

Semantic Loss of the Selected Words of English Borrowed in Urdu

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ABSTRACT

From a pragmatic standpoint, the study looks into how words that are borrowed from English suffer semantic loss when these words are used in Urdu language. 20 bilingual volunteers from grade 12 from a selected class completed a questionnaire that was used to gather data for the study. The study aims to investigate the semantic loss which the words of English language suffer from when these words are used in Urdu by the natives of Urdu. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the analysis. The findings showed that the English terms that were borrowed and used in Urdu had new meanings. Approximately 69% of the terms examined in the study did not imply their definitions as found in English dictionaries, according to the quantitative analysis. Furthermore, the results showed that, for 11 of the 16 words examined, over 70% of respondents selected entirely different meanings for the words when they are used in Urdu. It also reinforced the idea that meanings get formed in context based on the speaker's oblique meaning, rather than being understood as isolated concepts.

Keywords: Semantic, Loss, Borrowed, Bilingual, modifications

INTRODUCTION

The study looks into how words, when borrowed from English, into undergo semantic loss. It is indisputable that English has influenced many other languages due to its social control and status, especially in Asian nations. Linguistic borrowing is "taking words from donor languages" according to Yule (2010). Labov (2010) notes that social and psychological factors are the two main determinants of linguistic borrowing and semantic loss. In addition, Haspelmath (2008) incorporates historical and sociocultural elements with behavioral or psychological aspects. When the process of borrowing form English into Urdu is examined, these characteristics are clearly visible. It's possible that this procedure is more complicated than it seems. When one language borrows words from another, their meanings not only frequently change but at the same time many words experience semantic loss. "Meaning" is a mysterious reality that has not yet been completely understood. Semanticists have been observed to spend an excessive amount of time confusing the "meaning of meaning" as Leech (1981) correctly pointed out. Thus, it further complicates the situation for the person attempting to research a word when it is asserted that its meaning has changed.

Research Objectives

To explicate the semantic loss of words borrowed into Urdu from English

Research Question

How do words of English undergo semantic loss when used in Urdu?

Problem Statement

This study tends to investigate the semantic loss which the English words suffer from when these words are borrowed from English and used directly into Urdu by the native speakers of Urdu.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bahumaid (2015) looks into words that are borrowed from English into Hadhrami Arabic, which is spoken in Yemen. The changes in morphology and phonology based alterations in the borrowed words are the researcher's primary area of interest. He notes the shift in meaning that took place in the words by simply categorizing them as broadening or narrowing. He has only acknowledged that words which are borrowed have increased the lexicon of Hadhrami Arabic; he has not provided an explanation for the semantic shift in the borrowed words.

Anwar's (2017) research on Arabic borrowed words in Urdu is more methodical than Khan's (2014) work. She has maintained that semantic shifts have a major effect on people's lives in linguistic, cultural and social ways. She has demonstrated the way in which Urdu language has been greatly impacted by semantic shift, metaphor, and amelioration.

The current study is different from the other studies already conducted. The studies, as far as the researcher has seen, have been conducted to investigate the semantic changes and modifications taking place during the investigation. In the current study, the researcher is going to look into the semantic loss of selected words borrowed from English language. The investigation of semantic loss is something, as far as the researcher has seen, has not been conducted before this. Bloomfield's theory of Semantic Changes and thematic analysis with close text reading are going to be applied for the analysis of the data.

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative and quantitative in nature. The meanings of the donor language are taken by using Google's Dictionary provided by Oxford Languages. While the meanings in loan language are gathered through a test conducted in a selected classroom. There are 20 bilingual students aging between 16-17 years both male and female.

The responses of the participants are recorded and are analyzed aided by 'Bloomfield theory of Semantic Changes' and qualitative analysis are used to analyze the responses from the participants in the loan language.

Semantic change is described by Bloomfield in his book "Language" as "innovations which change the lexical meaning rather than the grammatical function of a form, are classified as change of meaning or semantic change" (Bloomfield: 1933). With regard to "analysis of a total experience, dominant elements, and habits of association", Bloomfield's theory of semantic change bore an uncanny resemblance to the "Wundt" inquiries (<https://www.ipl.org/essay/Bloomfields-Theory-Of-Semantic-Change-P3KMB53RJ486>).

