Lexical Creativity through the Use of New Denotations

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Human languages are regarded as the most important instrument for communication. They are used to sending vital messages about life, character and personality. Indeed, these messages are generally interpreted differently because of the impact of our culture which is able to explain how we think and behave in various situations. In a general sense, language occupies a vigorous place to influence people's views and concepts about their world. By means of language, individual identities become explicit since it mirrors their social status environment and culture. Arguably, when languages or dialects come into contact, either directly through the personal contact of the speakers of these languages, or indirectly through the media, one common outcome is the diffusion of cultural items across linguistic boundaries. One clear manifestation of this cultural diffusion is the emergence of new lexical items in the recipient language.

In fact our work is concerned with referential innovation issue i.e.how does a person give a word or phrase a new denotation using real examples that we have collected from our speech community (Tlemcen).Our focus is on semantic categories where a given phrase is used in contextsor circumstancesthat requirea completely different meaningbut the intended message is absolutely well grasped among people who live in the same region as it can be understood also by the others and this is due to the impact of culture and media. As a matter of fact, people use always new terms since they constantly meet new situations, goals, andinformants.Hence, this process can lead to the creation of new linguistic items or forms that will be used frequently by persons and then will take place in a given language or dialect. Speakers will appreciate the opportunity for creative phrasings to convey something quite different than the one which is normally employed. This obviously will conduct to lexical changes that will happen through time and results in the confusionand competitionbetween two terms because they have the same meaning. These lexical innovations however have at the beginning different linguistic consequences which the speakers are not aware of, but they do affect their speech.

Thus, with regard to the above mentioned issues, the following research questions require further analysis:

> What are the main factors that lead to the use of new words?
> Does this actof innovationreally participate in language change?

First, we may hypothesize that the primordial factor that leads people to employ new words in their daily use of language is languages contact. Thisoccurs mainly when speakers of distinct speech communities have close interaction with each other. Second the act of using and including new words in either a dialect or a language may definitely lead to language change which is deemed to be the first outcome of contact between languages. In some cases we can find that only few words are borrowed, but sometimes whole new codes may be formed.

Referential Innovation

Every phenomenon needs a name; indeed referential creativity is a way of speaking by using words which have different meanings to the one of their literal meaning. It can be either a loan word 'réseau' (resK) which means 'network' but used to describe someone who is eager to know the least detail about people or a word that belongs to the native language or variety 'habess' (ħWbes) that meansliterally 'stopped', but it is used in this context to refer to a person who does not understand matters rapidly. In this case, we speak about creativity because the word exists already but with another meaning or with its true meaning and the creativity is to use the same word to refer to something else.

Thespeaker evolves loan words in his communications to mean something which has no relationship with its literal meaning. In other words, he uses precise pattern ofsemantic elements such as 'charika' /GArikA/ meaning a society but it refers to someone who is rich as it can be used ironically to refer to someone who is poor but he wants to buy something which is beyond to his financial capacities. Another pattern of grammatical relations can be explained by the following illustration 'nvibri' (nvibri) derived from the verb to vibrate and conjugated in the present simple used to mean I 'am very cold or I 'am afraid. Consequently, through excessive use of these words they will look as if they really belong to the recipient language, though at the beginning or when they are heard for the first time they seem strange as they can be accepted or refused. Later, the phenomenon starts taking place as if the items involved become part of our knowledge and culture, as they are appliedto face new situations to achieve the meaning desired to be transmitted by the speaker.

Language Contact in Algeria

Algeria is regarded as a complex multilingual country where four varieties of languages are highly present in its speech communities. In other words, the sociolinguistic profile of Algeria includes classical Arabic and its modern form MSA which is the national and official language, Algerian Arabic spoken by almost all Algerians, and Berberrecently recognized as a national language and of course French which is still widely used in many fields. In brief, the co-existence of MSA, French and Berber gave birth to two major sociolinguistic phenomena, namely bilingualism and diglossia which can be apparent in the following situations: the use of Arabic- French, Arabic-Berber and finally Berber-French, though we are only concerned with the most prominent pair of language in contact in Algeria : Arabic and French.

As far as the French language is concerned, Algeria was deeply influenced at the linguistic level during the French colonization to the extent that it is almost impossible to hear a mere conversation between two Algerians without remaking the use of at least one or two French words.Obviously, the existence of French in Algeria has resulted in bilingualismwhich is the ability to speak two languages simultaneouslyincluding code switching thatmeans the use of two languages or codesin the same conversation in addition to borrowings i.e.to adopt words from a source language French especially into their native language.

