

Semantic Variations of Arabic Loanwords in Maguindanaon

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Abstract

The study is synchronic, i.e. examined the integration of Arabic loanwords in Maguindanaon at present. Data collection started with the list of loanwords which were repeatedly updated and sifted. It used qualitative, descriptive, and structural methods in identifying loanwords through semantic integration within the domain of contrastive analysis. This study shows that the meaning of most of the Arabic loanwords in the Maguindanaon language is not different from their meaning in Arabic sources, although, there have been some semantic adaptations. Furthermore, the relationship between the bilingual spontaneous insertions and the monolingual use of established loanwords, in terms of motivations and distribution across semantic domains can contribute to the mechanisms and directions of language change in Maguindanaon. Loanwords act as a face-saving strategy when it comes to speech acts like apology and request. Avoiding directness when expressing empathy, feelings, euphemism, disagreement, apology, etc., is manifested through resorting to Arabic words. The data also show formulaic usages of greetings, farewells, and wishes, which have become the norm, whether in the Arabic script or in the Romanized Arabic script, replacing the Maguindanaon words gradually. Insertions denoting institutional procedures have also turned out to be the norm to an enormous extent. On the other hand, semantic integration of loanwords in Maguindanaon is a clue of diachronic change, in which semantic narrowing and widening are the most prominent changes.

Keywords: Semantic, Arabic, Maguindanaon, Spontaneous Loanwords, Established Loanwords

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Introduction

Inventory of Arabic loan words in Maguindanaon in terms of their semantic fields and the semantic changes

A. Semantic categorization of Arabic loan words in Maguindanaon

Borrowing, as frequently reported by language contact scholars, is motivated by either the need to fill a gap in the linguistic system of the recipient language (RL), as meaning can only be expressed in one language, or by the prestigious social associations of a borrowed term (Matras 2009; Loveday 1996; Myers-Scotton 2002; Haspelmath 2009). Borrowing seems to be driven by social, pragmatic, or stylistic motivations, depending on the communicative goal of the user or the borrower.

Haspelmath (2009) discusses some social and linguistic motivations, such as the desire to avoid taboo words and to resolve the conflict of homonymy. Additionally, borrowing can be driven by stylistic motivations as it provides speakers with stylistic choices that permit the alternation of foreign and native words with the same meaning (Winford 2003). Matras (2009) talks about cognitive motivation that applies when there is a pressure on the bilingual society to simplify the selection procedure.

In this study, lexical borrowing is investigated in relation to the semantic fields that content loanwords belong to. The most affected semantic fields seem to depend on several factors like the type of contact, the dominant language from which words are transferred, the function and the usage of the borrowed words, and the socio-cultural setting of the subordinate language. The researcher found out that the mainstream of Arabic loanwords into the Maguindanaon language is due to the great influence of Islam, and the terms borrowed range from religious terminologies, law terms, religious rites, academic or educational terms, titles and kinship address, everyday expressions and supplications, five daily obligatory prayers, clothing, grooming, personal belongings, names of the days, months in Hijrah Calendar, names of persons and characters in Islamic myths, sense and perceptions.

Arabic is considered the spiritual language of Islam. Since the Qur'an is written in Arabic, people in all Muslim countries must have at least a basic to advanced knowledge of Arabic. Arabic is related directly to the Qur'an, the holy book of the Muslim and *Arabic* is a distinguishing feature of *Islam*. But this is only because it is the language that the Qur'an was revealed in. Muslims in the entire world form one community of believers who believe that the Qur'an was sent over 1400 years ago in the Arabic language. Therefore, Arabic serves as a common language within the World Islamic Community.

Muslims strive to study Arabic to be able to understand and comprehend the Qur'an as the Qur'an was revealed in Classical Arabic. Muslims have strong motivation to keep Classical Arabic alive and well because Arabs consider Classical Arabic as an important component of their culture. Arabic is an efficient language, especially when it comes to the precise statement of laws. Since the Qur'an is a Statute Book, it was crucial that such laws must be clearly stated. Also, Muslims believes that God chose Arabic for His Final Testament because of the obvious reason that it is the most suitable language for that purpose.

In this study, religion and belief received the highest borrowing rate. The possible explanation is that these words were borrowed with the outspread of Islam religion as also mentioned by Suleiman (1985).