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following table describes the responses from the participants. The data is analyzed then comparing the responses with actual meanings of the donor language using the Google's dictionary provided by Oxford Languages.

Table 1:

Response from the Participants

S No	Word	Meanings in Donor Language	Meanings in response	Data Analysis
1.	Train	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (v) to teach or to give some train someone for something. 2. Point or aim at someone typically gun or something 3. A number of pack of animals moving together 4. A number of vehicles moving together 5. A gathering of the people working together in collaboration 	All the participants wrote in two meanings in the answer i.e. to teach or train and a number of vehicles moving together. 100% participants failed to respond 100% meanings of the borrowed word.	The word suffered 50% semantic loss when it is lent to Urdu and is used directly in another language. However, the word didn't suffer any loss in terms of loss of grammatical category. Both in the loan and donor languages the word remained verb and noun
2	Club	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an association dedicated to a particular interest or activity 2. an organization constituted to play matches in a particular sport. 3. combine with others so as to collect a sum of money for a particular purpose 	All the participants responded that the word club is revered to as 'a place where players for sports such as cricket or football gather to take training'	The word 'club suffered from 66% semantic loss during its being lent to Urdu and used by the native speakers of Urdu who have got a great amount of English Language as well. However, no change in the grammatical category is observed.
3	Clinic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an establishment or hospital department where outpatients are given medical treatment or advice, especially of a specialist nature. 2. a conference or short course on a particular subject 	All the participants responded clinic to be 'a place where the 'a doctor examines his patients privately'.	A semantic loss of 50% is visible in the response which means that semantic loss is very heavy during the process of borrowing.
4	Tip	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the pointed or rounded end or extremity of something slender or tapering 2. attach to or cover the end or extremity of. 3. (In bookbinding) apply a thin line of paste along the inner margin of a book to attach a single page, usually an illustration, to the page next to it. 4. (informal) a small amount of money additionally given to the workers who 	All the participates responded that tip to be a small amount of money additionally given to people as a token to their services.	There is an awful semantic loss in the use of this word when the word is borrowed. 75% of the meanings of the loan language have disappeared during its borrowing.

		serve people at various service areas such as hotels and restaurants		
5	Match	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a contest in which people or teams compete against each other in a particular sport. 2. a person or thing that is equal to another in quality or strength 3. correspond or cause to correspond in some essential respect; make or be harmonious 4. a paper box containing small wood sticks used for lighting fire 	The participants responded that the word means a contest between two teams or opponents in games. Similarly, the other reply that the participants have given is “ a small paper box containing small wood-sticks used to lit up fire/	Semantic loss of 50% meaning is quite clear from the data received through the response provided by the participants. This means that the donor language is facing serious semantic loss when donates words even when the words are used by the native speakers of the loan language.
6	Traffic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a public-highway vehicle 2. the messages or signals transmitted through a communications system 3. deal or trade in something illegal 	All the participants have responded that the word traffic means vehicles moving on the road. None of the other meaning of the word is used by even a single respondent.	The process of borrowing as shown in the data has caused in immense semantic loss of almost 67% when the word is borrowed by the loan language from the donor language.
7	Engineer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a person who designs, builds, or maintains engines, machines, or structures. 2. a person who controls an engine, especially on an aircraft or ship 3. design and build (a machine or structure) 4. skillfully arrange for (something) to occur 	All the participants have replied in response the same i.e. all the participants have agreed that this word engineer is used for the person who builds, designs, structures, engines or machines.	The semantic loss is clearly visible during the process of borrowing. There is a semantic loss of 75% in this process of borrowing.
8	Record	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an official document saved for the purpose of keeping information 2. A collection of achievements in the past or performance of a person, organization, or thing 3. set down in writing or some other permanent form for later reference 4. convert (sound or a performance) into a permanent form for subsequent reproduction or broadcast 	18 participants relied that record means a document archive. Two of the participants added that the record also means an activity to save some happening.	Despite the addition made by two participants, still the word record has gone through 50% semantic loss.
9	Belt	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a strip of leather or other material worn, typically round the waist, to support or hold in clothes or to carry 	It is referred to be the leather strip used to hold pants together.	The word underwent an enormous semantic loss of

