

The Formation of Borrowed Lexis in Malaysian Chinese Newspaper

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Abstract

The usage of borrowed lexis in Chinese language has existed ever since the Qin Dynasty in China. These borrowed lexis experience change over time. The aim of this descriptive research is to examine the various forms of borrowed lexis that are used in Chinese newspaper in Malaysia. The data for this study came from newspaper articles in the field of economics and was downloaded in the electronic version of the articles from one of Malaysia's Chinese newspaper, that is, *Sinchew Daily*. One hundred most frequent and 50 least frequent used loan words are identified from this corpus data. The ways of formation of these loan words are analysed in detail. This research also focuses on the patterns of formation. From the findings of this research, it was found that borrowed lexis in the research data are formed through the borrowing of sound, shape, and meaning. Lexis formed through the process of borrowing sound is the most productive form of borrowed lexis found in this research with the percentage as high as 69.99 percent, whereas lexis formed through borrowing shape shows a great difference when compare to lexis formed through borrowing sound with 27.33 percent and followed by lexis formed through borrowing meaning with only 2.67 percent. In conclusion, the borrowed lexis found in this research were mainly formed through the process of borrowed sound.

Keywords: lexis, corpus, morphology, semantic, ideographic language

Introduction

“词汇是语言中最活跃、最容易变化的成分” (Hé, 2003). This means lexis is an element of a language which is most active and easiest to change into a new content form or format. This happens because lexis is used to describe the changes of socioeconomics and politics, the influences on politics thought, the changes of lives and the development of technological culture of those particular language users. Changes and development causes the formation of more new lexis to fulfill the need of language users. New lexis is formed through the process of borrowing intra-lingual and inter-lingual creatively and productively, while there is language contact. Borrowing is the process where new words are formed in the target language through taking in lexis from the source language.

Objective

There are a lot of different ways of word formation for different languages in this world. Is the process of formation of loan words of ideographic languages, like Chinese, the same as phonographic languages? In this study, the researcher would like to know the ways of formation

of Chinese loan words which are inter-lingually borrowed. This study also identifies the patterns of ways of formation of Chinese loan words in the corpus data.

Previous Studies

Lexical borrowing occurs in the formation of simple words, compound words and phrases (Weinreich, 1970). Borrowing of simple words involves substitution of phonemes from one language into another, while borrowing of compound words and phrases involves the substitution of compound elements which suit the syntax of the receiving language.

Borrowed lexis are lexis which are “born” in the family of Chinese language (Hú, 1988). These lexis are limited by the phonological, semantics and syntax rules of Chinese language but with the characteristics of foreign language. According to Hú, there are four ways of forming borrowed lexis in Chinese language.

Pure Sound Translation is a process of using Chinese language elements to translate the sound from borrowed language to Chinese language. The borrowed lexis which are formed consist of one, two or many syllables. Translation of Sound and Meaning does not only borrow the sound of the borrowed lexis. In addition, Chinese language elements are being used to describe the meaning of the borrowed lexis. While Borrowing of Partial Sound and Partial Meaning only borrow a part of the sound of the borrowed lexis and added a part of the translation of meaning. The translation of meaning is either at the front part or the end part of the borrowed lexis which is made of more than one syllable. Borrowing Sound with the elements of Ideograph is the process which not only borrows the sound of the borrowed lexis totally, but also uses ideographic elements to describe the meaning. Radicals are used as the meaning description.

Hú is the researcher who mainly focuses on the Chinese borrowed lexis which is formed through the borrowing of sound. According to Shǐ (2000), the Chinese borrowed lexis are not only formed by borrowing of sound. There are some formed by borrowing of form. This lexis only borrow the form of the borrowed lexis but is pronounced according to the pronunciation rule of Chinese language. Some of the new pronunciations have the similarity of the borrowed language but some do not.

Xǔ (2005) added two new processes which are Loan Translation and Semantic Translation. Loan Translation is used when importing new concept from borrowed language. Borrowed lexis is formed by translating the meaning of the concept of the meaning of borrowed

words by using the form of Chinese language. Semantic Translation, on the other hand, uses the existing lexis in Chinese language to describe the meaning of the borrowed lexis. This causes the expansion of meaning in the existing lexis.

