SEMANTIC CHANGE OF WORDS ENTERED INTO ANOTHER LANGUAGE THROUGH THE PROCESS OF LANGUAGE BORROWING: A CASE STUDY OF ARABIC WORDS IN BENGALI

Mahade Hasan
M.A. in Applied Linguistics & Arabic Language, Teaching Department of Arabic University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Abstract

This research paper aimed to study different aspect of semantic changes what Arabic words have faced in Bengali. The relationship between Arabic and Bengali, two languages which belong to two different language families, has been the topic of research by scholars for a long period of time. The main objective of this paper is identifying Arabic words in Bengali those have either changed meaning or shifted away from the denotations of their original meanings and finding out the reason of their change in meaning. This paper followed the descriptive-qualitative method. The data has been collected from the Bengali dictionary "Person-Arabic elements in Bengali" and then data has been analyzed to find out semantically changed Arabic words. The discussion concludes that there is a high frequency of Arabic origin words in Bengali, which are a product of borrowing. However, the researcher explained some selected words under particular category whether the word took broader meaning or narrowed, positive meaning or negative, metaphor or metonymy or it has totally shifted away from the original meaning. For

example: the Arabic word "Zhiaarat" stands for visit or meet (in general) in Arabic while it is used in Bengali only for the meaning of visiting the grave including holy grave of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and Holy Ka'ba. Here, this word has taken positive but narrow meaning. It is called Amelioration with narrowing according to the linguistic approach.

Keywords: Semantic Change, Amelioration, Pejoration, Metaphor, Metonymy, Broadening, Narrowing

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1. Preface

Lexical borrowing is one of the natural consequences of linguistic contact. As the language of the Qur'an and by extension the language of the Muslims, Arabic Language has spread widely with the spread of Islam. It's influence on the native languages of non-Arab Muslims is far reaching; together with the language of the countries known as Muslim country. Because of being one of them, Bengali has borrowed many lexical items from Arabic within a variety of context. Differences in history, culture and environment between the Arabs and the Bengals naturally affect the contextual use of those words that were borrowed between the donor community and the receptor. It is, therefore, normal to see some Arabic loanwords in Bengali that had their meanings changed from the denotations of their Arabic originals. These types of words which did acquire new or additional senses in Bengali other than what their corresponding Arabic sources denote are the concern of this paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

The studies of linguistic borrowings, especially in the area of lexicology, have always caught attention of contemporary researchers, pedagogues and linguists. However, to the best of my knowledge through related literature, there is no such attempt has been made in the specific area of Arabic loanwords in Bengali, in which the borrowed words has been presented showing semantic changes. Based on the background above, the researcher got interest to analyze the change of meaning.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to show how Arabic loanwords changed their original meanings in Bengali literature as well as conversation language. This paper aimed to explain in detail how the word meaning is changing day by day. As Bengali language accepted a lot of foreign words, so changing of word meaning is not an astonishing matter. Like other words,

Arabic loanwords also changed their original meanings. By this research the researcher expected to find out those words initially, then identifying cause and types of meaning change. In fact, most of those words came into Bengali from the religious perspective. We know Bangladesh is a Muslim country as well most of the Bengali speakers are Muslim. From this point of view, Arabic words spread into Bengali.

1.3 Review of Literature

There are large number of books, theoretical works and articles on Semantics as well as Semantic changes of loanwords. However, there is no research work available on this particular topic in the case of Arabic & Bengali language.

1.3.1. Semantic Change in Urdu: A case Study of "Mashkoor"

This research paper aimed to probe semantic change in Urdu lexis and focused on the Meaning of the word "Mashkoor" (thanked). He argued that users of a language have the authority to determine the correct forms in a language. At the end of his study, he also recommended for lexicographers to use corpus for writing Urdu dictionaries. The researcher gathered the basic knowledge on how the meaning of a word can change based on different context.