		<p>weapons.</p> <p>2. a continuous band of material used in machinery for transferring motion from one wheel to another.</p> <p>3. hit (someone or something) hard</p>		almost 66%.
10	Frame	<p>1. A structure</p> <p>2. An individual's physique in relation to their size or build</p> <p>3. position (a photo or picture) through a frame</p> <p>4. Make (a idea, strategy, or scheme).</p>	It is used as responded by the participant to be a place of holding pictures or something. All other meanings are not used by the participants.	This means that the word has undergone 75% semantic loss making it a very big loss in the process of borrowing.
11	State	<p>1. the specific state in which something or someone is at a specific period</p> <p>2. a country or territory that is seen as a single, structured political community</p> <p>3. Make a clear and final declaration through text or speech.</p>	State is translated to be "country" or government.	All other meanings of the word are lost during the process of borrowing.
12	Gas	<p>1. short for gasoline</p> <p>2. kill or harm by exposure to gas</p> <p>3. talk excessively about trivial matters.</p> <p>4. very amusing or entertaining</p>	It is responded unanimously by all the participants that it means a burnable substance.	All other meanings have vanished through borrowing. The word has lost a major chunk of 75% of its semantic value.
13	Party	<p>1. a gathering</p> <p>2. a group of politicians formed for contesting elections</p> <p>3. enjoyment through music at a public gathering</p>	Respondents have agreeably answered that the word means gathering of the people for a meal or congregation of the people for some meal or celebration.	Doing so, the participants have no idea of other meanings of the word. This clearly means that the word has gone thorough serious h semantic loss.
14	Driver	<p>1. a individual who controls a car or bus</p> <p>2. power supplying channels in a machinery</p>	This word is taken as nothing but to refer to the person who drives or controls a vehicle.	Semantic loss is clearly visible.
15	Jacket	<p>1. a garment used in winter to keep one's body warm.</p> <p>2. A covering of a pipe</p>	It is referred to a garments used specifically during the winter season.	All other meanings are either ignored or are not in the knowledge of the participants resulting in a loss of meanings.
16	Copy	<p>1. A thing which resembles the other</p> <p>2. One sample of a published work</p> <p>3. duplicate the flair or behavior of.</p>	It is responded to be a note book and to imitate someone.	Yet, the word has seen semantic loss of almost 34%.

17	Chamber	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sizable space designated for formal or open gatherings. 2. a personal space, particularly a bedroom. 3. insert (a bullet) into a firearm's slot. 	It is referred to be the sitting place of a lawyer.	The word clearly has suffered semantic loss because other meanings are lost.
18	Course	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the path or direction taken by a river, road, aeroplane, or ship. 2. a dish, or a group of dishes, that are served as one of the courses of a meal. (of liquid) move without obstruction; flow. 	The respondents have answered that this word means a degree or certificate completed in a small span of time.	It is once more clear that the borrowing is making words go through semantic loss throughout.
19	Company	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a commercial business 2. the fact or condition of being with another or others, especially in a way that provides friendship and enjoyment 3. associate with; keep company with 	Company is answered to be commercial working place which makes products. Similarly, the word is called to be the closeness among friends.	The word has gone through semantic loss despite being very common in other meanings.
20	Model	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a three-dimensional depiction of a person or object or of a planned structure, typically on a smaller scale than the original. 2. a thing used as an example to follow or imitate 3. 3. Make use of (a system, process, etc.) as a model to adhere to or emulate 	It is referred to be a person who does some modeling. Further, is said to be a specimen of something.	The semantic loss is clear because fullest meanings of the word present in the native language is not realized.
21	Motor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a device that provides motive power for a car or other moving object, particularly one that runs on electricity or internal combustion 2. a car 3. giving or producing motion or action 4. travel in a motor vehicle 	It is referred to be to a machine which works with the help of electricity.	The borrowing has made the word suffer from serious semantic loss where by the word is confined to just one meaning and rest of the meanings of the word are gone.
22	Market	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a regular meeting place where goods, farm animals, and other commodities are purchased and sold. 2. a location or forum where deals in business take place 3. encourage or market something. 	The respondents believe that this is a place where people do shopping.	Almost three-fourth of the meaning is not realized.
23	Glass	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a drinking container made from glass 2. cover or enclose with glass. 3. (especially in hunting) scan (one's surroundings) with binoculars. 	This is answered to be a container needing for drinking water or any liquid.	Rest of the two meanings have been sacrificed in the process of borrowing.
24	Hotel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A code word used in broadcasting that 	A place where people	The other meanings

