

Lexico-Semantic Changes of Arabic Loan Words in Hausa

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ABSTRACT: *In linguistics, semantics is the subfield that is devoted to the study of meaning, as inherent at the levels of words, phrases, sentences, and even larger units of discourse. Every word has a variety of senses and connotations which can be added, removed, or altered over time, often to the extent that cognates across space and time have very different meanings. The basic area of this study is to discuss how meaning of certain word borrowed from Arabic language is changing. Semantic change is a change in one of the meanings of a word. Therefore, the study confined itself to various types of semantic changes that affect Arabic loan words borrowed into Hausa language.*

KEYWORDS: lexicon, borrowing, semantic change, broadening, narrowing, pejoration, amelioration, shift

INTRODUCTION

Borrowing is a very common linguistic phenomenon, as no language is completely free of borrowed items. Though languages differ in the number of words borrowed due to historical or cultural reasons, it is evidently clear all living language borrow some items from other language or languages. Hausa language tremendously borrowed a number of words from different languages, including Arabic, as a result of commercial, geographical, political and religious reasons. It is observed that, there exist a certain change in the meaning of the borrowed words from Arabic due to one reason or the other.

One thing one ought to know in any theory of language change is to explain which sort of change that occur in a given language. Change in any language does not happen just desultorily, what is really interesting is the process of change itself, it causes, conditions and mechanisms. In Hausa, various issues of language change have been investigated by numerous scholars more especially on language borrowing, but most of them focus on the list of vocabulary and the phonological aspect of the borrowed words. Little or no attention was paid to the semantic aspect. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to fill the gap by studying the semantic changes the words undergo, more especially the Arabic words in the receptor language.

Types of Semantic Change

Semantic change is the most obvious area of linguistic change which has a strong influence in the life of a society. It examines the changes in the meaning of the lexicon of any language. A number of classification schemes have been suggested for semantic change. The most widely accepted scheme in the English-speaking academic world is from Bloomfield (1933), Crystal (1987), Blank (1999) and others. These can be summarised as follows:

- i. Narrowing/specialization; is a narrowing of meaning, when there Change from super-ordinate level to subordinate level, e.g. *meat* 'food' change to mean 'flesh of an animal', *corn* 'corn' now means 'wheat'.
- ii. Broadening/generalisation; when there is a widening of meaning, Change from subordinate level to super-ordinate level, e.g. *bird* 'nestling, young bird' now means 'bird' , *hoover* 'Hoover vacuum cleaner' change to mean 'any type of vacuum cleaner'.
- iii. Amelioration: a word loses an original sense of disapproval and elevated in meaning. The word *mischievous* has lost its strong sense as disastrous and now means the milder playfully annoying.
- iv. Pejoration: A word develops a sense of disapproval or degraded in meaning. The word *notorious* once meant widely known and now means widely and unfavorable known.
- v. Transfer of meaning when the meaning of a word shifts, so that the word refers to a different set of things.
- vi. Metaphor; Change based on similarity between concepts or things, e.g. *bitter* 'biting' now means 'not sweet'.
- vii. Metonymy; Change based on nearness in space or time, e.g. *jaw* 'cheek' means 'jaw'.
- viii. Synecdoche; Change based on whole-part relation. e.g. *town* 'fence' now means 'city'. etc.

Crystal (1987) is of the view that, in most languages, the vast majority of new words are in fact borrowed from other languages in all directions. He said lexical items are to be obsolescent or obsolete because the object or concept is no longer of value to a community other than to the historians or literary scholars. Sometimes a word or sense may become obsolescent if it develops unpleasant association. In his view, Yule (1985) states that modern English differs lexically from old English in the number of borrowed words, particularly words of Latin and Greek origin which have come into the language since the old English period.

Linguistic Change in Hausa

As time goes, linguistic components and properties are said to have undergone certain changes. Wurma (1998) states that, Linguistics change are introduced by people and occur at different times. He argues that, changes in any language can either be gradual or sudden. The gradual changes are the changes that take over a long period of time, while the sudden changes occur suddenly and abruptly.

Hausa language like other language is undergoing such changes as a result of internal and external factors. Babba (1990) states that, Hausa language change because of desire of its speech community to express new ideas, innovation, invention, etc. Some of the expressions

were made by means of extending and modifying the meaning of existing words so that they can meet the new communication needs. Sometimes it is forced to borrow words as a result of its contact with other languages.

