Strategies for Lexical Expansion in Naro

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Abstract

Most of the minority languages in Botswana are gradually shifting to the dominant ones due to extensive borrowing, as their lexicons are heavily inundated by words from the dominant languages. This paper discusses lexical expansion and semantic extension in Naro (a Central Khoesan language spoken around Ghanzi area in Botswana).Through external lexical expansion, Naro has borrowed extensively from Setswana, Sekgalagadi, Afrikaans, and English and domesticated the words borrowed from these languages. It is also noted that Naro has enriched its vocabulary through semantic narrowing, semantic expansion and semantic shift. In general, the data shows that borrowing constitutes 70% of the lexical resources of the language, while compounding and semantic expansion constitute 19% and 11% respectively. Furthermore, it shows that borrowing in Naro is very prominent in domestic and technology domains.

Key words: Lexical expansion; Strategies; Naro

INTRODUCTION

Naro is a Khoesan language spoken around Ghanzi in the western part of Botswana. It is related to Nama and ǀGwi as well as other Central Khoesan languages. Several varieties of Naro are spoken including a variety called Ts'ao, a variety some call Big Naro, a variety called Goo and a variety that has some Nama words mixed in (Anderson & Janson, 1997, p.130). Around 1890, the Ghanzi farm block was created and the Naro had to share their land with many white farmers. In many cases they lived partly as workers on farms and partly as hunters and gatherers. Since then many people have arrived in the area. Groups of Bakgalagadi and Batawana have arrived in the area, originally as subsistence herders and in some cases as workers on the farms. According to Visser (1998), there are close to six thousand Naro speakers in Botswana.

On the other hand, Hasselbring's estimation is that there are about eight thousand Naro speakers in the Ghanzi district (Hasselbring, 1996, p.7). Whichever figure is most correct we can conclude that Naro is one of the major Khoesan groups. They may constitute 15-20% percent of the Khoesan speaking people in Botswana. The Naro have been in contact with commercial ranches for longer than any existing Kalahari people, yet they retain much of their culture, even in the interior of the ranching area.

It is probably not the case today that Naro attracts new speakers from other non- Khoesan groups, but among the Khoesan languages it is clear that Naro is one of the stronger languages. To some extent, Naro is used as a lingua franca among other Khoesan speakers in the Ghanzi area (Visser, 1998, p.28).

Most of the minority language speakers in Botswana are slowly shifting away from their languages in favour of the dominant languages. This situation is more evident among the Khoesan language speakers who are slowly shifting towards Setswana.

Not much research has been carried out in the area of creation of new words through a number of strategies such as borrowing, compounding and extension of meaning in Khoesan in general. It is important that we know the structure and semantic attributes of the newly adopted lexical items. Nowadays Naro is used in new domains like, literacy, administrative purposes etc. and therefore

there is need for it to expand its vocabulary to respond to the new domains of use. When people expand their lexical items, there are two strategies used; internal and external expansion. Internal expansion involves extension of meaning, derivation, compounding, blending etc., while external expansion deals with borrowing, calque and coinage. I did not come across cases of calque and coinage and blending in the data that I collected.

The aims of the paper are:

(a) To investigate the domains of language use where most loanwords go
(b) to determine the nature of semantic evolution that such borrowings go through
(c) to describe the nativization rules that the loanwords go through in order to be integrated into the phonological system of Naro.

This paper is divided into the following sections: section one gives the introduction; section two considers the loanwords and their semantics; section three considers extension of meaning and finally section four gives the conclusion.

Before dwelling into the analysis it is important to show the kind of syllable structure that Naro has.

In Naro, the following syllable structure occurs:

CVCV   ‖aba   "be angry" (Visser, 1998)

The CVCV structure is the most common syllable structure found in Naro, that is an onset which is made up of a consonantal element, which is usually a consonant (in this case it would be a normal basic consonant or a click), and a core which is composed of a syllabic element, usually a vowel and this is shown in (Figure 1) below.
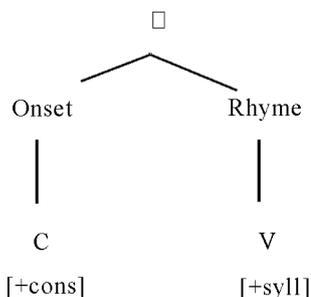

Figure 1
Syllabic Element

The following root structures are also found (Figure 2):

CVV |áò   "buffalo"
CVN |ám   "sun"
CVCV   ‖aba   "be hungry"
CVVCV   g|oaba   "spider"
NCV   nda   "where"
NCVCV   n-lámá   "when" (Visser, 1998)

Figure 2
Root Structure

According to Visser it looks like Naro has a basic set of egressive consonants produced with the pulmonic airstream. On top of that, there are several ejectives made with the glottalic airstream mechanism, as well as ingressive consonants, "clicks"- a common feature in Khoesan languages. The distinctive consonants can occur in different positions in the root: those, which are found in initial positions, and those, which are found as C2 in the CVCV, root structure (Visser, 1998).

