

Zero Semantic Extension of the Persian Origin Words in the Contemporary Bosnian Language

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Abstract:

The Bosnian language lexis is characterised by a number of words of eastern origin, i.e. the words from Turkish, Arabic or Persian have a prominent place. The Bosnian language vocabulary contains a number of the Persian origin words that were introduced to the Bosnian language mainly through Turkish language as an intermediary language during the Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Comparison of the Persian words meaning in Bosnian language resulted in a conclusion that a number of Persian words experienced zero semantic extension. The Persian Origin Words that experienced zero semantic extension in Bosnian language are mostly related to expressions limited to narrow specialized areas that we thematically grouped in: flowers, fruits, vegetables, herbs; dishes, furniture and different objects; buildings, rooms, different places; apparel, cloths, and jewelry; colors, metals, minerals and chemical elements; food, drinks and spices; religious and sufi expressions; occupations; music instruments and animals.

Keywords: Persian origin words, zero semantic extension, thematic areas

1. Introduction

The Bosnian language vocabulary contains a number of the Persian origin words that were introduced to the Bosnian language mainly through Turkish language as an intermediary language during the Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovinaⁱ. However, in the process of transition from the Persian to Bosnian language these words experienced a number of changes at the phonological, morphological and semantic level.

Whith regard to the semantic adaptations it can be noticed that in Persian loan-words after they have been integrated to the Bosnian language, *restriction of meaning*, *expansion of meaning* as well as *semantic incompatibility* between the model and replicaⁱⁱ. But, comparison of the Persian words meaning in Bosnian language resulted in a conclusion that a number of Persian words experienced *zero semantic extension*. This means that after a Persian loan-word has been integrated in the recipient language system, i.e., Bosnian language, its meaning remained unchanged and corresponds with the original language.

Following the analysis that we conducted in our language corpusⁱⁱⁱ we classified all words of Persian origin that experienced *zero semantic extension* into specific thematic areas that contain majority of words.

2. Thematic areas

2.1. Flowers, fruits, vegetables and herbs

Thematic area *flowers, fruits, vegetables and herbs* contains the most units and we will classify it into four subgroups:

1. Flowers: *jasmin*/ 'jasmine'; *jorgovan*/ 'lilac'; *lala*/ 'tulip'; *nergić*/ 'daisy'; *nesrin*/ 'narcissus'; *sumbul* (*zumbul*)/ 'hyacinth'; *šeboj*/ 'Aegean wallflower'. This group contains words that we refer to it as regionally or stilistically marked such as: *đul*/ 'rose'; *melekša* (*menekša*)/ 'violet'; *menevša*/ 'violet'.
2. Fruits: *dud*/ 'mulberry'; *hurma*/ 'date'; *limun*/ 'lemon'; *nar*/ 'pomegranate'; *narandža* (*naranča*)/ 'orange'. Here we also have regionally and stilistically marked words such as: *rezakije* (*rezaćije*)/ 'rasins', *rezakija*/ 'type of grapes that grows in Herzegovina'; *šeftelija*/ 'peach'. In this group there are some archaic words such as: *armut*/ 'pear', *dževiz* (*dževiz-nut*)/ 'cashew', *indžir*/ 'anjeer', *miva* (*mivka*)/ 'fruit', *turundža*/ 'orange'.
3. Vegetable: *patlidžan*/ 'eggplant'; *spanać* (*špinat*)/ 'spinach'.
4. Herbs: *nohut*/ 'chickpea', *pamuk*/ 'cotton', *pirinač*/ 'rice', *šimšir*/ 'box plant', *zendžefil*/ 'ginger and archaic names as: *bendžija*/ 'Cannabis sativa', *fustuk*/ 'pistachio'; *selvija* (*sevlija*)/ 'Mediterranean cypress'.

