

Language Borrowing in Mqapheli Mngadi's Selected Editorial Cartoons: A Socio-Stylistic Critique

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Abstract

The aim of this research article is to examine language borrowing in Mqapheli Mngadi's cartoons, and this is done by considering loan-words as one of the language borrowing processes. While the study adopts ethnography of communication as the main theory to guide the analysis of the textually analysed data, the study is broadly grounded on socio-stylistics. This is because one of its aims is to critically evaluate the socio-stylistic significance of language borrowing in Mngadi's selected editorial cartoons. The findings of the study demonstrate that Mngadi employs loan-words to artistically depict context, culture and setting in his cartoons. It was also discovered that the cartoonist, in some instances, uses loan words because there are no isiZulu equivalents. On the same note, he uses them when a more suitable word is preferred, so that the cartoons are more relatable and contextualised.

Key concepts: Language borrowing, loan-word, cartoon, socio-stylistics, ethnography of communication

Introduction

Languages are bound to change over time, and this is largely influenced by the economic, social, and cultural factors in each context or environment (Akidah, 2013: 2). One of the factors that contribute to language borrowing is multilingualism in societies. Language borrowing is one of the natural results of linguistic contact (Hasan, 2015: 1376). This linguistic phenomenon occurs under different contexts, including in literature. When it occurs in literary genres, both fictional

and non-fictional, it is usually used to spark some artistic and cultural effects. From the context of cartoons, language borrowing can be examined from characters' speech. Cartoons are known for their written and visual language. While their visual language is analysed from drawings, their written language can be analysed mainly from dialogues (if there are any).

The concept of 'language borrowing' is made up of two words: the noun 'language' and verb 'borrowing'. While language refers to a tool of communication, borrowing refers to the process of using one language in another in this context. Commenting on language borrowing, Hoffer (2005: 1) points out: "Borrowing is the process of imparting linguistic items from one linguistic system into another, a process that occurs any time two cultures are in contact over a period. Maintaining a similar view, Mojela (2010: 701) remarks: "Foreign acquisition through borrowing is the adoption of foreign lexical items in a language to refer to new concepts which originated in foreign cultures or foreign languages". Qreshat (2019: 185), on the other hand, is more specific in stating that the linguistic process of borrowing involves words which are borrowed from one language and utilised into another. Not only does this process occur in spoken language, but it also occurs in written language, including in different literary genres. Authors may use borrowed words from other languages for different reasons.

Hoffer (*Op cit.*) explains that language borrowing can take place in different processes, and these are referred to as loan-words, loan-translation, and loan-shift. He further states that out of these, it is only loan-words that occur beyond language boundaries, and this can be attributed as correct even when it comes to the isiZulu language. The discussion of language borrowing in Mngadi's cartoons is thus done by considering loan words only in this paper, since this is the only language borrowing process that is evident in the cartoons.

As this research paper aims to investigate language borrowing and its artistic significance, its significance lies on the view that, so far, there seems to be no work that has been done on this linguistic aspect in context to isiZulu cartoons. The genre of cartoons in the isiZulu language has generally not been given attention, and this can be attributed to its underdevelopment, to some extent (Dlamini, 2022: 64). This study is thus an attempt to fill in the scarcity of scholarship in the cartoon genre of the African indigenous languages of South Africa. Before the analysis and findings section, this paper will comment on document analysis as the adopted qualitative research

technique. A discussion is also subsequently made on socio-stylistics and ethnography of communication, as the study's theoretical underpinnings.

Research method

Since the study is based on literary analysis, this suggests that data is collected, organised, and interpreted primarily from Mngadi's selected cartoons. These cartoons will serve as primary sources. This study essentially adopts document analysis as a qualitative research technique, since cartoons are the subject of primary interpretation. Bowen (2009: 27) defines qualitative document analysis as a systematic process of evaluating and interpreting printed and electronic materials. This approach consists of analysing different types of documents to elicit meaning and understanding (Morgan, 2022: 64). These documents range from literary to non-literary texts. Mngadi's cartoons are one example of these texts. They are analysed with the purpose of eliciting meaning and understanding in this study. The selected analysed cartoons are extracted from *Isolezwe*, which is one of the prominent isiZulu newspapers in South Africa. Some of them are also extracted from the cartoonist's *Facebook* page.

