers insert vowels to break the consonant clusters of English words. The word *sukulu* 'school' in (18) is a good example of this; note that the word-initial cluster /sk/ is broken up by inserting the vowel /u/ between /s/ and /k/, and another vowel /u/ is suffixed after the word-final liquid to ensure that the open syllable pattern of Chichewa is maintained. It turns out, however, that such complete modifications are associated with rural rather than urban speech. This is confirmed by a comment made by one urban speaker presented in (25).

(25) Eeh!, kunena kuti *buledi*! Ndiye za kumudzitu. Ife timati *bredi*

'What? To say buledi sounds rural. We (urban dwellers) say bredi'

Note that this urban speaker believes total phonological integration of the English word is associated with rural, and perhaps less prestigious, speech. The utterances in (21) and (22), which show less phonological integration, were in fact uttered by this urban dweller. It is evident from the speaker's comment that the degree of phonological integration of loan words distinguishes urban from rural speech: urban speech tends to exhibit less phonological integration than rural speech. This difference in speech patterns reflects the different degrees of bilingualism in the country: urban dwellers in Malawi and elsewhere are generally more educated, have more contact with English (or another foreign language) and, consequently, tend to be more bilingual than rural dwellers. Urban dwellers are therefore the more likely agents for the introduction and transmission of English loans into Chichewa and, because these speakers are generally competent in English, they tend to be more faithful in their rendition of English words than their rural counterparts (Poplack *et al*., 1988). On the whole, the presence of consonant clusters illustrated in (21) and (22) is a sign that Chichewa speakers, particularly urban speakers, have not only adopted the English lexical item, but also the phonology that has come with it. A similar relaxation of phonotactic constraints on consonant clusters and closed syllables has also occurred in Shona, a related Bantu language spoken in Zimbabwe, due to borrowing from English (see Bernsten, 1990; Bernsten & Myers-Scotton, 1993 for detailed discussion). In their study of English loans in Shona, Bernsten and Myers-Scotton also discovered that more educated and urban speakers showed less phonological integration of English lexical items than less educated rural speakers.

Displacement of indigenous items

Earlier we noted that core lexical borrowing results in the semantic narrowing of Chichewa lexical items; words such as *gula* 'buy' and *gule* 'dance', for example, have narrower meanings now than was originally the case due to the presence of English equivalents. A more significant consequence of core lexical borrowing is that, because borrowed forms are generally associated with modernity and high prestige, bilingual speakers tend to favour the use of such forms over the indigenous equivalents, which, in turn, is likely to lead to the displacement of indigenous lexical items over time. There are indications that this process is underway

for some lexical items Chichewa. One indication comes from the use of numbers, where counting and reference to numbers is mostly done in English despite the availability of Chichewa numbers. In the data examined in this study it was found that reference to numbers above three was exclusively in English, and that Chichewa numbers were only used in relation to quantities of three or less. The following extract from a Chichewa news bulletin on the national radio demonstrates that the use of English numbers is a characteristic that has now permeated the formal usage of Chichewa.

(26) Mnyamata wina [wa zaka *twelve*] amugoneka mu chipatala ku Nkhota-kota
boy another [of years]
'A boy aged twelve years has been admitted to hospital in Nkhota-kota'

Clearly, English is taking over the numbering system of Chichewa. Another indication that English lexemes are replacing Chichewa forms comes from the use of kinship terms such as *auntie* in place of the Chichewa term *zakhali*. In an informal interview, one teenager remarked that he had never heard the word *zakhali* and thus did not know what it meant; he went on to state that he believed that none of his friends knew this word: all they knew was the word *auntie*. This anecdotal evidence suggests that younger speakers are not acquiring all the Chichewa kinship terms; what they have in their mental lexicons are the English equivalents.

A Case of Linguistic Recycling

The discussion this far has focused on the borrowing of lexical items from English to Chichewa. It should be noted, though, that borrowing in any contact situation is not exclusively unidirectional: there are always cases in which the predominantly donor language borrows from the predominantly recipient language. Myers-Scotton (1993b: 182), for example, cites cases in which Swahili lexical items are borrowed into East African English. Malawian English also shows traces of borrowing from Chichewa, and expressions such as *his mulamu* 'his brother/sister in-law', *Kamuzu's mbumba* 'Kamuzu's women' (i.e. women specifically belonging to the Malawi Congress Party during the reign of Kamuzu Banda) are not uncommon in conversations that are exclusively in English. There are instances in which a lexical item is borrowed from English into Chichewa and, having been modified in Chichewa, is later used in monolingual English discourse. This process, which I term 'linguistic recycling' involves the use in the source language of lexical items that have been modified by the borrowing language. In the section entitled 'Semantic modifications', for example, we saw that the word *madam* has meanings in Chichewa that are remotely related to those of the source language and that, instead of being used exclusively as a term of address, this word is used as a term of reference in Chichewa discourse. It turns out that this word now occurs in what might be termed as mainstream 'Standard Malawian English' exactly in the way that it is used in Chichewa. This is illustrated in (27) in which the speaker is describing the state of his wife who had been ill in hospital for an extended period.

(27) My madam is fine now. She came out of hospital on Thursday.