Methodology

This morphological inter-lingual borrowed to Chinese language descriptive study was based on corpus data to analyze the ways of formation of borrowed lexis in Malaysian context. The description of study was made in the form of quantitative and qualitative.

Data Corpus

This study identifies the usage of Chinese language borrowed lexis in the local electronic newspaper. The data corpus was made up of articles from one of the most read newspapers, that is, *Sin Chew Daily*. The data corpus consisted of 361 articles and 21,645 words in total. The downloaded articles were about the information of economy and business in Malaysia which included the perspective of companies which had transactions in Malaysian stock market, policies or progress and projects announced by government like the National Bank, and the chief executive officers of local and foreign private companies. This comprised the information of business and whatever related to transactions and currencies.

Data Analysis

The outcome of the analyzed data is divided into two parts: the frequency of usage and the ways of formation of borrowed lexis. Since it is quite big in number, and the majority of these borrowed lexis have the frequency of usage not more than ten times, therefore, only 150 borrowed words are analyzed for the ways of formation in detail. They are 150 of the most frequently used and the least frequently used borrowed lexis found in this data corpus respectively.

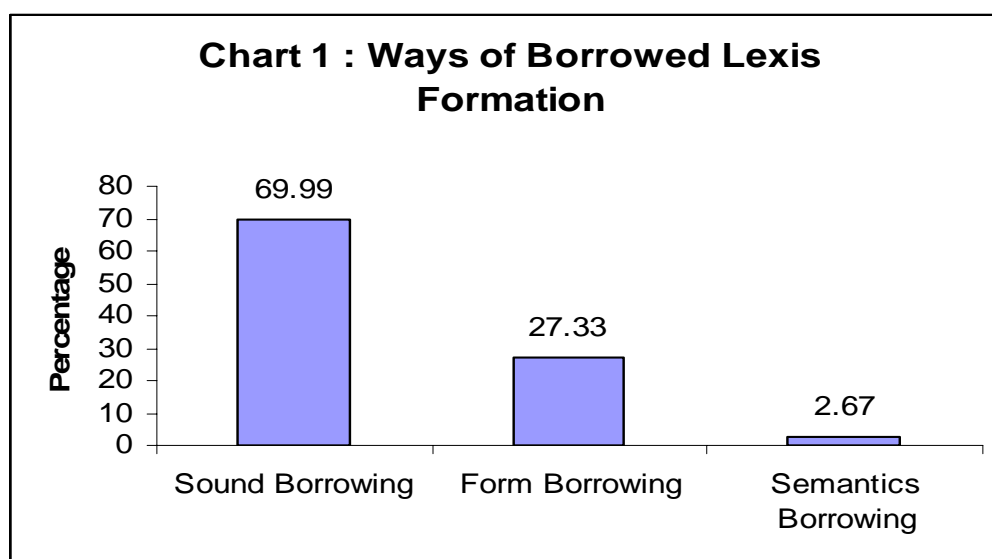
The reason for choosing the most frequent and the least frequent borrowed lexis is to examine the feature of the ways of formation more comprehensively. The ways of formation are analyzed and the percentage of each way is counted to identify which is the most productive. The pattern of formation is analyzed based on phonology, morpheme and also semantics.

Data and Findings

The findings are divided into two parts: the ways of formation and the features of formation.