Theoretical considerations

The textually analysed data in this study is done through ethnography of communication as the main theoretical approach. Prior to the discussion of this theory, the foundation is laid by firstly drawing insights from socio-stylistics as a broad theoretical approach.

Socio-stylistics

Socio-stylistics blends or integrates two disciplines, namely: stylistics and sociolinguistics. Essentially, this approach has benefited from the stylistic and sociolinguistic approaches (Adeyanju & Olaniyan, 2020: 10). While stylistics devotes itself to the analysis of the manipulation of language (to determine style in literary texts), sociolinguistics considers the investigation of language usage in relation to the society (*MacMillan English Dictionary*, 2002). Socio-stylistics blends sociolinguistics and the concept of style. Sociolinguistics and style are interlinked, and they have a long academic history (Kadhim *et al*, 2023: 799). The socio-stylistic approach focuses on highlighting 'style' as a concept, and its relationship with language and society. In a nutshell, socio-stylistics is the analysis of language varieties. It investigates language in context to different social groups (Ashipu, 2010: 114). Even though socio-stylistics may study literature, it takes

readers beyond that as it explores social and cultural patterns. It studies literature with reference to historical and dialect accounts (Rao, 2014: 264).

Ethnography of communication

The main proponent of the theory of ethnography of communication is Dell Hymes. He showed interest in a new linguistic discourse in the 1960s that would not only explore language according to its formal systematic grammar, but also according to the influence of the cultural and social context (Carbaugh, 2008: 2). Hyme's ethnolinguistic approach is informed by the desire to determine 'communicative competence' within members of the community, since language behavior is deemed as culturally orientated. Alluding to the sentiments, Ray & Biswas (2011: 33) posit: "Ethnography of communication relates to the description and structural analysis of society and culture with the language (identity)". The main premise proposed by his approach is that there is a link between language and cultural context.

Even though ethnography of communication can be considered as a subdiscipline of sociolinguistics broadly, this theory can also be considered as a sub-branch of semantics since it considers the meaning of language, even though this is viewed in relation to the societal context. As alluded to above, the centre of Hyme's ethnolinguistic approach is social context. The aim of this approach is the speech community (Farah, 1997: 125), and this entails contextual features such as setting, community members, purpose of communication, outcome of communication, and socio-cultural rules of communication (Ononye, 2014: 202), to name a few. The significance of ethnography of communication can be attributed to its interdisciplinary nature, which covers both theoretical knowledge and methodology (Noy, 2017: 1). Ethnography of communication blends different fields in social sciences such as sociology, linguistics, anthropology, and communications. Ethnography of communication draws its insights mainly from ethnomethodology, which is the study of how social interactions inform social order (Tobabi, 2004).

The relationship between society, culture, and language can be understood from different contexts, including literature. Literature is generally used as a medium to reflect culture and society. The analysis of communication, in relation to society and culture, can also be depicted and understood through literary texts. The link between ethnography of communication theory and literature can thus be established from this perspective and understanding. The analysis of language borrowing

in Mqapheli Mngadi's cartoons is done through ethnography of communication because the aim is to determine the relationship between language variation, culture, and the society as depicted in the selected cartoons.

The analysis of language borrowing in Mqapheli Mngadi's selected cartoons

Words that are borrowed from one language to another are called loan-words (Hara, 2011: 1). These are words that are modified from one language and used in another. Loan-words are generally used when there is no suitable word in the targeted language or when a specific word is preferred that people can easily relate to. These words are a linguistic aspect which has not been given sufficient attention in the literature of the South African indigenous languages. Mngadi's cartoons contain a considerable number of loan words that are derived mostly from English and a couple from Afrikaans. He does this for different artistic reasons as it will be shown in the discussion below.