The speaker who uttered (27) is a highly educated individual with qualifications from a British university and was at this particular time speaking exclusively in English. The word *madam*, as noted earlier, is considered to be the equivalent term for *wife* among Chichewa speakers; and more importantly, *madam* carries with it connotations of respect and endearment which the speaker holds towards the referent of the expression. Thus by uttering (27) the speaker is not just describing the physical state of his wife; he is also expressing the respect and affection that he has towards her, feelings which he could not possibly capture had he used the word *wife*. What is significant here is that a lexical item that is originally English is now used in its source language with the semantics of Chichewa. A related, though less dramatic example, is the use of the expression *pick up* (for 'pick up truck') illustrated in (28) which was taken from a newspaper advertisement.

(28) For Sale: A 1987 Toyota *pick up* in excellent condition. Price negotiable.

The use of *pick up* without the head word *truck* is an instance of categorial modification discussed earlier, and it would seem that such modifications are induced by Chichewa patterns and then the resultant word brought back into English. However, as one reviewer has noted, the fact that this form occurs alongside those cited under 'Catergorical modifications' could be purely coincidental because the use of *pick up* for 'pick up truck' is also common in American English and it is possible that this form was current in the British English from which the Chichewa variety studied here has borrowed. The genesis of this word in Malawian English can only be resolved by further research.

Borrowing or Codeswitching?

A question pertinent to the data examined in this work is whether these represent instances of borrowing or codeswitching. Thus far, no attempt has been made to distinguish between the two processes; it has been assumed from the outset, and without justification, that the data represent instances of borrowing into Chichewa. Indeed from a purely morphological and syntactic standpoint, the items cited in this work are no different from those cited in studies on codeswitching involving English and a Bantu language (e.g. Bokamba, 1988; Kamwangamalu, 1999; Myers-Scotton, 1993a, 1993b). So why should the items here be treated as cases of borrowing and not codeswitching? The reasons are twofold: first, as noted earlier, is the level of modification which the English lexemes seem to have undergone in Chichewa; some of these lexemes have been modified in such a way that they have now taken on meanings and belong to categories which are not exactly identical to those of the source language. The second reason is that these forms occur regularly in the speech of most urban Chichewa speakers, some of whom are not necessarily bilingual. Researchers generally agree that whereas codeswitched forms only occur in the speech of bilinguals, borrowed forms appear in the speech of monolinguals (though it should be added that determining who is and who is not a bilingual in a speech community is itself problematic). The three-year-old boy who uttered (3), for example, is not a bilingual speaker and thus would not have been engaging in codeswitching; rather he is a monolingual who speaks an urban variety of Chichewa. Distinguishing borrowing from codeswitching on morphosyntactic

grounds is tenuous as has been noted by various researchers over the years (see for example Bentahila & Davies, 1983; Bernsten, 1990; Hill & Hill, 1986; Myers-Scotton, 1992; Pfaff, 1979; Poplack *et al*., 1988; Sankoff *et al*., 1990). The difficulty of making the distinction stems from the fact that both established loans and singly-occurring codeswitching forms are subject to similar patterns of morphological and syntactic integration. However, by examining the various types of modifications which English lexemes have undergone in Chichewa and the fact that these forms occur with much regularity among Chichewa speakers, a case can be made that the items cited in this study represent borrowing. I leave it for further research, specifically one which presents a quantitative analysis of language use in both rural and urban Malawi, to shed more light on the extent of borrowing from English into Chichewa and the possible emergence of 'urban Chichewa'.

Conclusion

It is clear from this study that the sociopolitical dominance enjoyed by English over Chichewa during and after the colonial era has played a key role in inducing borrowing of English features into Chichewa. It has also been shown that although the Matrix Language Frame Model provides a morphosyntactic basis for explaining how forms from English fit into the structure of Chichewa, an examination of the cultural requirements and speech practices of Chichewa speakers provides us with some insight into why certain morphosyntactic modifications to the borrowed items occur. This study has shown that once a loan word is borrowed it is modified in various ways to fit the grammatical structure as well as the cultural requirements of the recipient language; and lends support to the findings of earlier studies on borrowing which show that borrowed items 'are adapted into the existing patterns' (Poplack *et al*., 1988: 62) and 'are incorporated into the grammatical system of the borrowing language' (Gumperz, 1982: 66). Furthermore, the study has shown that borrowing does not only induce modifications to the syntactic and semantic properties of the foreign expressions, but also modifications to the semantic and syntactic properties and possible displacement of some indigenous expressions. Thus linguistic borrowing is not a passive process in which one language is the provider and the other the passive recipient; in a number of instances borrowing is an active process wherein the recipient language, in intricate ways, reacts to the presence of foreign forms by making the necessary adjustments to its own system as well as to the features of the foreign forms themselves.

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Notes

1. The following glosses are used in this paper: AGR = agreement; APPL = applicative; ASP = Aspect; DEM = demonstrative; FV = final vowel; HON = honorific marker; IMP = imperative; OBJ = verb object; PERF = perfective tense; PL = plural marker; PST = past tense; Q = question morpheme; SB = subject. Numbers (where given) refer to Bantu noun class; and '.' represents the English translation of the propositions expressed.
2. Fuller (1996) considers the changes that occurred in Pennsylvania German as indicative of linguistic convergence. A closer examination of the contact languages in question, viz: Pennsylvania German and English, however, reveals that only one of the two languages has changed to become more like the other. That is, whereas the English language has remained relatively stable, Pennsylvania German has changed and become more English-like; thus *language shift* would be the more appropriate term to describe the phenomenon.

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