Ways of Formation

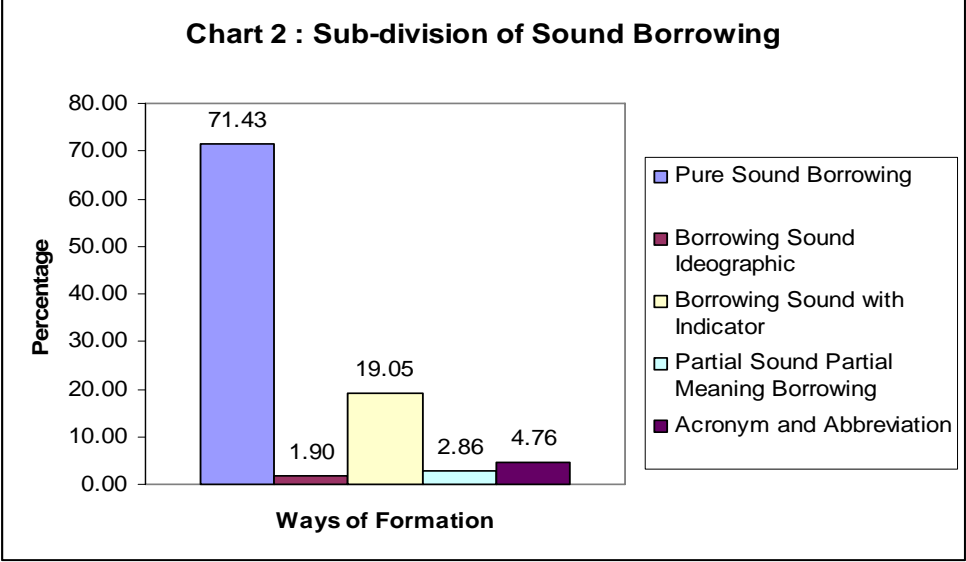
The ways of formation of borrowed lexis are divided into three main groups, that is, through the borrowing of sound, form and meaning.



Most of the borrowed lexis in the corpus data were formed through the process of Sound Borrowing, with about seventy 70 percent of the lexis. The Borrowed lexis formed through the Sound Borrowing process had quite a great difference in percentage compared to Form Borrowing which was about 27 percent, while Semantics Borrowing was the least, i.e., less than three percent. This showed that Sound Borrowing played the most important role and most productive in forming the loan lexis in this study. About two-thirds of the borrowed lexis was formed by using this process. The Sound Borrowing is sub-divided into five smaller groups, while Form Borrowing is sub-divided into two and Semantics Borrowing has no sub-division.

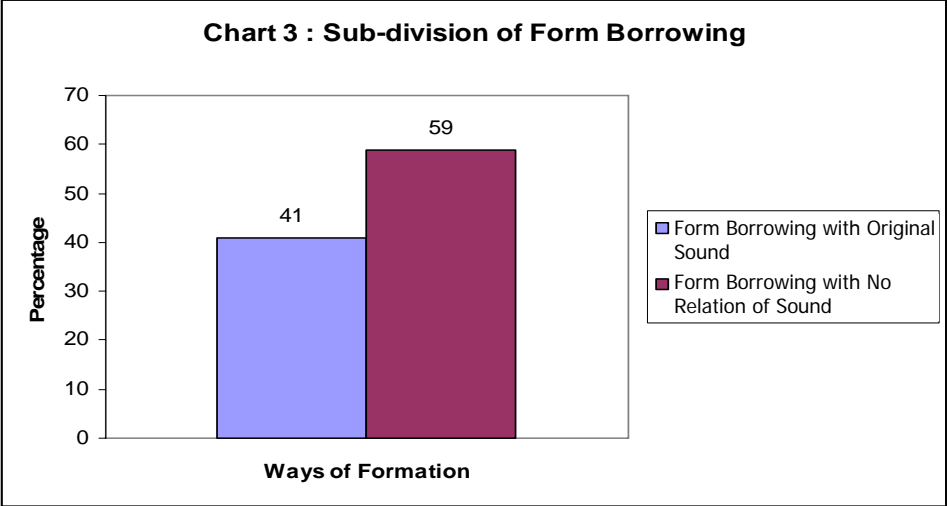
Sound Borrowing

Most lexis in this corpus data were formed by Pure Sound Borrowing, Ideographic Sound Borrowing, Sound Borrowing with Indicator, Partial Sound Partial Meaning Borrowing, and Acronym and Abbreviation.



The Pure Sound Borrowing was the most productive way because half of the borrowed lexis in this corpus data were formed in this manner. This is followed by the Borrowing Sound with Indicator which covered about 20 percent of the total Sound Borrowing lexis, whereas the other three processes formed no more than 10 percent of the total Sound Borrowing lexis.

Form Borrowing



Form Borrowing was the second important process of borrowed lexis formation in this study. It can be sub-divided into two ways: Form borrowing with original sound and Form borrowing with no relation of sound. It is different from Sound Borrowing where the sub-division has formed similar amount of borrowed lexis by both processes. It is found that both are equally important.