		represents in for the letter H. 2. A place where individuals and visitors can get food, housing, and other services.	come for eating and temporary stay.	of the word have not been achieved.
25	Deposit	1. Fund an account with (a certain amount of money) 2. Openly recognize the part a contributor played in the creation of (a published or broadcast work). 3. a customer's ability to receive goods or services without making a payment, on the understanding that payment will be made later.	It is responded by the participants that the word means merely an activity to deposit money in the bank.	All other meanings have gone unknown to the participants.
26	Park	1. a large public park or recreational area. 2. a space allocated for a particular objective 3. Put (something) in an useful location until needed.	Respondents know only that the word only means i.e. public garden and stop the car.	The word has clearly experienced a semantic loss of 34%.
27	Press	1. apply constant physical force in order to cause something to move or come into contact with it. 2. exert pressure, usually with an iron, to smooth, flatten, or shape something. 3. A press for printing 4. a tool that applies pressure to something to shape, flatten, or extract juice from it	It is taken as an action to suppress some object. Further, it is used to refer media both print and electronic.	50% meanings of the word are lost only because the borrowing is done in a specific range for specific purposes.
28	School	1. a facility for teaching youngsters. 2. convey to a school; instruct 3. train a horse to go over fences or on the flat. 4. Educated and Westernised (of a Xhosa); a group of small fish gathered in the water	A place where the activity of education is carried out.	A serious somatic loss of the word is observed.
29	Camera	1. a device that records images visually as film, photos, or video signals	All the participants respond correctly in line with its sematic meanings.	No semantic loss is observed in case of the word camera.
30	Ticket	1. A document or card that grants its bearer a specific privilege, 2. a certificate or warrant 3. issue (someone) with an official notice of a traffic offence 4. Have a travel ticket issued to them (the passenger).	It is game played in most parts of the world including Pakistan.	The actual sematic or conceptual meanings of the word are lost.
31	Paste	1. a substance in between liquid and solid. 2. To attach something to a place	It is referred to the paste of recipe as well as the substance used	It is clearly observable from the response of the

		3. Adhere to something	for clearing teeth. Also the participants have referred this word to be an action of attaching a thing to a surface.	participants that the word has undergone a serious semantic loss when the Native-Urdu speakers have used the word having borrowed it.
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During the process of data analysis, it has been observed by the researcher that the semantic loss of great amount and values has occurred when the words of English are borrowed in Urdu. The users (participants) are found to be unaware of the multiple meanings of the words.

Words such as paste, press and light including all others have gone through semantic alterations when these words are used by the Native-Urdu speakers particularly in their everyday usage. The data shows that the words of English (the donating language) have been through a lot of semantic modifications when they are used by the Urdu speakers.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to investigate the semantic loss the words suffer from when these words of English are utilized and produced by the native speakers of Urdu. The responses of the participants have shown that many words loss a major part of their denotative or conceptual meanings borrowing between languages takes place. Although borrowing is so facilitating to the users of the loan language, yet it is so harmful for the donor language. The loan language users use the words only for their needs in certain situations. However, borrowing should be made very carefully in order to preserve the meanings of the words. In the future course of time, further studies can be conducted to investigate the reasons and factors which cause the semantic loss of the words during the process of borrowing.

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