The cartoon in figure 1 below serves as the first example for the demonstration of Mngadi's use of loan words. Ankeli's speech to the woman character is considered in the following cartoon in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1 – Cartoon 1

(Mngadi, 2016)

After Ankeli discovers that the woman he is talking to in the cartoon is from Mlaza, he apologises for attempting to propose to her. He is prompted to apologise because of the belief that women

from Mlaza are violent. This is a real-life stereotype common in KwaZulu-Natal. Ankeli's speech in the cartoon is made up of several isiZulu loan words that are derived from Afrikaans and English.

To begin with, Ankeli addresses the woman as 'sisi', which is from the English word sister, meaning a female sibling. Ankeli then continues to complain to the woman that women from Mlaza are notorious for their jealousy in the words: "*Kuthiwa osisi baseMlaza banesikhwele esibikabi, babulala amafoni namawindi ezimoto zamadoda*" (They say ladies from Mlaza have serious jealousy. They destroy men's phones and car windows). This statement alone consists of several loan words, namely: 'amafoni' from the English word 'phone' (a device used to talk to someone from typically a long distance) and 'iwindi' from the English word 'window' (a frame that has glass in the wall that allows visibility, sunlight and air in the room or car). Another loan word is 'imoto' from the Afrikaans word 'motor'. Motor is a mode of land transport also known as a car in English. The words highlighted above are regarded as loan words as they are derived from other languages – English and Afrikaans – and are included in isiZulu.

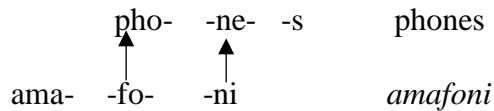
Ankeli concludes his statement in the cartoon above by saying: "*Ungaze ubulale iwindi letekisi kabasi*" (You may even destroy the boss's taxi window). It is worth noting again that this statement also consists of loan words. These include: 'itekisi' from the English word 'taxi' and 'ubasi' from the Afrikaans word 'bass'. A taxi is a mode of land transport and bass is someone who is an owner or employer. The word 'Ankeli' is also derived from the English word 'uncle' (a brother of one's mother or father).

The derivation of the loan words highlighted above is given below. It is important to note that the morphology of the English and Afrikaans words given is not necessarily the way it is presented here. This is only done for the purpose of illustrating the derivations of the loan words to isiZulu in this paper. The first example is considered below:

	-sis-	-ter	sister
	↑	↑	
u-	-sis-	-i	usisi

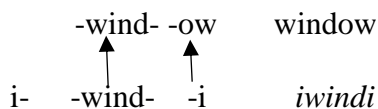
In the English word 'sister', the root morpheme -sis- forms part of the isiZulu word '*usisi*'. Since all nouns commence with a prefix and end with a vowel in isiZulu, the pre-prefix *u-* of class 1a is used and the vowel -i suffixed at the end to substitute the last part -ter of English.

The derivation of the word '*amafoni*' from phones is as follows:



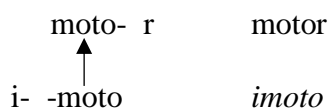
In deriving the word '*amafoni*', the English stem phone is substituted by the isiZulu stem *-foni*. The *ph* of English is pronounced like the consonant *f* in isiZulu. Moreover, the prefix of class 6 *ama-* is used and the last vowel -I, is attached at the end to substitute the -e of English. The plural indicated by the consonant -s at the end of the English phones is indicated by *-ama* in isiZulu. It is normal practice to indicate plurality by the use of a prefix in isiZulu while it is indicated by the final -s in English.

The loan word '*iwindi*' is derived from the English 'window' in the following manner:



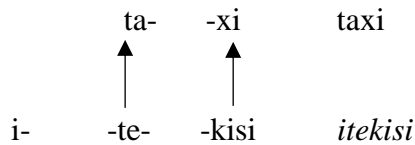
In the word '*iwindi*', the root morpheme *wind-* of English is used with the isiZulu class 5 pre-prefix *i-* and the last vowel *-i* to substitute the -ow of English, as illustrated above.