Lexical Borrowing in Hausa

While many changes take place in a given language without external interference, many changes can result from contact with other languages. Linguists use the term borrowing and loan to refer to instances in which one language takes something from another language. And the most obvious cases of borrowing are vocabulary. Most of the works done with the regard to lexical addition in Hausa were related to words, which Hausa borrowed from numerous languages. Hausa language has been in contact with different languages for centuries as a result of geographical location, commerce, religious and political inclinations. Scholars like Greenberg (1947, 1960,), Hisket (1965), Goerner (1966), Jinju (1972), Zarruq (1979), Ibrahim (1978, 1981), Bello (1979), Salim (1981), Rufa'i (1982), Sa'id (1982), Bature (1982), Bagari (1983), Bello (1985), Baldi (1989, 1991), Yalwa (1994), Musa (1996), Sani (1999), Ahmed (1999), Haruna (2000), Muhammed (2005) and more, shows their interest in the words came into Hausa from languages like Arabic, English, French, Kanuri, Yoruba, Fulfulde, Azbin, Nupe etc. But most of their work is more on the list of vocabulary and phonological aspect of the words, little or no attention was paid to semantic aspect.

Arabic Loan Words in Hausa

Arabic is a Semitic language spoken in North Africa and Middle East, and also a Language of Islamic religion. While Hausa as a major language spoken in West Africa belong to Chadic group, all of them belong to Afro-asiatic language family. The influence of Arabic language on Hausa is directly link to two major reasons; commerce and Islamic religion. For centuries there exists a trade route between Hausa Empires and North Africa through the famous route called "Trans Sahara Trade Route". Secondly majority of Hausa people are Muslims, a religion whose book is written in Arabic and is also emphasizes the use of Arabic language in most of Islamic activities. This compels Muslim Hausa speakers to learn Arabic how little it is, for their religious activities. Therefore, as a result of these wide spread commercial activities and Islamic influence, many Arabic words find their way into Hausa language, with certain words being adopted, modified and brought nearer to the Hausa language, while others were totally internalized. Most of the scholars mention above, have conducted studies to establish the relationship between the languages, i.e. Arabic and Hausa, but none of them provide a comprehensive analysis of the semantics changes that take place in the two languages as a result of borrowing. This study is therefore aimed at filling this gap by exploring the various lexico-semantic changes take place in Arabic words borrowed into Hausa. These changes may be induced in full or in part by contact. The presence of change lead to what is sometimes called adaptation.

Lexico-Semantic Changes of Arabic Loan Words in Hausa

Semantic change refers to semantic shift or semantic progression and involves changes in the usage of words to the point where its current meaning radically differs from its original meaning. Such change may take place over a period of time.

For purposes of this study, we limit ourselves to the five broad types of semantic change, namely: shift, broadening, narrowing, amelioration and pejoration.

Semantic Shift

This is a total change of meaning and sometimes to the opposite meaning. In this process, a word may lose some aspect of its former meaning or take on a partially new, but related meaning. There are instances where Arabic words, when borrowed into Hausa take on different, sometimes opposite meaning as shown below:

Hausa word	Arabic word
aalaat = luxury material	aalah = tools
ajàmi = Hausa written in Arabic letters	<i>al ajamiy</i> = non Arab person
alfindikii = name of place in Kano	<i>al funduk</i> = loaging
àlkantàraa = name of place in Kano	<i>al qanṭarah</i> = culvert, bridge
alqalumàa = numbers	al qalam = pen
arbà = to suddenly meet with someone	<i>arba'</i> = four
àssàlaat = dawn time	as ṣalah = the prayer
àttajirii = rich person	attaajir = trader, businessman
daulàa = enjoynment	<i>daulah</i> = kingdom
fasàlii = beautiful/structure	fasl = passion
fàtaraa = having no money	<i>fatrah</i> = sudden pause
haajàa = commodity	haajah = need
hàrbii = shoot	<i>ḥarb</i> = war/batle
harkàa = enjoyment	<i>harakah</i> = movement
hàtsàbibii = stubborn	<i>aṭṭabiib</i> = doctor
kàrahiyàa = bush meat	<i>khariha</i> = unwanted
laayàa = charm	<i>alayah</i> = verse/sign
qaimii = encouragement	<i>qaimiy</i> = spur for a horse
qiilà = dough	<i>Qiyla</i> = he said
saba'aa = twenty seventh date of a month	<i>sab'at</i> = seven
sùkuunii = to have chance/opportunity	<i>Sukuun</i> = quitely
tàqaddàmaa = hot debate	<i>taqaddam</i> = introduction
tàrtiibì = specific	<i>Tartiib</i> = que