1.3.2. Meaning and Change of meaning with special reference to the English language

The writer explained the factors of meaning change from different angles in this famous book. The researcher got conceptual overview on change of meaning from this work.

1.3.3. "An Introduction to the study of language"[3] and "Language"

Bloomfield played a vital role in this field; in these two books, he has discussed on every branches of linguistics as well as different types of semantic change. The researcher acquired basic knowledge on semantics and semantic change.Systematic ties in Semantic Change of Arabic Words in Urdu: [1]

The writer discussed on semantic changes of Arabic words in Urdu in her article. From this article the researcher got such important information on how word meanings change from one language to another.

1.3.4. Lexical Borrowings from Arabic and Semantic Change in Urdu: A cross Linguistic analysis

This paper discussed on the process of lexical borrowing from one language to another language. In the first part of this paper he presented how Arabic words entered into Urdu and at

the end, he analyzed semantically changed Arabic words in Urdu and the reasons why semantic change occurred. The researcher acquired knowledge on cross linguistic discussion from this paper.

1.4 Research Methodology

1.4.1 Method of Collecting Data

A method of collecting data is needed to achieve a proper data for any research. The Documentation Method has been followed in this research because the data are taken from a printed media. The researcher has collected data from a book named "Perso-Arabic elements in Bengali"[3]. As this dictionary includes almost all of the Arabic loanwords in Bengali, so, this dictionary has been selected to find out those words what experienced semantic changes. The researcher also took help from another dictionary named "A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, (Arabic to English)[4], to collect the original meaning of Arabic words.

1.4.2 Method of Analyzing Data

The goal of analyzing data is to find out the regular form, so that the purpose of the research can be achieved. In this research, qualitative and descriptive method has been followed. To analyze the data, the researcher has followed the steps below:

- Observing the data.
- Looking for words those have been faced semantic change.
- Categorizing the words according to the types of semantic change.
- Using writing technique to analyze the data.

2. Borrowing words

Borrowing is the process of incorporating into one language elements which originally belong to another. It is common for one language to take words from another language and make them part of its own vocabulary; these are called loanwords and the process is called Linguistic borrowing.[1] In a journey of a language, words usually migrate from one place to another. There are many halts, stations and environments that affect the linguistic achievement. In other words, there are so many linguistic, social, cultural and political variables that attribute to the process of linguistic borrowing. Bilingualism can be an important reason of linguistic borrowing. For instance, Muslims are supposed to learn Arabic for religious reasons while as a matter of other

linguistic needs, the other learners acquire either a neighbor language or English as a lingua franca (the common or bridge language).

Apart from this, there are some reasons why languages borrow words. The main reason is that "the necessity of those words", and it happens when a new word enters into the language for a new concept. Another reason is "prestige issue". It is very clear to us that the foreign acquisition is highly appreciated in everywhere. Language borrowing is closely linked to the cultural borrowing because both the culture and the language depend on each other. So, out of many reasons, it can be pointed out that linguistic borrowing is the direct or indirect result of language contact or cultural interaction in which people exchange languages, life aspects, and other cultural phenomena.

3. Arabic loanwords in Bengali

Bengali language has been touched by the Arabic language and accepted many Arabic words as well as the other linguistic elements during the rule of Muslim emperors in the Indian sub-continent. There were some reasons to accept Arabic words- Firstly; Arabic is used in different liturgical functions in Bengali. The liturgical activities include recitation of the Holy Qur'an, litanies or tasbih, praying prayer five times in a day and so on. These liturgical uses of the Arabic language are significant to the Muslim community. The regular practice of these activities makes them used to this language. Secondly, Muslims learn the Arabic language from their early life as a religious language. There are numerous numbers of Maktab/Tahfiz (Quran learning Institute), Madrasah (Religious school), and Dar-El-Ulum (Universities based on Islamic Studies) in Bangladesh. Thirdly, the Muslims of Bangladesh like the Islamic and Arabic names the most. The Muslims generally prefer those names which are related to the religion like Muhammad or Ahmad (name of Prophet (pbuh)), Abu Bakar, Omar, Uthman, Ali (Names of a caliphs), Fatima (Daughter of Prophet (pbuh)), or name of different religious place or things like Tasnim (name of a river in paradise), Anjum (stars) and so on. The Muslim preferable names are closely connected with the Arabic words as the religion required having certain names. Fourthly, most of the Bengali Muslims are converted Muslim, which means they converted into Islam from other religion like Hindu, Jain etc. They need to incorporate the rules regarding daily life, ethics and religious procedures directed in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The words that are related to these rules and procedures are used in the Bengali language extensively, especially in the