'*Imoto*', on the other hand, is derived from the Afrikaans word 'motor' in the following way:



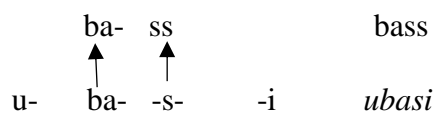
The stem *moto-* of the Afrikaans word forms part of the isiZulu word '*imoto*'. The vowel *i-* of isiZulu is prefixed to this stem and the last consonant -r of the Afrikaans word *motor* is omitted.

A similar derivation process is seen with the isiZulu word '*itekisi*' from the English word 'taxi' below:

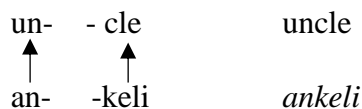


The above example illustrates that in the isiZulu word '*itekisi*', *-te-* substitutes the initial part *ta-* of the English *taxi*, while *-kisi* substitutes the English *-xi* of the word, as they are somehow pronounced more or less the same. The pre-prefix *i-* of class 5 is added to the stem *-tekisi*.

On a similar note, the illustration below shows how the isiZulu loan word '*ubasi*' is derived from the Afrikaans word 'bass':



It is evident in the word '*ubasi*' above that the pre-prefix *u-* is added to the Afrikaans word 'bass', while the last vowel *-i* substitutes the last *-s* of *bass*. The derivation of the isiZulu word '*Ankeli*' from the English word 'uncle' is a result of morphological substitution. This is illustrated below:



The morpheme *an-* of isiZulu substitutes the morpheme *un-* of English, while *-keli* substitutes the English part *-cle*. This substitution is a result of the fact that these parts are pronounced more or less the same.

The use of the loan words above reveals that Mngadi is from a township and designs his cartoons from that context. The kind of isiZulu spoken in townships is not the same as that of rural areas. IsiZulu spoken in townships tends to be made up of a lot of loan words, even if there are suitable isiZulu words that can be utilised. For example, instead of using '*Malume*' for Uncle, '*Ankeli*' is used in the cartoon. Another example is the use of the word 'ifoni' (phone) over the word '*umakhalekhukwini*' or '*usisi*' (sister) over '*udadewethu*'. As indicated above, loan-words tend to be employed when there is no suitable word or, sometimes, because of a preferred word that could

be related with better. In the examples above, there is no direct or suitable isiZulu word that could have been used to refer to a taxi or window.

Mngadi successfully does this to make his readers relate with his cartoons as well as to demonstrate the kind of isiZulu spoken in townships, as highlighted above. Mngadi uses these loan-words as a strategy to enhance his content representation, as most readers could easily relate with them, including people who are not mother tongue speakers of isiZulu. Even though Mngadi was born and bred in the rural areas, he spent most of his adult life in urban areas, Durban (one of the South African urban cities), in particular. This is demonstrated by his use of many loan-words in his writings.

Another example of the use of loan words is examined from Figure 2 below. Ankeli's speeches seem to be dominated by loan words. His words to Nduna are considered:



Figure 2 – Cartoon 2

(Mngadi, 2016)

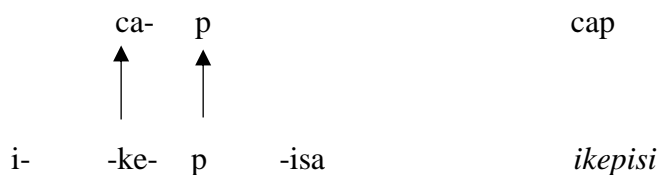
In reality, Black Coffee, whose real name is Nkosinathi Innocent Maphumulo, is reported to have slapped Kiernan Jarryd Forbes' (stage name AKA) manager in 2016 after having a disagreement (*The Citizen*, 2016). Both Black Coffee and AKA are successful South African musicians who seem not to be in good terms with each other.