Semantics Borrowing

This is the least important and least productive process of borrowed lexis formation, where only four words were formed in total.

Features of Formation

The borrowed lexis which were formed through the process of Sound Borrowing, Form Borrowing and Semantics Borrowing had the following features of formation.

Sound Borrowing

As mentioned before, the Sound Borrowing is sub-divided into five groups. Pure Sound Borrowing forms borrowed lexis through translating the original borrowed sound into Chinese language. These lexis do not match the characteristics of Chinese language because the lexis are formed by using the elements in the form of phonographic, but they are meaningless. This does not match the main characteristics of Chinese language which is ideographic.

One of the borrowed lexis formed by this process is “金 伍 大” (jīn wù dà), formed by using the Chinese language elements “金” which means ‘gold’; “伍” with the meaning of ‘affair’; and “大” meaning ‘big’. Therefore, the literal meaning of this borrowed lexis is ‘big gold affair.’ The borrowed lexis in the real context is borrowed from the Malay language which is a construction company *Gamuda*. Therefore, the borrowed lexis which is formed by Pure Sound Borrowing can not reflect the actual meaning literally.

Besides that, borrowed lexis which are formed by Pure Sound Borrowing have two patterns of formation, which are substitution of the sounds [sa], [sau] and [ser] with [sha] and the usage of phoneme [l] to substitute phoneme [r]. This is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Pattern of Pure Sound Borrowing

No.	Patterns	Borrowed Lexis	Borrowed from
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	“国 ”	国	Deutschland
2.	Use of indicators “国 ” and “国 ”	国 国	Asia Negeri Sembilan
3.	Use of indicator “国 ”	国 国 国	America Dollar Brunei Dollar
4.	Use of indicators “国 ”, “国 ”, “国 ”, “国 ”	国 国 国 国 国	Bloomberg metric tonnes Northern Malaysia Malaysian currency

There are a few different indicators used when forming the borrowed lexis in this study. Indicator “国 ” in Chinese language means ‘country’. It is used after the name of the country for the borrowed lexis, which is related to country. Normally, for the part of the name of the country, it is represented by the initial or part of the name. For example, 国 is the part of America which is translated to 国 国 国 where 国 is added with such indicator to form the borrowed lexis which refers to the country, the United States of America. For the borrowed lexis 国 , 国 is the initial of the borrowed lexis Deutschland which is translated to 国 国 and the added indicator refers to the country of Germany.

Indicator “国 ” means ‘mainland’ or ‘delta’. The way of the formation of the borrowed lexis, 国 refers to Asia, which is translated to 国 国 and the initial is added to the indicator which means ‘the mainland of Asia.’ The case of *Negeri Sembilan*, however, is different. “国 ” does not mean ‘mainland’ or ‘archipelago.’ It refers to part of a country where *Negeri Sembilan* is only a part or a state of Malaysia. The initial of the borrowing sound *Sembilan* 国 国 is added to the indicator.

“国 ” is the indicator of Dollar which is the unit of currency. The initial sound of the borrowed name of the country is added to the indicator to refer to the unit of the currency of that particular country. 国 is formed by using the initial of the country and added with the indicator to refer to US Dollar. But this is different with *Brunei Darul Salam* 国 , where the full sound borrowing of the country is taken and added to the indicator and formed 国 , referring to Brunei Dollar.

Different indicators are used by the Chinese language users for different purpose.

Bloomberg is an organization which is related to economy in the United States of America.

Therefore, 党, which means 'organization' or 'party,' is used. For the purpose of differentiating the system of certain unit of measurement, the indicator 公 is used for metric system of measurement. Tonnes, 吨 is the measurement unit introduced by British, where 英 is used to differentiate the new system from the older system. 北 which means 'north,' is used to indicate the direction or portion of the particular part. This indicator is used in the front part of the initial of Malaysia 北 is to indicate the northern part of Malaysia or the states located at the northern part of Malaysia. 币 in the borrowed lexis 币 refers to the currency of Malaysia. It is different from 元 as mentioned before, because the dollar or *Ringgit* of Malaysia is not 元, but 币. '币元' refers to 元 and 币 *cent*.

