

Extended Abstract

Stability or change in kinship terms as a result of language contact: A case study in several bilingual villages of Khorasan in the 1970s

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Introduction

According to Winford (2003: 2), when speakers of different languages come into contact, a form of accommodation between their speeches occurs. The borrowing process is one of the most prominent manifestations of language contact. Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 37), believe that “Borrowing is the incorporation of foreign features into a group’s native language by speakers of that language: the native language is maintained but is changed by the addition of the incorporated features”. In linguistic contact, words are the first elements that enter the system of the receiving language. But if language contact persists over an extended period and involves greater pressure from the speakers of the source language to the speakers of the recipient language, morphological and phonological borrowings will also occur (Thomason and Kaufman, 1988: 37). Borrowing in basic vocabulary either does not occur or takes place temporally later than the borrowing process in non-basic vocabulary. According to Hock and Joseph (1996: 257), basic vocabulary typically resists the phenomenon of borrowing.

Materials & Methods

In the present study, the impact of language contact on borrowing kinship terms, one of the concepts related to basic vocabulary, is examined in several bilingual villages in Khorasan in the 1970s using a descriptive-analytical method. The research data are extracted from the vocabulary section of the Iranian Linguistic Atlas questionnaire. The research corpus includes data from 9 bilingual villages in the Ahmadabad district of Mashhad, comprising 153 words gathered from the equivalents of 17 kinship terms in the questionnaire in four languages: Turkish, Balochi, Arabic, and Turkmen, which are spoken alongside

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Persian in the studied villages. Data was gathered through face-to-face interviews with speakers, and their voices were recorded. The study involves 18 speakers aged 20 to 65, mostly literate. While the ILA database includes audio samples from female speakers in some villages, all participants in this study happen to be male, which is considered advantageous given the current research objectives.

Haugen (1950: 214-215) introduces three types of lexical borrowing, including loanwords, loan-blends, and loan-shifts in his research. Alizadeh (2003) examines the borrowing in language, focusing on lexical borrowing and its influencing factors. Safavi (1995) classifies borrowed words in the Persian and considers external and internal factors as reasons to word borrowing. Zolfaghari (2002) has compiled English loanwords in the dialects of three cities: Ahvaz, Abadan, and Masjed Soleiman. In the nineteenth century, scholars such as Müller (1875), Paul (1886), Schmidt (1872), and Schuchardt (1884) researched language contact (Klein, 1987: 453). In the twentieth century, Sapir (1921), Bloomfield (1933), and other structuralists also studied language contact. However, recent studies in this regard are related to the works of Weinreich (1953) and Haugen (1950; 1953). Weinreich (1953) explains the significance of language contact in language changes. The typological studies of Thomason and Kaufman in 1988 have also prompted researchers to explore the topic of language contact (Winford, 2003: 6-9).

Results and Discussion

In this research, the contact of each of the Turkish, Arabic, Balochi, and Turkmen languages with Persian and the status of borrowing kinship terms are separately examined.

In each of the three bilingual Turkish-Persian villages in the studied region, 10 out of 17 kinship terms have been borrowed. According to McMahon (1994: 204), unrelated languages are less likely to borrow kinship terms from each other. However, it is observed that Turkish and Persian, which are linguistically unrelated, have borrowed from each other due to long-term contact. Therefore, social factors seem to take precedence over linguistic factors in this context. According to Matras (2009: 166), since certain concepts like kinship relations exist in all human societies, there is no necessity to borrow them from another language. However, the data analysis indicates that in Turkish-Persian bilingual villages, borrowing of kinship terms is observed not only in distant but also in close kinship relationships. The borrowed terms are all structurally simple. In terms of meaning, the number of relative kinship terms (9 terms) is higher than affinal terms (2 terms).

In Balochi-Persian bilingual villages, the level of borrowing kinship terms is not significant, with only 3 out of 17 terms borrowed from Persian. Structurally, the borrowed kinship terms are simple. In terms of meaning, 4 terms are relative and 1 term is affinal.

For the Arabic-Persian bilingual villages, the borrowing of kinship terms occurred in 4 cases in one village and 3 cases in another out of the 17 terms studied. Regarding the Arabic language, the issue of borrowing extends due to the unrelated nature of the languages, and social factors are more important than linguistic factors in the borrowing phenomenon. In

Arabic-Persian bilingual villages, kinship relations related to close kinship such as father, mother, etc., have not undergone borrowing. The borrowed terms are all structurally simple. In terms of meaning, in one village, 2 terms are relative and 2 terms are affinal, while in the other village, the number of borrowed relative terms is higher than affinal terms.

In the region under study, linguistic data is only available for one Turkmen-Persian bilingual village in the ILA database. In this village, only one case of borrowing in relative kinship terms is observed. Since Turkmen and Persian are linguistically unrelated, the expectation of borrowing between these two languages is low. Since the level of borrowing is not high, it can be concluded that linguistic factors are subordinate to social factors. The borrowed term is structurally simple and, in terms of meaning, is classified as a relative term.

Conclusion

The examination of data in this study from the bilingual villages under investigation shows that contrary to the belief of many researchers who believe that borrowing does not occur in basic vocabulary in languages, it takes place in kinship terms as one of the types of basic vocabulary in languages. However, the borrowing trend in these words differs from non-basic vocabulary words.

The research results indicate that the process of lexical borrowing occurred in kinship terms in the studied bilingual villages, but the extent of borrowing varied in the contact of each of the mentioned languages with Persian. The data analysis also supports the idea that Persian, as the dominant language, has influenced kinship vocabulary in the prevalent languages in the studied villages, contributing to the borrowing direction from Persian to these languages. Among the total research data, 45 cases involve borrowed simple kinship terms. However, there are no borrowed compound kinship terms in the list of borrowed words. It should be noted that the number of compound kinship terms in the questionnaire is 2 out of 17, which may have an impactful result in the analysis.

Keywords: Language Contact; Loanwords; Kinship Terms; Bilingual Villages of Khorasan in the 1970s

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