Ankeli uses Black Coffee and AKA's story to humorously threaten Nduna in the above cartoon and this is seen in the words:

Ngithi kuno-DJ Nduna okuthiwa uBlack Coffee, angakubamba ngempama eyodwa lelo kepisa lakho nebhodi kundize kuyolahleka lapha.

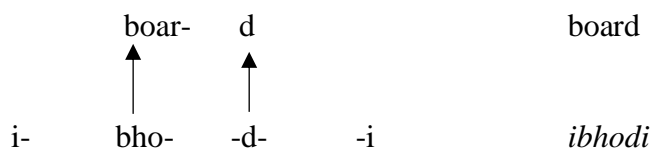
(I am saying there is a DJ called Black Coffee Nduna, who can slap you once and your cap and board will fly over there.)

The words 'ikepisa' and 'ibhodi' in Ankeli's speech are loan words derived from the English words 'cap' and 'board'. A cap is a headwear, and a board is an instrument used for writing or showing information. By analysing Ankeli's speeches, one can easily see that he is portrayed as a character from the township as he uses a lot of loan words. This was also uncovered under Figure 1 earlier. For the word 'ikepisa' (cap) for instance, he could have used 'isigqoko' as the isiZulu original word for a cap. The derivation of the isiZulu loan words 'ikepisa' and 'ibhodi' is illustrated below:



The illustration above depicts that the isiZulu morpheme *-ke-* substitutes the *ca-* of English as these morphemes are pronounced more or less the same way. The pre-prefix *i-* of isiZulu class 5 is added to *-ke-* and the morpheme *-isa* suffixed to the consonant *-p* of *cap* to form the word 'ikepisa'.

Lastly, 'ibhodi' is derived from the English word 'board' in the following way:



This above explanation also applies to the isiZulu word 'ibhodi' where *-bho-* is pronounced more or less the same as *boar-* of English, hence substituting it. The pre-prefix *i-* of isiZulu class 5 is added and the vowel *-i* suffixed to the last consonant *-d* of 'board' to form the noun 'ibhodi'.

There are direct isiZulu equivalents for the words ‘ikepisa’ (cap) or ‘ibhodi’. IsiZulu only has the direct and broad word for ‘hat’, which is *isigqoko*. A careful analysis of the cartoons suggests that the setting of the cartoon is a town since a taxi rank is depicted. Authors constantly find themselves in situations where they must use loan-words when their story is told from the context of urban areas. This is the same with cartoonists. To depict their setting better, so that the presentation of content their content is more authentic and relatable, they might integrate loan words to highlight the sociolinguistic milieu of the cartoon.

The last examples of loan words in Mngadi’s cartoons are examined from Figure 3 below:



Figure 3 – Cartoon 3

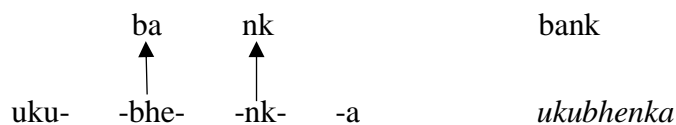
(Mngadi, 2022)

Figure 3 depicts the current President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, rendering a speech to the nation’s youth. This is demonstrated by the paper he is holding which is written “*Inkulumo bhekiswe entsheni*” (Speech directed towards the youth). The 16th of June is considered as a public holiday in South Africa, commonly known as Youth Day. The holiday is inspired by events that took place on the 16th of June 1976 during the students’ uprising against the Bantu Education system. Black students were, in particularly, boycotted against the use of Afrikaans as a medium word of instruction. To this day, South Africa celebrates the 16th of June as a way of

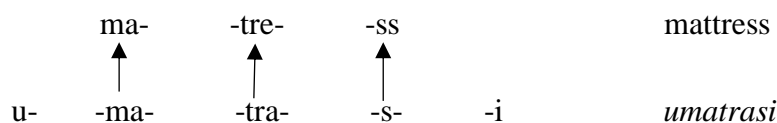
commemorating the bravery young people demonstrated. The day is also used to honour young people who lost their lives during this uprising.