Bilingualism, an outstanding linguistic behaviour of the majority of Algerians, is characterized by its heterogeneity, since the Algerian speaker's linguistic competence differs in degrees. In other words, we can find speakers who know only few lexical items and others who are really native like speakers. Indeed, whenever languages are in contact, inevitable kinds of linguistic phenomenon such as borrowings and code-switching will generally be found. In this regard Myers- Scotton (2006:45) says:

> Discussing loan words (borrowings) has a place in a volume on bilingualism because their presence in a language depends on some bilingual speakers who brought in the borrowed words in the first place.

Auer (2002:3) adds that "code-switching is related to and indicative of group membership in particular types of bilingual speech communities".

Nonetheless, linguists' point of view differs in distinguishing between code-switching and borrowings. Milroy and Muysken (1995:263) define borrowings as the act of "taking a word or short expression and adapting it to the basic language". Code switching on the other hand is "the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent" Poplack (1980:583).

In so far as to consider both borrowing and code switching, borrowings are used by monolinguals of a given language who have adapted some new words at least at the lexical level,

particularly when no equivalent is at hand i.e. lack of vocabulary, whereas code switching is an immediate outcome of bilingualism. Nevertheless, as some linguists assume that the process of integration happens gradually, some forms of borrowings cannot be easily distinguished from code-switches.

Actually, borrowings and code switching have become part of the Algerian culture and identity since the majority uses them to convey meanings or to achieve certain purposes such as prestige or the need to preserve a distinct identity. Hudson (1996: 51) argues this idea in the following "Anyone who speaks more than one language chooses between them according to circumstances".

Cultural Contact

In Algeria, which is a bilingual country, nobody speaks Arabicor French independently i.e. many French linguistic features have been infiltrated in the recipient language because of historical, cultural and sociolinguistic reasons. Henceforth code switching and borrowing are consequences of cultural contact between two language communities.Indeed, with globalization and increasing population movement, contact between languages, cultures and individuals has become a reality which nobody can flee it. As a matter of factthe influence of culture is deemed to be a crucial factor which results in the phenomenon of borrowing since wherever two languages are in contact the influence is apparent. That is to say, just as everybody belongs to a particular area and possesses a particular social and cultural background, everybody speaks using his own and specific way of communication.

Language change

The borrowed items mainly nouns may be more or less assimilated to the individual's mother tongue. This assimilation can be discussed at the phonological, lexical and grammatical levels.
As far as the former is concerned,it has to do with the change in pronunciation patterns.Let's consider the example of the word 'tune'. On the one hand Many English speakersespecially the old generation include the'y'sound between the initial consonant and vowel of the word *tune*, so that it will sound like 'tyoon'. On the other hand, youngsters are far more likely to pronounce the consonant 'y'like a 'ch'.Thus, they would result in a word that might sound like 'choon'

Second, grammatical change occurs when grammatical conventions are not respected. Arguably, it is a subtle processand we cannot find plenty of examples. For some people in Tlemcen particularly youngsters use the following sentence conjugated in the first person plural (we) e.g.'mchinachefnahadikl'bentf l'khadma' (mGinWGefnWhWdikl'bentf'lUedmA)instead of 'mchit' (mGitGeft), 'laabnachwiyabihom'(l'⊠WbnWGwi:W b:ihCm)in place of 'laabtbiha' (l⊠WbtbihW)(a girl)This is an example of grammatical change a complex process and not easy to discern by listeners.

The latter is lexical change the one that we are interested with, it refers to a change in the meaning or use of a word.Lexical change is probably the most frequent type of language change and certainly the easiest to observe. For instance, we can make confident assertions about the age of a speaker who uses the expression'*hebaanumerique'* (ħAbAnumirik) as expressions to describe a beautiful girl orsomeone they find attractive. This kind of words is replacing the usual word 'chebba' 'GebA'.

Data Collection and Analysis

As with any form of spontaneous speech phenomenon, the insertion of borrowed words must be caught on the fly i.e. it should be studied within spontaneous conversations. As matter of fact, two tools of data collection namely, an unstructured interview and participant observation were used for the sake of obtaining answers to our research questions. In fact, unstructured interviews have many advantages, for example, they are high in validity since the respondents give us an

accurate and naturalistic picture as they are flexible; this enables to retrieve more clarifications about the meanings and interviewees may feel more comfortable to give their true feelings as it is a relaxed atmosphere.

Participant observation is the second data collection instrument used in our research in order to collect new borrowed words which can support our work. The data collected is analyzed qualitatively. Obviously, the primordial goal in choosing different strategies in the same study is to balance them and to assure completeness of findings or to confirm findings.

The data obtained from this type of research usually take the form of explanations, stories, and events. In effect, the analysis of the results is difficult to control and to organize. Moreover, it is not classified into finite numbers. Objectivity is required at this level in order to make the data obtained qualitatively more experimental and scientific.

At this level, the researcher should first provide a clear and comprehensive image about the linguistic phenomenon which is examined, as we should be aware of what is going on in front of us, because we may sometimes be misled by the informant's answers. Availability of data and avoidance of subjective judgments are also important elements required to study the situation under investigation.