Shari'a is a religious law forming part of the Islamic tradition. Judicial procedures and legal education were likewise brought along with Maguindanaon practice being an Islamic tribe. Separating these concepts in Islam or concepts specific to Arab culture or the language itself from Maguindanaon culture can be difficult. Many of these law terms and concepts have an Arabic secular meaning as well as an Islamic meaning. Why the loanwords under this category rarely have Maguindanaon native equivalent may be attributed to this reason.

Islam teaches the importance of both belief and practice; one is insufficient without the other. Muslims, specifically Maguindanaons, are asked to put their beliefs into practice by performing certain acts of worship which are usually termed as how they are referred to in Arabic. As in all faith, since adherence to religious obligations and practices is a matter of individual choice, some Maguindanaon are very strict in performing these duties, while others are not. Since these rites only began to be observed since the coming of Islam, they lack Maguindanaon native equivalents.

In addition, there are also terminologies that refer to the five daily obligatory prayers among Muslims. These terminologies arrived in the Maguindanaon language after the coming of Islam that is why these terms initially did not exist in the Maguindanaon vocabulary. This reflects how the Arabic language as the language of the Qur'an and by extension the language of the Muslims spread widely with the spread of Islam. Muslims are supposed to learn the Arabic language for religious purposes especially that they are obliged to pray using Arabic. Everyday religious expressions are common not only in Maguindanaon, but also among other Muslim tribes in the Southern Philippines such as *Maranao*, *Iranun*, *Yakan*, *Tausug*, *Jama Mapun*, etc. Words denoting good wishes were also listed in the corpus as formulaic. These words were also very frequent in the data of this study, including words denoting wishes at the end of a conversation, congratulations, and compliments. The following table shows the list of these commonly used religious expressions and supplications.

Maguindanaon communities also have a continuous Islamic education even in informal situation such as *Wasi'ah* and *Khutbah* (sermons) delivered by an '*Alim* (learned men in Islam) during Friday obligatory prayers.

Furthermore, although Arabic loanwords label institutional activities related to education, the same linguistic practice was found at work when relating to academic activities and procedures, especially for interactions in which university students were involved. Maguindanaon bilingual *Madrasah* students tend to insert Arabic words designating academic procedures, practices, or activities, due to the dominance and appropriateness of the Arabic academic terms among Maguindanaon *madrasah* students.

Maguindanaons are also fond of naming their children after famous characters in Islamic myths or after Islamic terminologies which have beautiful meanings. The following table shows the list of the famous Maguindanaon names that are of Arabic origin.

Clothing and grooming also showed up a number of times in the corpus collected. An explanation proposed was that in Islam, men and women have a prescribed set of garments to

use, for example, especially among women who are forbidden to dress in the modern fashion style which shows the “supposed-to-be-hidden” parts of the body.

In Maguindanaon community, intimacy in kinship address can also be expressed through insertions of affection. In naturally occurring conversations, Maguindanaon participants tend to switch to the Arabic script in order to express affection.

Sense and perception had the lowest borrowing rate due to the existence of indigenous words for such concepts. Most of these terms still have Maguindanaon native equivalents and are commonly known among elders and younger Maguindanaons.

Maguindanaons also refer to the names of the days as how Arab people name it. According to one of the respondents, Maguindanaon elders do not perceive the names of the day as how they are counted nowadays prior to the coming of Islam. The elders only differentiate the usual day routine into *mapita* (morning), *modtu* (noon), and *magabi* (evening). In the coming of Islam, they learned to name it according to its Arabic terms such as:

Names of the days are originally from numerical counting system in Arabic:

-	One	=	Wahid (become Ahad)	أحد
-	Two	=	?Ithnin	إثنين
-	Three	=	thalatha	ثلاثاء
-	Four	=	Arbaʿa	أربعاء
-	Five	=	Khamsa	خميس

The Maguindanaon language also borrowed all Arabic names of the months in the Islamic calendar or Hijrah calendar. The Islamic (Hijrah) calendar has twelve lunar months. Years are counted since the Hijrah – the time when the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) migrated from Mecca to Madinah (approximately July 622 A.D.). The Islamic calendar was first introduced by the second caliph 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab in approximately 638 A.D. The Islamic calendar is the official calendar in some Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia. The table below lists the names of these twelve months in Hijrah calendar.