Muslim community. Some of the Arabic vocabularies has been mentioned below as example of those are related to the ethics and religious instructions: din (religion), hajj (the Hajj pilgrimage), iman (belief), haqq (right), hikmat (wisdom), dunya (this world), salam (greeting), sadaqa (alms), zulm (oppression), adalat (justice), wa'da means promise, and yaqin which means certainity[1].These words sometimes change its original meaning in different areas.Semantics and Semantic Change

4.1 Meaning and Semantics

The term semantics is related to the meaning of word. The word 'meaning' is very important here. In any linguistic literature 'meaning' signifies semantics. Meaning is a broad word which can denote the meaning of anything. There are meaning of words, meaning of phrases, the meaning of a sentence or meaning of an idea. Besides, the meaning can signify the effectiveness of efficiency of a certain action. When we discuss about the meaning of the actions taken by the government or any public authority, we simply try to find out the effectiveness of such actions. It also includes the merits and demerits of such actions. A very important issue is that linguistic semantics do not work with the meaning of any actions, policy or phenomena, rather only the meaning of words, phrases or grammatical structure and in some cases the meaning of the sentence. The semantics tries to understand what meaning is as an element of language, and how it is constructed by language. It is concerned with the investigation of meaning in a language without any reference to the context of the situation. That is, semantics studies meaning of words, phrases, clauses, sentences. It also deals with such concepts as synonyms, antonyms, homonyms[1], hyponyms[2], homophones, componential analysis and so forth.[3]

4.1. Conceptual Overview on Semantic Change

The semantic change is one of the most important theories in the linguistics. The analysis of semantic change is so important, because, without the analysis of semantic change, linguistic analysis seems to be worthless. So, in any linguistic analysis, semantic changes are being emphasized the most. [4] When languages borrow words, they frequently change the meanings of those borrowings, typically making generic words more specific, in the same way that one language's place names often grew out of another language's generic words for concepts. The

meaning of word changes in every language for many reasons. This process of changing meaning is called semantic change. This change can be different on the basis of the use of words. Any speaker without direct access to the intent of the speakers around him or her must figure out what words mean from the contexts in which he or she encounters them. Linguists put it that Words do not convey meaning into themselves; they are invested with meaning according to the totality of the context. They only have meaning in so far as they are interpreted as meaningful, in so far as the hearer attributes meaning to them in context (emphases in original).

Words frequently change their meanings over time, and pursue such change often illustrates cultural and historical shifts. Historical processes of meaning change are of course intimately linked to synchronic processes of meaning extension. This can be illustrated with English word "expired". At early age, there were such things as tickets and licenses with limited periods of validity, this just meant "die". Then, it was metaphorically extended to mean "come to an end of a period of validity", which existed as a clear figurative use alongside the literal use. Nowadays, the "die" sense is quite uncommon, and people will declare a metaphorical extension of the "cease to be valid". This example illustrates one way in which synchronic meaning extension forms an essential part of diachronic change. In principle, the meaning of a word may change along any of the semantic dimension.

4.2. Taxonomy of Semantic Change

Semantic Change may be categorized into various types. The most widely accepted form of taxonomies is the one proposed by Bloomfield.[1] That involves semantic broadening, narrowing, metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, synecdoche, degeneration, elevation, meiosis. Another classification of the semantic change which is known as traditional approaches was mentioned by William B. Hallman.[2] He categorized into three types, such as, Amelioration and Peroration; broadening and narrowing; metaphor and metonymy. For the purpose of research and simplicity, I have discussed here some major parts of semantic change.