Our sample population was selected at random about fourteen persons, their ages vary from 18- to 32 years old(including students, cousins, and friends) were asked the following questions of course the questions were included during general discussions:

Why do you use or at least include some French words in your speech?

The majority (8) answered that they are unconscious of using such types of words; they consider them as being part of their speech repertoire. Others (2) said that it is a matter of prestige or when they do not find the required word at hand they switch to the other language or the other variety. And (4) participants argue that it is due to the place that the French language occupies in their society i.e. this habit reflects their socioeconomic background. Hence, a speaker may change the code according to the topic under discussion or to show certain attitudes or position or to grab people's attention.

Do you think that colonialism is the sole factor behind this behavior?

Approximately all the answers include that they cannot deny the influence of the French language in Algeria, particularly that it is still used in certain institutions. About (6) participants added that media has played a role in the diffusion of certain ways of code switching and borrowings because it enables the speakers to know about the cultures of the other side of the world.Henceforth, fashionable usage of vocabulary spreads rapidly across speech communities due to the sophisticated communication links found everywhere such as social media and networks.

Indeed, in what concerns our second research question here are some words used in Tlemcen speech community collected through a participant observation. As any general conversations the topics tackled will turn around people's motivations; internet, mobiles and so on. It is worth noting, that sitting with people who live in a bilingual or bi- dialectal country observing their language gave the observers the chance to hear and to examine many forms of borrowings and code switching. The advantage of this tool of data collection is that it provided us with naturalistic data, in other terms the observers see how the respondents actually speak when they are in their natural environment. Some words have been picked up from their speech such as:

'Satellite' /sAtilit/ meaning the same thing in English i.e. satellite or 'réseau' /rezo/that means 'network' both of them are new words which entered the Algerian dialect because of the advance of technology as they are employed instead of the Standard Arabic word /qamar/ which we

seldom or never hear. Nevertheless, we have remarked that these two terms are used nowadays to refer to somebody who is eager to know everything about others.

/*la'ja*/ (laaya) and /*lafatig* / (la fatigue) are words used by adults and young people especially. The true meaning of /*la'ja*/ derived from the word (*ayan*) /'ajan) and /*lafatig* / (a French word 'la fatigue' is 'tiredness', nevertheless, they are used by people as a negative label to refer to tedious or tiresome people. So, we can say that the new denotation of these two words lead to the innovational use of their meaning i.e. the two terms already pervade in our society but their recent use is with new meanings. In other words, tiredness has become a label to someone who is tiresome.

/*bankA*/ 'Banka' is another loan word that originates from the French term 'banque' as it has the same meaning in English 'bank'. It can be considered a new item as it can be deemed as an old one because even our parents use the expression 'maranichbanka' /mrAniGbKnkA/meaning 'I have not enough money'

/*haba numirik*/ 'Habanumérique' is a new expression that has entered the Algerian dialect; it is a combination of an Arabic and French words. In effect; '*haba*' means either 'only one' e.g. /*aandimenhom haba wahda*/ (I have only one form each kind or thing) as it implies a 'seed'. 'numérique' means 'digital' and the new denotation of this combination is to relate it with a very beautiful and rich girl.

'*Chita*' /chi:ta/implies'a brush' or a tool used to clean clothesis another label used to call people whoshowthe others that they are very much liked as they gave them too much interestfor the sake of getting what they want.

'*Bipilo*'is from the French verb 'biper' and in English it is 'to beep'; a brief and repeated ring that generally resultsin making several missed calls.However'bipilo' /*bipilk*/ is used to mean'tell him' 'give him a sing'or 'let him know'.

Hence, the above mentioned words that are all pervasive in our Algerian society in general and in Tlemcen in particular are considered as becoming part of our dialect as they are able to either erase the original words with their true meaning or to be in competition with each other e.g. 'charika'/*charika*/ or 'banka'/banka/ as opposed to '*mrefeh*' /mrefh/, 'bipilo' as opposed to '*olo*' /'ulu/ 'tell him' and so on. Thus through this process of language use we may say that these lexical creativity may inevitably lead to language change though it may take a significant period of time.

To sum, the act of the co-existence of two or more languages at the same time will give birth to the phenomenonknown aslanguage contact. This latter may manifest itself linguistically through code-switching, and borrowing that are favored by bilingualism. In the same line of thought, Thomason (2001:62) states that "contact is a cause of `any linguistic changethat would have been less likely to occur outside a particular contact situation'. Thus whenever there is foreign material includedin a given society it may conduct to language change.Thus, the study proves that people use new lexical items to face new situation and to achieve certain stylistic effects such as humor as they are employed to convey messages that cannot be transmitted by the original meaning.

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