B. Semantic changes

Onysko (2007) mentions that some foreign words are unique because they have cultural associations, showing that foreign words in the native written discourse may act as ‘culturally specific tones’ and ‘cultural indices’ that evoke in the reader an image of the source culture, which will eventually contribute to the authenticity of the picture given. The association that the loanword makes is such a choice loaded with meanings, contrary to what might be achieved in case a native equivalent is used. That is, a translation of the term whether by calquing or providing the exact equivalent, or semi-equivalent may reflect the semantic denotation of the term, but not its cultural connotation.

Semantic changes in the Arabic loanwords in Maguindanaon may fall on three specific categories – broadening, narrowing, and shifting.

Semantic broadening

Semantic broadening of the Arabic loanwords in the Maguindanaon language is the shift in the meaning where the words express wider meaning or more general in its use than the original meaning. Another case of semantic broadening is when Arabic derivatives from the

same root, approximately having similar meanings and pronunciations might have been used in the Maguindanaon language but later one word is left and extended to represent the meanings of the others. An example is the term *ni'mat*, which means blessing from Allah, and was extended to mean, satisfied, happy, good or delicious that are termed *mutanaim* and *manum* in Arabic. The broadening of this term could have been extended because of the absence of the Arabic terms *mutanaim* and *manum* in the corpus of Arabic loanwords in Maguindanaon, but the meaning is left in *ni'mat* since these words have the same root. Another is the word *madrasah*. Although the term *madrasah* means only a school in the Arabic Language, it was extended in the Maguindanaon language to mean a lecture and to have a lecture.

In Maguindanaon, the loanword *Arab* which only pertains to an Arab person in its original meaning does not only refer to a person, but also anything that has something to do with the Middle East as a whole. Almost all concepts coming from all countries from the Middle East are termed *kana Arab* 'from Arab'. Likewise, the loanword *iklas* 'sincere' is also used to refer to a religious and devoted Muslim. Also, the loanword *alamat* 'sign' is used to denote the act of fortune telling. The word is found in the data to have undergone semantic widening to also mean the act of pondering the meaning 'sign' which is the literal meaning of the word *alamat*.

Another example is the use of the supplication *la hawla wa la quwwata ila billah* (*There is no power or might except of Allah*). The spontaneous exclamatory expressions in Maguindanaon *lakola* was a shortened version of the earlier mentioned supplication with initial words such as *la hawla* to *lakola*. In Maguindanaon, this supplication is read when someone is amazed or afraid of something but is also used to mean an exclamation or a questioning discourse device.

Further, an interesting case of semantic broadening is the instance of insertions that expresses solidarity in the use of the word *akh* (brother) and *ukhti* (sister). Unlike the previous loanwords that reflect social identity, the use of *akh* (brother) and *ukhti* (sister) represents a relatively broader sense of identity. That is, it signifies religious (Islamic) identity expressing solidarity among Maguindanaon participants belonging to a broader social group, which is the Islamic brotherhood that unites members of the society. The use of the word does not reflect the same degree of informality as opposed to other loanwords because it seeks solidarity among a larger social group that goes beyond the interpersonal group of intimate friends. An example is given when someone is thanking his friend for a favor. The word *akh* is usually inserted in the script. As shown in the use of *akh* (brother) and *ukhti* (sister), affirming solidarity through the declaration of intimate feelings could achieve the speech act of apology successfully. In fact, establishing or confirming solidarity through insertions of intimate feelings could act as a strategic device that creates a linguistic leeway to accomplish a number of verbal actions. In other words, it is shown to be a key mechanism of sorting out problematic personal issues due to the effect these words have on establishing a social and religious identity.

Semantic narrowing

Semantic narrowing is the opposite of extension. Semantic restriction of meanings in which a term acquires a narrower meaning of the word and becomes less general than before is evident in Arabic loanwords in Maguindanaon. The majority of the Arabic loanwords in the Maguindanaon language retained similar meanings of the Arabic original words especially

the terms concerning Islamic issues. Although deeply religious material tends to be transmitted in the original form, most of the semantic adaptations, especially narrowing, happen to be religious terms.

In case of the Arabic loanwords which have more than one meaning -- one of which is religious, the religious meaning is retained in the Maguindanaon language. This narrowing is simply because since the coming of Islam the Maguindanaon Muslims have been in contact with Islamic terms concerning their faith in their everyday life. A large proportion of these loanwords are concerned more or less directly with the moral values introduced through Islam. As there were new concepts of Islam, Arabic words especially religious terms were used to fill gaps in the lexicon of Maguindanaon to designate the newly introduced notions. An example would be the sex-related words which are highly stigmatized in the Maguindanaon culture; someone would tend to express his idea by inserting some Arabic borrowings to sound polite and soften the effect of the taboo word. In the data, Arabic words denoting sexual activities such as *hayd* (menstruating) and *junub* (impurity caused by having sex) were also shown to be preferred over their Maguindanaon taboo counterparts *gapamalyan* for the term menstruating and *ebpun sa kinambargyuma* for the impurity from having sex.