- Broadening or Generalization
- Narrowing or Specialization
- Amelioration or Positive Change
- Pejoration or Negative Change
- Metaphorical extension

- Metonymy

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Widening or generalization of meanings

Widening is the shift of the meaning of a word where the words express a broader meaning than the original word could before. It means the expansion of meaning so that the word can indicate more feelings or objects as a generalized word, can be applicable in many contexts than it previously was and can mean more than it previously did. It generalizes the meanings of words and includes a group or a large portion of same category objects. For example, the word 'bird' was used to indicate 'small fowl'. But today, bird means any winged creature, whether it can fly or not. Another word is 'aunt' which was used to indicate only the 'father's sister'. But, today, it indicates both the father's and father's sister.

Table 1: *Generalization of Arabic words in Bengali*

Arabic (IPA)	Original meanings	Bengali (IPA)	Changed meanings
ʔilɑːqa	connection, relation	elaka	area, province
xijɑːl	imagination, vision, shadow, fantasy	kʰeẹ al	dream, imagination, knowledge, remember, kind of songs, wish
dʒins	kind, classification, description of goods	dʒinis	thing, article, goods
tˤalab	seeking, asking, searching, application	ʈɔlɔb	payment, salary, demand, fees paid to peon for serving process,
munʃiː	author, creator, founder, establisher	munʃi	A person who has a few knowledge on religion, religious teacher.

4.2 Narrowing or specialization

Narrowing is the change of the meaning of words from supper ordinate level to sub-ordinate level. It specifies the words to indicate more specialized meaning. It is the process where the words become less general or less inclusive than before. In a word, it is the shift of meanings to more specific objects. For example, the word 'Meat' meant 'food' in the Middle English. But recently, meat means only the types of animal flesh. It is the specification of the meaning of the word meat. On the other hand, the word 'flesh' also narrowed to indicate only the human flesh. The specification of the word 'disease' is the 'illness' which indicates more specific meaning.

Table 2: *Specialization of Arabic words in Bengali*

Arabic (IPA)	Original meanings	Bengali (IPA)	Changed meanings
ʕɑːlim	learned , scholar, wise	alim	a scholar who has enough knowledge in religion
waðˤiːfa	task, assignment, lesson, homework,	odʒipʰa	daily religious works at particular time, daily religious duty
waʕaðˤ	lecture, speech, advice	oe̯adʒ	religious lecture, religious speech, religious advice
qɑːriː	reader or who recites in general	Kari	reader or who recites the Holy Quran
taħsˤiːl	Collection, acquiring	to̯ħʃil	Collection of revenue, rent or tax.
dafter	Paper, sheet, official document	d̪ɔpʰto̯r	office, working place

4.3 Amelioration

Amelioration is the positive change of meaning. In this process of change the words express improved or elevated meaning to emphasize a meaning or to exaggerate the meaning. Amelioration emphasizes on an object in a ways that becomes more favorable than the original one. From another perspective, Katamba explained amelioration as saying that it generally shows more positive meaning than the original things. For Example, the word 'knight' generally means 'servant'.

Table 3: *Use of Arabic words in a positive sense*

Arabic (IPA)	Original meanings	Bengali (IPA)	Changed meanings
ʕadɑːlat	justice, equity right	ad̪alo̯t̪	court of justice, department of the administration of justice
xatˤiːb	public speaker, orator, lecturer	kʰɔt̪ib	one who recites or reads the sermons in a mosque on Fridays
ɣazal	Erotic poetry, love poetry, words of love	gɔdʒol	religious song, Islamic song, Islamic poem, poem of sufism
ðikir	remember, keep in mind, mention, quote.	dʒikir	recital of God's names and attributes, recital of God's praises
tˤariːqah	way, path, method	t̪orika	spiritual way in Islam.
maktab	Office, working place	mɔkt̪ɔb	Religious school, primary school.
awdˤat	garden, hence grave	rɔodʒa	grave of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