In response to President Ramaphosa's speech, the character labelled "SA", who is a representation of the South African youth in this context, remarks: "*Oh, uchaza ukuthi sihambe ezinyathelweni zokuthi ibhenkwa kanjani imali phansi komatrasi nasemakhabetheni efenisha?*" (Oh, are you implying we should follow in your footsteps about how to bank money under mattress and furniture cupboards?). This remark is satiric in nature. The character is condemning Cyril Ramaphosa after allegations were levelled against him that he was saving money in his farm. This was discovered after it was revealed that his farm was broken into, allegedly. A careful observation of the speech above highlights that three loan words are used namely, *ibhenkwa* (it is banked), *komatrasi* (on/in the mattress), and *efenisha* (on/at the furniture). The original loan word forms of the above words are: *Ukubhenka* (to bank), *umatrasi* (mattress), and *ifenisha* (furniture).

The derivation of the isiZulu word '*ukubhenka*' from the English 'bank' is illustrated below:

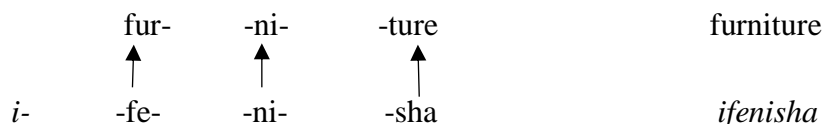


The isiZulu loan word '*ukubhenka*' above is an infinite verb, hence it uses the prefix *uku-* (to) and ends with the vowel *-i*. The English morpheme *ba-* is substituted by the isiZulu morpheme *-bhe-* since the two are pronoun more or less the same. The morpheme *-nk-*, on the other hand, is maintained for both words. The isiZulu loan word '*umatrasi*', on the other hand, is regarded as a noun. It is derived in the following manner from the English word 'mattress':



In the illustration above, the morpheme *-ma-* is equivalent in both languages. While this holds, the morpheme *-tre-* is substituted by *-tra-* since the vowels *e* and *a* are contextually pronounced more or less the same. The morpheme *-ss* of the English language is then substituted by the morpheme *-s-*. This is because it is ungrammatical for two of the consonants 's' to be juxtaposed. The prefix *-u*

and the final vowel -i are also affixed since all nouns start and end on vowels in the isiZulu language. Lastly, the word ‘*ifenisha*’ is derived in the following manner:



While the pre-prefix i- is affixed to the isiZulu derived loan word, the English morpheme fur- is substituted by the isiZulu morpheme -fe- since both morphemes are pronounced the same way. As illustrated, the morpheme -ni- is maintained in both languages while the morpheme -sha replaces the morpheme -ture of English. Both morphemes are also pronounced more or less the same.

One can argue that the practice of using loan words seems to dominate when an urban area is the place in the setting of the story, as alluded to earlier. The time in which the story takes place can also be determined by observing loan-words. furniture, matrass, bank, etc., were non-existence in remote times among the AmaZulu people. It is for this reason that there are no native words to label them. Frankly, they were invented by non-native people and relatively named by them. Since there is lack of better indigenous words, loan-words can be attributed for enriching and expanding the isiZulu language.

Conclusion

Socio-stylistics is the breach between style and sociolinguistics. The approach intends to understand style from the context of language variation. The significance of the relationship between language and culture is cleaved by the theory of the ethnography of communication. Both style and language variations, as well as the relationship between culture and language were examined with reference to loan words in Mqapheli Mngadi’s cartoons. It is from this analysis that it was determined that cartoonist uses loan words for literary purposes, such as to highlight culture, setting, and context in the cartoons. It was also determined that Mngadi uses loan words in instances where there is no suitable isiZulu word, and in instances where a loan word is mostly preferred. This has been proven to be effective in making the cartoons relatable.

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