1. THE ADAPTATION OF FOREIGN WORDS IN NARO

With the help of the informants; Maria Camm and Coex ˀae seventy-one words were collected and were all categorized into their new semantic fields. From the examples, it is observed that these borrowings cover a wide range of items from different semantic fields, most of which are foreign objects which originally did not belong to the culture of the Khoesan people. Naro has borrowed extensively from Afrikaans, English, Setswana and Sekgalagadi and the foreign elements have been adapted to fit into the framework of Naro. The domestic category constitutes 59% followed by the technology domain with 23%, the society domain with 10% and lastly the religion domain with 8%.

It appears that Naro is a more cultural language and as such there is not much of new technology. Naro borrowed more from Setswana and not Sekgalagadi mainly because many of the Naro people work in Batswana farms. It has also borrowed extensively from Afrikaans because most of the Naro people live in enclosed areas around Afrikaaner speaking people and work for them as well. As mentioned ealier, Naro adopted words of foreign origin mainly from English and Afrikaans. The other sources however have not made as much impact as English and Afrikaans whose proportion in domains such as domestic and technology is quite high. Where the adopted words had consonant clusters, particularly those which were not permissible in the onset structure, some phonological processes had to take place to adapt these words to the Naro syllable structure.

1.1 Nativization of Consonant Clusters

Many Bantu languages have used various strategies or rules in adapting foreign consonant or vowel clusters to their languages. It is assumed that the same rule holds for Khoesan languages. The most common nativization processes in Naro are; vowel deletion, vowel addition and extra syllabic consonant truncation. The section below will consider some of the rules and try to show how Naro has exploited them.

1.2 Vowel Deletion

This is a process in which a phoneme is eliminated from the word structure. In some languages, deletion may involve both consonants and vowels. The process in which a vowel is deleted following another vowel is known as elision. Where the deletion or loss of a phoneme

or phonemes occurs at the end of a word, the process is known as apocope. On the other hand, the deletion or loss of a phoneme at the beginning or in the middle of the word is known as syncope. This is shown by the examples below:

(a) setilo (Setswana) >stilò < (Naro)   "chair

(b) sepikiri (Setswana) >spekiri (Naro)> (Afrikaans) "nail"

(c) borkhoe (Afrikaans) > borkhoe (Naro) trousers'

(d) kerese (Setswana) >keres   (Naro)   "candle"

(e) samp(English) > setampa(Setswana) > stampa (Naro)

The conclusion here would be that Naro is more tolerant to consonant clusters than a Bantu language like Setswana, eg. Setswana "setilo" and Naro "stilo".

1.3 Vowel Insertion

In this process a vowel is inserted between clusters or in final consonants so as to maintain the CVCV canonical form e.g

(a) fork (English) > foroko (Setswana) > foroko (Naro)

(b) bed (English) > bete (Setswana) > bete (Naro)

(c) fork (English) > foroko (Setswana) > foroko (Naro)

(d) bed (English) > bete (Setswana) > bete (Naro)

(e) pencil (English) > pensele (Setswana) > pensile (Naro)

(f) clock (English) > kloko (Naro)

(g) glass (English) > glase (Naro)

1.4 Extrasyllabic consonant truncation

This is a process whereby one of the consonants in the consonant cluster is deleted so as to allow a CVCV syllable structure e.g.

table (English) > tafole (Setswana) > tafole (Naro),

rubber (English) > raba (Setswana) > raba (Naro).

In the two examples, the "b" is truncated.

post (English) > posa (Setswana) >posa (Naro)

In the above example the "t" is truncated.

number (English)>nomoro (Setswana) > nomoro(Naro)

In "number", the "b" is truncated.

chalk (English) > choko (Setswana) > choko (Naro)

In "chalk", the   "l" is truncated.

1.5 Tolerated Clusters

A closer look at the data revealed that only certain consonant combinations have been tolerated, namely;

(a) Clusters in which nasals precede a voiceless obstruent

(b) Clusters involving the liquids /1/ and /r/

(c) Clusters involving the fricative /s/

. These cases are illustrated in (9) below;

senke	"zink"
banka	"bank"
kámpè	"camp"
lampi	"light"
benchi	"bench"

Figure 3
Clusters in Which Nasals Precede a Voiceless Obstruent

fridaga	"friday"
troko	"truck"
praisi	"price"
klasi	"class"
mokreste	"christian"
fluti	"flute"
gredi	"grade"

Figure 4
Clusters Involving the Liquids /1/ and /r/

stilò	"chair"
spekiri	"nail"
spili	"mirror"
starta	"starter"
skéré	"scissor"

Figure 5
Clusters Involving the Fricative /s/

As mentioned in Batibo (1996, p.35), the main reason for the tolerance of the consonant clusters in (Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5) is that such clusters correspond to the most unmarked onset clusters according to the implicational universals (Greenberg, 1996; Cairns, 1968). According to this Universal Principle, the most unmarked margin cores are the stop consonants and the most unmarked pre-margins are the nasals and the voiceless fricative /s/. The most unmarked adjunct segments are the sonorant consonants especially glides and liquids. Hence the clusters that are likely to be tolerated in languages are those that correspond to the universally unmarked segment clusters. Most of the tolerated consonant clusters in Naro, namely the fricatives, the nasals and the liquids fall within this category.