4.4 Pejoration

Pejoration indicates negative meanings of words. It is the process where a word indicates worse or degenerated meanings. It negates a word in a way that shows less favorable condition of the word that it originally was. This process passes with the passing of time. For this reason, in the past, some words were more important and favorable but recently these words have lost its importance and become less favorable. The change of the meaning of a word can be called Pejoration when it shows the more negative meaning. For instance, the 'villain' is used as negative word today, but in the past it was not used as such negative. This word was used to indicate a person who has a doubtful character or a scoundrel. Likewise, the word 'peasant' was used to indicate a country boy or anyone who has come from a rural area. But today, this word indicates a boorish person or a very low status person which express absolutely very negative meaning.

Table 4*: Use of Arabic words in a negative sense*

Arabic (IPA)	Original meanings	Bengali (IPA)	Changed meanings
ʕɑjʃ	subsistence, life existence, living	ae̯ eʃ	voluptuary, sensualist, pleasure-seeker
xasɑːrat	damage, loss	kʰesarɔt̪	Compensation, penalty, loss.
ɣariːb	Stranger, foreigner, alien	gorib	Poor, indigent
nafar	Group, person, individual	nɔpʰɔr	Servant, attendant, menial nurse
faːdˤil	Virtuous, scholar, educated person	pʰadʒil	Excessive, surplus, talkative, excess

4.5 Metaphor

Metaphoric change is globally recognized as a major cause of Semantic change. Traught[1] considered it as a central factor of semantic change. Metaphor means the change of words on the basis of the similar nature or characteristics. This similarity may involve different types, similarity of shape, similarity of function, similarity of form, similarity of place and so on. For example, broadcast originally meant "to cast seeds out"; with the advent of radio and television, the word was extended to indicate the transmission of audio and video signals. Outside of agricultural circles, very few use broadcast in the earlier senses.

Table 5: *Use of Arabic words in a similar sense*

Arabic (IPA)	Original meanings	Bengali (IPA)	Changed meanings
daxal	entering, entrance, move, walk	ɖɔkʰɔl	possession, control, right, occupancy, skill
ʃajex	old man, guide, leader, chief	ʃekʰ	spiritual leader, spiritual guide, title among Muslims
θɑːliθ	Third, third person	salis	arbitrator, umpire, mediator
sˤadar	chest, breast, head quarters	sɔɖɔr	seat of honor, chief, chairman, president

4.6 Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech where one word is substituted for a related word; the relationship might be that of cause and effect, part and whole. It is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is called not by its own name rather by the name of something associated in meaning with that thing or concept. For instance, **"Wall Street"** is often used eponymously to describe the U.S. financial and corporate sector, while **"Hollywood"** is used as a metonym for the U.S. film industry because of the fame and cultural identity of Hollywood, a district of the city of Los Angeles, California, as the historical center of film studios and film stars.

Table 6: *Use of Arabic words in an overall conceptual sense*

Arabic (IPA)	Original meanings	Bengali (IPA)	Changed meanings
ħawɑː lat	Delivery, transfer, bill of exchange.	ɦaolaṯ	deposit, loan, borrowing
mufasˤsˤal	Detailed, divided into sections, elaborate	mɔpʰɔssɔl	country side, interior, region out of the head quarters
fasˤal	Season	pʰɔsɔl	Crop. Harvest, good result
tasbiːh	to utter the holiness of God, utterance of subhanallah	ṯɔsbiɦ	rosary, chaplet of beads, instrument to count utterance of subhanallah
ʕɑbiːr	Perfume, aroma, redolence	abir	colored powder used on the occasion of the Holi festival

5. Conclusion

The implication of semantic changes is very significant in the society. It indicates the social value and its nature. It shows the change of occupation and its status in the society. For

example, in the past the surgeons were very negligible word just like a butcher. Both of them did the same task like cutting and chopping flesh and bones. Through the social change and professionalization of the surgery and the endeavor of certain institutions made this profession more prestigious than ever. Today, the surgeon is regarded as more humanitarian who engage themselves in the serving of people and recovering them from serious illness. The interpretation process is influenced by the shared linguistic, cultural, social history and the cooperation of the interlocutors' endeavor to communicate.