Partial Sound Partial Meaning Borrowing formed eight borrowed lexis in this study. The patterns of formation are as below:

Table 3: Patterns of Partial Sound Partial Meaning Borrowing

No.	Patterns	Borrowed Lexis	Borrowed from
1.	sound borrowing + meaning borrowing	Wall Street	Wall Street
2.	meaning borrowing + sound borrowing	Mighty Malaysia	Mighty Malaysia
3.	borrowed lexis with alphabet	DIGI Net	DIGI Net

The borrowed lexis formation process of sound borrowing + meaning borrowing has the feature of sound borrowing at the front part and the semantics borrowing is at the rear part, where 'Wall Street' is the sound borrowing of 'Wall' and 'Street' is the semantics borrowing of 'Street.'

The process of meaning borrowing + sound borrowing is the opposite of the previous process. 'Mighty Malaysia' is borrowed from Mighty Malaysia which was formed in the year 1961. 'Mighty' means 'very great in power,' is borrowed through semantic borrowing and 'Malaysia' is the initial of the sound borrowing of 'Malaysia.'

'DIGI Net' which is borrowed from DIGI net is an example of the new trend of formation of borrowed lexis where the sound and form of DIGI is totally borrowed from the source language to Chinese language and is then added with the existing element in Chinese language, 'Net', which means 'net.'

Acronym and Abbreviation had formed five borrowed lexis in this study. The borrowed lexis is not simply through the borrowing of sound or semantics borrowing. The following table shows the patterns of the borrowed lexis formation of Acronym and Abbreviation.

Table 4: Patterns of Acronym and Abbreviation

No.	Pattern	Borrowed Lexis	Borrowed from
1.	pure acronym	Singapore Airlines Malaysia Airlines Malaysia Stock Market	Singapore Airlines Malaysia Airlines Malaysia Stock Market
2.	pure abbreviation	Indonesia	Indonesia
3.	acronym + abbreviation	Olympic Game	Olympic Game

Pure acronym borrowing only involves the process of acronym, using the initial sound borrowing of the name of a country or organization in front and then added to the initial meaning

of the Chinese language element. 新加坡 is formed by the initial of the sound borrowing of Singapore 新加坡 and the initial of the Chinese language element of airlines 新加坡 .

Abbreviation is different from acronym where the name of the country is borrowed through sound borrowing, and then followed by the process of abbreviation. 'Indonesia' is sound borrowed as 印度尼西亚 and later abbreviated from five syllables to two syllables as 印尼 .

Acronym + abbreviation is a more complicated process, where both processes are involved. 奥运 has gone through the process of acronym of taking the initial of the Olympic 奥运会 and added to the abbreviation of game 比赛 and becomes 奥运 .

Form Borrowing

The borrowed lexis which are formed by this process are not as many as the lexis which are formed by Sound Borrowing. The lexis which are formed by this process can only be borrowed from those languages which have the same system of writing or form with Chinese language. Since the scope of this study is inter-lingual borrowing, the dialects in China, therefore, are not taken into consideration. Among the languages in the world, Japanese language has the nearest form with Chinese language. In addition, all the borrowed lexis found in this study were borrowed from Japanese language.

The borrowed lexis formed through Form Borrowing is sub-divided into two groups. The criteria used to group the lexis are the pronunciation of the borrowed lexis compared with the original lexis in the source language. Sound Borrowing with original sound is the process where the form of the lexis in source language is borrowed exactly and the pronunciation in Chinese language is the same or near to the source language. The pronunciation of the Sound Borrowing with no relation of original sound, on the other hand, is different when compared to the source language. 寿司, which is originally pronounced as *shijou* in Japanese language, is pronounced as *shichang* in Chinese language. Similarly, while 借借 was originally pronounced as *keikaku* in Japanese language, it is pronounced as *jihua* in Chinese language.

Semantics Borrowing

This is not a productive word formation process in this study, because only four out of 150 borrowed lexis is formed by Semantics Borrowing. Two of the four borrowed lexis are related to technology, which is a new concept imported from other cultures after the invention of

computer. This is the process of describing translated new concept or meaning of the concept by using the existing elements in Chinese language.