The data above shows that the Hausa terms have different meanings from the original meanings of Arabic words from which the terms were borrowed. Even then, we notice that in some instances, the meanings are close in terms of what is implied in both languages.

Semantic Broadening

This is a process where the meaning of a word becomes more general or more inclusive than its historically earlier form. It is also known as generalization, widening or extension where the word increases its range of meaning over time. The process of semantic broadening also takes place during the process of borrowing Arabic words into Hausa, where certain Hausa loans

words take an extra meaning that were not in the original Arabic word. Here are some examples:

Hausa word	Arabic word
Ahuwà = discount, seek for divorce, recover from sick	<i>afwa</i> = forgiveness
ajji = class room, school level, high class (social prestige) mutunci	<i>al juz'</i> = part
àl'aadàa = habit, menstruation	<i>al aadat</i> = culture
àlbarkàa = blessing, abundance, resources, kindness, fertile land, refuse to offer a sale, barkàa (<i>barakah</i>) greeting, congratulation	<i>al barakah</i> = bless
àlheerì = grace, bumper havest, gift, bribe, gain	<i>al khair</i> = good deed
àlluuràa = injection, vaccine	<i>al ibra</i> = needle
àmfaani = important, use, farm produce	<i>al manfa'ah</i> = benefit
àrzikì/àzzikì = abundance, lucky, greatfull	<i>al rizq</i> richness
aya = full stop[ʔa:ja] verse, sign, mark, miracle [aya] verse, paragraph	<i>ayah</i> = verse/sign
bindigàa = gun, burst	<i>bunduqiyyah</i> = gun
bìsimillàa = invite person for a meal or for a fight, direct someone to start something	<i>bismillah</i> = in the name of Allah
faatiyàa = prayer, rubbing palm on a face, marriage	<i>fatiḥah</i> = opening, first surah of the Qur'an
gaafaràa = give way, excuse	<i>ghafar</i> = forgive
haqqii àlhakii = sin, guilt, wage, responsibility	<i>ḥaqqu</i> right
haxàri = dangerous, accident	<i>khaṭar</i> = danger
iimaanii = sympathy, pity	<i>iimaan</i> = believe
kunyàa = shyness	<i>al kunyah</i> = respect
laimàasheemàa/heemàa = umbrella, pilgrim's canopy	<i>al khaima</i> = canopy
launii = style	<i>launu</i> = colour
lissaafii = budget, sense	<i>al ḥisaab</i> = calculation
saa'aa = good luck, propitious time, same age, Saa'ì time of death	<i>saa'ah</i> = time, hour
saatii/àsàbe = week, name of girl born on Saturday	<i>al ṣabt</i> =Saturday
sallàa = religious fest, pilgrimage	<i>as ṣalat</i> = prayer
sallamàa = greeting, seeking for permission to enter, agree to sale at the price offered, give off, acknowledge, dismissed, divorce, discharge, released from custody, end the prayer, discard something, abandoning, traditional title	<i>salam</i> = peace
shaawaràa = advise, warning, yellow fever	<i>tashaawar</i> = discussion, advice

shàgalàa = carried away, shagali business, affair	<i>shagala</i> = work
waqàfii = comer, prison	waqaf = pause

The data above indicates that the Hausa loanwords have acquired extra meanings in addition to their original meanings in Arabic from which they were borrowed.