As a primary approach, this paper analyzed semantic changes in some Arabic Loanwords in Bengali, within the context of widening, narrowing and shifting positively or negatively from an elaborative perception. It has provided some characteristics and features of the Arabic words entered into Bengali through the process of Language borrowing. This study concludes that the process of borrowing Arabic words into Bengali led to adaptation as they get absorbed into the Bengali lexicon.

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Appendix: A

Transliteration of Arabic Alphabet with International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

Arabic	IPA	English equivalent	Arabic	IPA	English equivalent
ب	b	**B**ee	ر	r / ɾ / rˤ	roughly like **r**ule
ت /ة	t	S**t**ick	ز	z	**z**oo
ث	θ	**Th**ing	س	s	**s**ee
ج	g / ɟ	**G**ood	ش	ʃ	**sh**e
ج	dʒ / ʒ	**j**oy / mea**s**ure	ص	sˤ	ma**ss**age
ح	ħ / ʜ	(No equivalent)	ض	dˤ	**d**ark
خ	x / χ	lo**ch**	ط	tˤ	s**t**ar
د	d	**D**eed	ظ	ðˤ / zˤ	**th**us / ba**z**aar
ذ	ð	**Th**is	ع	ʕ / ʢ	(No equivalent)
غ	ɣ / ʁ		ن	n	**n**o
ف	f	**F**ool	و	w	**w**e
ق	q	**S**c**a**r	ه	h	**h**e
ك	k	**Sk**in	ء أ آ إ ئ ؤ	ʔ	
ل	l / ɫ	**l**eaf / be**ll**	ي	j	**y**es
م	m	**M**an			

Appendix: B

Transliteration of Bengali Alphabet with International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

Vowels

Bengali	IPA	English equivalent	Bengali	IPA	English equivalent
অ	ɔ	**S**ort	এ, এ্যা7, অ্যা7	æ	fl**a**sh
আ	a	**Fa**ther	ও	o	s**o**le
ই, ঈ	i	**See**	◌া	~	Nasal ([ã:], [õ:])
উ, ঊ	u	**Moo**n	**Diphthongs**		
এ	e	**Cl**a**y**	ঐ	oj	b**oy**
			ঔ	ow	l**ow**

Consonants

Bengali	IPA	English equivalent	Bengali	IPA	English equivalent
ক	k	**Sk**y	ঢ	ɖʰ	gua**rdh**ouse
খ	kʰ	**C**an	ত	t̪	s**t**able
গ	g	**G**ain	থ	t̪ʰ	**t**able
ঘ	gʰ	Pi**gh**eaded	দ	d̪	a**d**o
*, ◌ংঃ©	ŋ	Feeli**ng**	ধ	d̪ʰ	a**dh**ere
চ	tʃ	**Ch**eck	ন,ণ,ঞ	n	note
ছ	tʃʰ	**Ch**oose	প	p	spy
জ, য	dʒ	**J**ob	ফ	pʰ	food
ঝ	dʒʰ	He**dgeh**og	ব	b	beau
ট	ʈ	**A**rt	ভ	bʰ	abhor
ঠ	ʈʰ	a**rt-h**istorian	ম	m	moon
ড	ɖ	Gua**rd**	য	dz	zip
র	r	t**r**illed	হ	ɦ	ahead
ল	l	**L**eaf	ড়	ɽ	larder
শ, ষ	ʃ	**Sh**oe	ঢ়	ɽʰ	as plus h
স	s	**S**ix	য়	e̯	sky