网 , ‘networking’ is related to information technology. It does not have the outlook of a net. This new concept is borrowed by using the existing Chinese language elements 网 and 形 , where 网 means ‘net’ and 形 means ‘something that has the shape of a net.’ The usage of these two elements in Chinese language refers to the new concept clearly, that is, ‘something which interacts in multi-ways and systematically.’ But it is abstract and not a real ‘net.’

冰 岛 is the borrowed lexis which is formed to refer to the country *Iceland*. It is formed by the direct semantics translation of ‘ice’ to 冰 and since it is an island, 岛 , ‘island’ is used instead of translating the sound of the morpheme ‘land’ to 兰 . In the cases of Scotland and Holland, the morpheme ‘land’ has undergone the sound translation by using the element 兰 and has become 冰 兰 and 冰 兰 .

The process of Semantics Borrowing is very strict in choosing the existing elements in order to form the borrowed lexis to describe the new concept and thing simply and pack. The meaning which it refers to might be abstract or concrete.

Conclusion

According to Shǐ (2000), Hú (1988) and Xū (2005), the ways of the formation of borrowed lexis in Chinese language are divided into three main categories, which are Sound Borrowing, Form Borrowing and Semantics Borrowing. Sound Borrowing is the most important and most productive method used to form the borrowed lexis in this corpus data, which consisted of about 70 percent of the borrowed lexis analyzed in this study. Form Borrowing is the second important process which formed about 27 percent of the borrowed lexis, followed by Semantics Borrowing. Form Borrowing is sub-divided into two ways, both of which have the equivalent importance in forming Form Borrowing lexis.

Every process has distinguished features of forming borrowing lexis. Some have the phonological and morphological features, due to the thinking and culture of the language and society. Different phonological patterns occurred during the process of forming lexis through total translation, from the source language to the target language. Substitution of phonemes occurred because of the absence of certain phonemes in Chinese language or the habitual factor of the language and society. Most of the morphological patterns are related to the usage of

suitable indicators to describe the meaning of the borrowed lexis. Indicators are the existing elements in Chinese language. The addition of indicators to the sound of the translated elements from the source language will form a new borrowed lexis. Even though there are rules for new word formation, there are also exempt cases in formation of new lexis, such as ‘DIGI ㄷ’, which totally does not fit to the characteristics of Chinese language as an ideographic language. This has shown a new trend of the formation of new words with alphabets.

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Study of Asian Languages and Cultures in Modern Context

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Abstract

Language represents the main instrument of communication. The thoughts and aspirations of any Nation in the form of culture are stored in language and conveyed mainly through language. Hence, language and culture are inseparable. In the era of globalization and scientific technological advancements, the language and cultural boundaries between different nations are being erased and world is slowly converting into a global village. However, there is an urgent need to protect cultural diversity because cultural diversity is as important as biodiversity. The aim of this paper is to focus on the significance of study of Asian Languages and cultures in the context of growing interconnectivity and interdependence of World in general and Asia in particular, in modern times. It calls for promotion research in Asian languages and cultures with an aim to formulate commonalities and differences in order to sketch a unitary picture of cultural bondness between different Asian cultures. Such study would further strengthen economic, political, trade and cultural relations among Asian countries.

Keywords: language, cultural diversity, globalization

The scientific technological advancements in recent times have truly brought revolution in generating, preserving and communicating knowledge. The size of knowledge has grown tremendously over past two decades with expansion of new fields of knowledge practically on day-to-day basis. There is a hardly any dispute over the fact that any knowledge is expressed in language. Because it represents a universal form and means of human communication, scientific theoretical and artistic thought. In the newly emerging knowledge-based society, there is a demand and need for better understanding of knowledge itself. One of the strategic challenges faced by the scientists is to redefine and reanalyze the current qualitatively new stage in overall human social progress which is based on higher economic growth, unbelievable penetration of science and technology in daily life. In the time of such rapid change, a major challenge for linguists to ascertain the crucial role of language and language science in building knowledge societies and identify the new trends within language structure and its function. Therefore, the vision and mission of language scientists need to be clearly reoriented towards framing broader goals and perspectives suitable to the needs and demands of society in order to protect and develop plurality of languages and cultures in the context of globalization.