Semantic Narrowing

This is the opposite of expansion. It is also known as semantic restriction and refers to a situation where a term acquires a narrower meaning. Semantic narrowing can also take place as a result of borrowing Arabic words into Hausa. Below are some examples:

Hausa word	Arabic word
dabbàa = animal	<i>dabbah</i> = creature that crawl on the ground
xàriiqàa = Sufism	ħa'kim = governor, ruler
hìjaabii = piece of cloth use by ladies to cover their body	<i>hijaab</i> = to cover
hubbaarè = the grave of Usman xanfodiyo in Sokoto	<i>qubba</i> = dome
jàm'iyàa = political party	<i>jam'iyah</i> = association
lardii = region	<i>al 'ardh</i> = land
màdiinà = a town in Saudi Arabia	Madiynah = city
qaadii = Islamic judge of court of apple	qadhi = judge, magistrate,
màsaabaaqaa = qur'anic compotition	<i>musaabaqah</i> = competition
safaràa = travelling for a trade purpose	<i>safar</i> = travelling
shàbbaki = grave of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)	shubbaak = window with burglary proof
tàkàari = Hausa people living in Saudi Arabia	<i>tukurur</i> = black people
hakiimii = district head	<i>tariiqaa</i> = path

The data above shows that the words borrowed from Arabic have narrower meanings compared to their meanings in Arabic.

Semantic Amelioration

This is a form of semantic shift in which a term acquires a positive association or becomes more favourable. It is, in fact, an improvement in the meaning of a word. Is a change were a word loses an original sense of disapproval and elevated in meaning. The process of semantic amelioration also takes place during the process of borrowing Arabic words into Hausa, where the meaning of certain Hausa loans words take a strong sense that were not in the original Arabic word. Here are some examples:

Hausa word	Arabic word
alqaryà = city	<i>alqaryah</i> = town
Lantànaa = female name	<i>lan tanaaluu</i> = you will never get
Maakaana = male name	<i>maa kaana</i> = has not happen
Mâl'uunàtu = female name	<i>mal'uunah</i> = curse
Ribaaxò = name of person	<i>ribaaṭu</i> = protection
Sàfiinà = female name	<i>Safiyah</i> = ship
Sintàli = traditional title	<i>sintali</i> = catle
Ūnàizaa = female name	<i>unaizah</i> = small stick
bàlaa'ii = great	<i>balaa'un</i> = calamity

The data above shows that the meanings of words borrowed from Arabic have raised up compared to their meanings in Arabic.

Semantic Pejoration

Pejoration is also known as semantic deterioration and is a form of semantic shift in which a term acquires a negative association. A word develops a sense of disapproval or degraded in meaning. In other words, the meaning of the word becomes less favourable. Pejoration also takes place during the process of borrowing Arabic words into Hausa.

Hausa word	Arabic word
Aamada = singing and rhythmic beating of interted calabashes by women	<i>Aḥmadu</i> = name of prophet Muhammad (SAW)
àzaabàa = grea as in azabar qanshi = nice cent, azabar kyau = so beautiful	<i>'adzaab</i> = punishment
ha'ula'i = hardship, trouble	<i>ha'ulaa'i</i> = this
izzàa = arrogant	<i>izzah</i> = famous
jàmhuurŪ = intrigue, conspiracy	<i>Jumhuur</i> = majority
jàzaa'ii = calamity	<i>jazaa'i</i> = result
qaharŪ = false accusation	<i>qahar</i> = forcefully
qàiluulaa = absenteeism	<i>qailuula</i> = siesta
laahaulà = hardship	<i>laa haula</i> = no ingenuity
màulaa = begging	<i>maulaa</i> = leader
sabàbii = calamity	<i>sabab</i> = cause
shàqiiyyii = jocker	<i>shaqiiyyun</i> = poor
tijaaraa = disrespect	<i>tijaar</i> = trading
tsibbŪ = sorcery	<i>(tibb)</i> medicine

CONCLUSION

The paper discusses the various semantic changes that Arabic words go through during their absorption into the lexicon of Hausa as a result of borrowing. The main objective of the study was to examine, in detail, the semantic changes induced in part, or in full, by borrowing Arabic words into Hausa. We have discussed various semantic changes that indeed Arabic words go

through as a result of adapting the words in the receptor language. Our study has concluded that indeed lexical borrowing of Hausa loans from Arabic has led to an addition of vocabulary into Hausa language. In short, the borrowing has led to semantic transfer in the meanings of lexical items borrowed into Hausa from Arabic. These semantic changes include semantic shift, broadening, narrowing, pejoration and amelioration.

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