

The dynamics of language contact and lexical borrowing in Grassfields languages: A case study of Kom in Boyo Division

James N. Tasah
University of Maroua

Language is naturally dynamic, and this dynamism is made the more manifest when two or more languages co-exist. Lexical borrowing is an important aspect of change, and it has been observed that lexical borrowing is inevitable when languages come into contact. Using data obtained from one of the members of the Kom language committee and personal intuition as a native speaker, this paper seeks to identify some lexical items borrowed in the domain of household utensils, farm products, professions, days of the week, among others. The paper uses Borrowing Transfer Theory as propounded by Odlin (1989) to demonstrate that when languages come into contact, transfer or diffusion of elements from one language into another occurs; and the Wave Theory (Lions 2002) to show that features of a language stretch incessantly like waves when an object is thrown in a body of water. The findings indicate that Kom borrows semantic fields to fill lexical gaps, prestige and for its vocabulary expansion.