Also, usage of Maguindanaon words denoting body-related biological parts, actions, or processes was also avoided in the Maguindanaon chats. Slightly similar to words referring to sexual activities, these words in Maguindanaon are considered low, tabooed, and uncivilized. For this, Arabic words were chosen to lessen the effect of such usages. The use of words such as *bubun* (legs) *awitan* (ass), and *buk* (hair) by a Maguindanaon is euphemistically driven and therefore referred with Arabic word *awrat* (forbidden to be seen parts of the body) in general. Further, referring to sex-related terms was avoided by Maguindanaon speakers, even if they represent basic notions that do not have to do with women's body features or sexual behavior.

The last example is the word *setan* from the Arabic word *shaitan* which literally means evil spirit in Arabic. In Maguindanaon, it has commonly been referred to a person who is a venial sinner who is so aberrant in terms of moral values.

Semantic shift

Semantic shift of the Arabic loanwords in the Maguindanaon language is a complete shift of meaning and sometimes a shift to the opposite meaning. In this adaptation, a word loses some aspect of its former meaning or takes on a partially new but related one. This change occurs over an extended period of time, resulting in a meaning that is totally irrelevant to the previous meaning of a word. An example is the word *ustads* 'professor' which is adapted in Maguindanaon to mean anyone faithful and steadfast on the Islamic religion. Since the Madrasah professors are referred to by their students as *ustads*, if somebody, not necessarily an *ustads*, advises someone of an Islamic teaching, they would exaggeratedly refer to him as *ustads* which is far from its literal meaning. Another example is the word *kapil* from the Arabic work *kafir* which literally refers to anyone deviant of a set rule. In Maguindanaon, it mutually refers to the people belonging to the other religions. From the Islamic viewpoint, a Maguindanaon who is accepting the Islam religion may still be referred to as *kapil* if he or she is not following or executing the teachings of Islam.

Another case of semantic shift is when derivatives from the same root are approximately having similar meanings and root. The word *adnan* is derived from the Arabic word *adan*. Both *adan* and *adnan* exist in the Maguindanaon to refer to the paradise. However, in the Arabic language only *adan* means paradise which is repeated in the Holy Qur'an so many times. The word *adnan* is only a proper name. It denotes a far ancestor of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as well as Arabs. Indeed, the term *adan* is closely related to Muslims spiritual life and is thus used abundantly during prayers, preaches, sermons and personal spiritual life. Both *adan* and *adnan* are approximately similar in pronunciation. The term *adnan* was used mistakenly for *adan* due to having the same root and the great prominence of the meaning of *adan* over *adnan*. Another example is the term *kitab* which is used in the Maguindanaon language to mean something which is relating to religious studies. *Kitab* in the Arabic language is literally translated to "book" specifically relating to Holy books such as Qur'an, Torah, and the Bible. The meaning is shifted with the Maguindanaon word *kitab* which is taken from the Arabic word *kitab* that means a law or rule to follow. The semantic shift might be due to the fact that the term *kitab* is a religious term of great prominence, and the Maguindanaon interpreted this term upon its borrowing to mean anything that has to do with the knowledge and rules of Islam. This is an example of important type of semantic shift – that is the additional metaphorical meaning that some loanwords gain. On the whole, metaphor is a semantic change in which a broadening of the meaning of a word that takes place due to semantic similarity or connection between the new meaning and the original one, i.e., 'one thing is conceptualized in terms of another' (Campbell 2004). The metaphorical meaning goes beyond the literal meaning of a loanword.

Conclusions

The findings reveal that one more reason of semantic changes such as broadening, narrowing, and shifting is that the receptor society does not get exposed only to words but also to beliefs and culture of the donor society so there was borrowing of new words along with new concepts and notions. That is mainly because words are borrowed to signify a cultural concept rather than their literal meaning in the source language, to name things by the way they are utilized or because of overgeneralizing forms that occurred in Arabic loanwords to include other words in the Maguindanaon language.

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