

Lexical Reanalysis, a Manifestation of Persianization of Borrowed Words in Persian Language; a Structural Investigation

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Abstract

Human communities with different languages, because of business transactions, cultural and religious relationships and even war, have always been in close contact with each other. One of the consequences of these relationships is transmitting the language elements and structures from one language to another. This phenomenon is generally called “borrowing”. Borrowing occurs in all levels of language ranging from orthography to phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntactic structures, but the most frequent type of borrowing is lexical borrowing or borrowing the whole word (Arlotto, 2005).

One of the important facts of borrowing is that through this process, borrowed words conform to the grammatical rules of the borrowing language. This phenomenon is called “nativization”. Since, nativization in any language occurs on the basis of the specific grammatical rules of that language, it gets a title related to the name of that language; for instance, nativization in German is called “Germanization (Eindeutschung)” (Lane, 2012, p. 8), or in Arabic is entitled “Arabicization (التعريب)”, (Khadim, 2012, p.16); therefore, it is proposed to name this process in Persian language as “Persianization”.

One of the manifestations of nativization is “reanalysis”, the primary cause of which is illiteracy, ignorance and unacquaintance of native speakers with the etymology of borrowed words. In reanalysis, a part of a borrowed word, because of formal similarity, is mistaken for a native word or morpheme and is substituted by that native word or morpheme. The works conducted so far on nativization, either have not paid any attention to reanalysis, or just mentioned some instances of this phenomenon without giving any structural analysis or classification of it. Therefore, in this paper, attempts are made to investigate the structure of reanalysis and to classify it according to its structure.

The data of the study have been collected in informal situations from the colloquial communications of low-educated old people or illiterate young children who are not familiar with the original or written forms of borrowed words. Because of the rising educational level of common people and their excessive contact with

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written media and the messengers of cyber space, the frequency of the data is dramatically decreasing.

In all the cases of reanalysis, three common elements can be found. These elements include: borrowed word, native word, and the relevant semantic feature of borrowed word. The relevant semantic feature of the borrowed word can be the function, the formal shape or the meaning of the borrowed word. There exist also three relationships among these elements: The first one is the conventional relationship between the borrowed word and its semantic feature which is a signifier and signified relationship. The second one is the accidental relationship between the borrowed word and the native word which is the result of accident and a formal similarity relationship. The third one, is the relationship between the native word and the semantic feature of the borrowed word which is an indicative relationship. To occur an instance of reanalysis, all of the above mentioned factors and relationships must be met and the absence of one of them, prevents its occurrence.

As it is revealed, the indicative relationship between the semantic feature of borrowed word and native word can vary according to form, function and meaning of the borrowed word. With respect to these variables, reanalysis can be classified into formal reanalysis, functional reanalysis and semantic reanalysis. In the following, each of these types of reanalysis is further explained with an example.

Formal Reanalysis occurs on the basis of the formal shape of the object that the borrowed word denotes it. For example, the borrowed word “hamburger” has been reanalyzed as “hamburjer”. It has occurred on the basis of the indicative relationship between the round shape of the object that the word “hamburger” denotes it and the meaning of native word “gerd” with the meaning “round”. Therefore, “hamburger” has been reanalyzed to “hamburjer”.

In Functional Reanalysis, the function of the borrowed word and its accidental similarity with the native word play the main role in forming the functional reanalysis. For instance, the borrowed word “address” which refers to the details of the place someone lives and the function of which is to help somebody else to reach there, has been reanalyzed to “addras”. The reason is that the final syllable of the borrowed word (-ress) is similar to the native word “ras” with the meaning “to arrive” or “to reach”. Therefore, the final syllable “-ress” has been replaced by “ras”; and the borrowed word “address” has been reanalyzed as “addras”.

In Semantic Reanalysis, there is no formal or functional relationship, rather, there exists an indicative relationship between the meaning of the borrowed word and the native word, therefore the native word replaces the whole borrowed word or part of it. For example, the borrowed word “double” means something that is twice as big as something else. The part “dou-” is also accidentally similar to the Persian native word “do” which means “two”. Because of the indicative relationship between the meaning of “double” with the native word “do” on the one hand, and the accidental similarity between the part “dou-” and the native word “do” on the other, the native word “do” has replaced the part “dou-”. This construction has been further reanalyzed by substituting the native word “do” with another native word “se” with the meaning “three” and producing the colloquial word “suble” which means “something that is thrice as big as something else”.

Keywords: Borrowing, Persianization, lexical reanalysis, Borrowed word, Native word