Following the adoption of the new loan words in Naro, the three position consonant sequence in the onset namely, pre-margin, core margin and adjunct have been reinforced due to the tolerance of some of the sequences. In the new Naro onset structure, the pre-margin comprises either nasals or voiceless fricatives, while the margin core consists mainly of obstruents. On the other hand, the adjunct is made up of sonorants namely, liquids. The new structure is shown in (Figure 6) below.
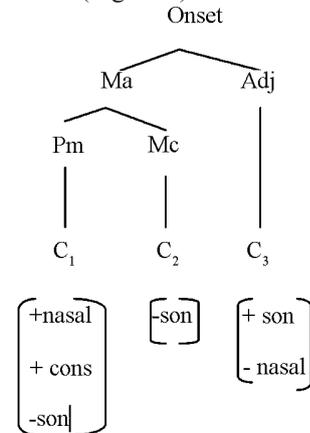

Figure 6
New Naro Syllable Structure
Note. adopted from Batibo, 1996, p.19

There are however, certain restrictions in which the consonants may combine in an onset cluster. For example, the nasals may only combine in a homorganic relationship, while the voiceless fricatives can only precede voiceless plosives as indicated in examples in (Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5). The consonants in the margin core can never be followed by /w/ or /y/ in Naro. Usually consonants from the same category cannot follow each other in the same onset structure in Naro. In languages like Setswana and Kiswahili, we do find exceptional cases in the adjunct category as in; *firwa* (Kiswahili) "be sodomized' and *hirwa* (Setswana) "be employed'. The two examples in Setswana and Swahili show that indeed the liquid and the glide can follow each other in these languages although they are from the same category.

2. EXTENSION OF MEANING

One of the ways adopted by Naro to expand its vocabulary is through extension of meaning. Extension of meaning can take place in two ways. One way is when a meaning changes and becomes another meaning and this can take place in three different ways, namely; semantic narrowing, semantic expansion and semantic shift. Semantic narrowing is when a word which used to refer to something broad now refers to a specific thing; eg. *hound →dog→ a specific dog*. Hound was a general name for dog in old English and now it means a specific type of dog. On the other hand, semantic shift is when a word refers to something that is totally different from what it used to refer to, for an example; *leuba* "*sun*" *→drought*. This example states that "*leuba*" used to mean "*sun*' and now the meaning has shifted to "*drought*". Lastly semantic expansion is when a lexical item which used to refer to something specific refers to something general or broad. Many languages have a tendency of generalizing a tradename in a number of new vocabularies to use it as a general term to refer to a particular item as in; *"klenex"* which used to be a tradename and now it refers to tissues. Other examples include "*Xerox*" which now means photocopying. The second way is when a word has two or more closely related meanings and this is semantic extension. The difference between semantic expansion and semantic extension is that semantic expansion is more historical and one meaning is lost in favour of another as in the example of *sekausu* "condom" because the original meaning was "rubber". On the other hand, semantic extension is when a lexical item has two or more meanings as in *cám* in Naro which can either mean sun, day or thirsty. The data shows that Naro has expanded its vocabulary through semantic extension. The data that was collected does not show examples of semantic narrowing and semantic shift.

The data below gives examples of words which have two or more closely related meanings. In most of the examples it is not easy to tell whether the word refers to two separate words which are written in the same way but pronounced differently and have different meanings (homonymy) or a word which has two or more closely related meanings (polysemy). It is a well known problem in semantics to tell the difference between homonyms and polysemous words especially if one does not know the origins of the words. These cases are shown in (Figure 7) below;

ám′ >	sun
	day
	thirsty
òo	forehead (n)
	end (v)
dào	day (warm period) (n)
	burn (v)
hìi	tree (n)
	stick (n)

Figure 7
Semantic Extension

The above examples clearly show that verbs are derived from nouns and the other way round. If one takes the example of natural object like "a stone" and "to stone", one may argue that the object stone existed before the verb "to stone" could be coined. There is no clear reason in the case of abstract concepts why the noun should be the original form from which the verb derives. However, the data shows a few cases whereby adjectives are also derived from nouns.

óm′	problem (n)
	heavy, difficult (adjective)
ám	depth (n)
	deep (adj)
ão	pain (n)
	healthy (adj)

CONCLUSION

In its quest to respond tosocio-economic use of language, Naro has expanded its lexical repertoire mainly by borrowing extensively from other languages which it has been in contact with for a long time. Borrowing constitutes about 70%. Most of the borrowed words fall within the domestic field. Compounding accounts for 19% whereas semantic extension constitutes 11%. There is not much extension of meaning in Naro and this shows that its internal structure has not been affected. The data on extension of meaning clearly shows that there are new grammatical categories; i.e verbs and adjectives are derived from nouns. Another point of theoretical interest from this study is that of homonymy and polysemy. It is very difficult to tell the difference between the two unless one knows the origins of the words. It was very difficult to tell whether the word was a homonymy or polysemy since the researcher does not know the origins of most of the

words. From the data it is clear that Naro prefers external expansion. The data clearly shows that Naro has become very tolerant to cluster occurrences.

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