2.2. Dishes, furniture, and different objects

Second thematic area characterized by frequency of its units is: *dishes, furniture, and different objects*, such as: *čilim*, *halija*, *ziliya* (all three words denote carpet); *erende*/ 'grater', *fildžan* (*findžan*)/ 'cup', *merdevine*/ 'stairs', *sepet*/ 'basket', *testera*/ 'hand-saw', *kibletnama*/ 'Kibla compass'. This group is characterized by presence of some archaic words such as: *ajna*/ 'mirror'; *armagan*/ 'present, gift'; *buhurdanluk* (*buhurdar*)/ 'censer incense or perfume burner'; *fagfurijal*/ 'China porcelain', something made of China porcelain; *nalpora*/ 'a piece of horse shoes'; *nešter*/ 'a sharp surgeon and barbers knife'; *šemidan* (*šamidan*)/ 'candle holder'; *salnama*/ 'almanach'; *sindžir*/ 'chains, hardware'; *tabirnama*/ 'dream interpretation book'; *tebriknama*/ 'greeting card'; *tufek*/ 'gun'. Words *muhur*/ 'seal', *peškeš* (*pešćeš*)/ 'gift', *tahta*/ 'board' are expressive in spoken language.

2.3. Buildings, rooms and different places

The third thematic area is *buildings, rooms and different places* such as: *ambar* (*hambar*)/ 'warehouse'; *bazar*/ 'Market place'; *derdap*/ 'whirlpool'; *kafana* (*kahvana*)/ 'coffee-house'. Interestingly this thematic area contains most of archaic words such as: *đumrukhana*/ 'custom'; *hapsana*/ 'jail'; *kiraethana*/ 'reading room'; *kutubhana*/ 'library'; *muvekihana*/ 'observatory'; *tabakhana* (*tabhana*)/ 'tannery'; *tefterhana* (*defterhana*)/ 'accounting office'; *telegrafhana*/ 'post office'; *dembelhana*/ 'a place where lazy people gather'; *dera*/ 'a valley between two hills, brook'; *dershana*/ 'class room'; *kabristan*/ 'cemetery' and historisms *menzilhana*/ 'post station – a place where horses for postman were kept on standby' and *serhat*/ 'border area'. In addition, there are number of words whose main feature is

expressivity, such as: *đulistan/* 'rosary'; *mezaristan/* 'cemetery'; *musafirhana/* 'hostel', *zindan/* 'jail, dungeon'; *viranija/* 'destroyed house'.

2.4. Apparel, cloth and jewelry

The fourth thematic area is: *apparel, cloth and jewelry*, which we will classify in three subgroups:

1. Apparel: *čador/* 'chador', *čarapa/* 'sock', *šal/* 'scarf' and words that are used in ethnological context and they denote type of a hat and they are: *arakčin, čelepoš, taća*.

2. Material and cloths: *čadorbez (čador-bez)/* 'linen', *diba, hara, ibrišim/* 'types of silk'.

3. Jewelry: *bazument/* 'amulet', *čehlibar (čilibar)/* 'amber', *dževahir/* 'jewel', *menduša (minduša)/* 'earring', *piroze/* 'turquoise'.

2.5. Colours

The fifth thematic area is: colours, such as: *al/* 'light-red' and a color *azur/* 'sky-blue' is emphasized with its expressivity. Also, we can notice a number of words that denote colors that are archaic such as: *jorgovani/* 'the color of lilac'; *lal/* 'the color of rubi'; *ružičast/* 'pink'; *limuni/* 'the color of lemon'; *pirozi/* 'the color of turquoise'; *sijah/* 'black color'; *singav/* 'grey color'; *višnjevi/* 'the color of chery'.

2.6. Metals, minerals and chemical elements

The sixth thematic area is: *metals, minerals and chemical elements* such as: *bor/* 'boron'; *boraks/* 'borax'; *kreč/* 'lime' and *nafta/* 'oil'. This thematic group is featured by a number of archaic lexeme such as: *čezap (čezab)/* 'nitrit acid', *čil/* 'clay'; *ćukurt (ćurkut)/* 'sulphur'; *đuverčila/* 'potassium nitrate'; *pirinč (pirindž)/* 'yellow bronze'; *tutija/* 'zinc'.

2.7. Food, drinks and spices

The seventh thematic area is *food, drinks and spices* includes meals: *arpaš/* 'barley meal', *červiš/* 'melted meat fat', *čorba/* 'soupe', *đunlač/* 'a type of sweets made of pastry with cream with almonds and walnuts', *nišesta (nišeste)/* 'cornstarch', *reclj (redžel)/* 'jam', then drink *boza/* 'boza'; *spicessirće/* 'vinegard'; *šećer/* 'sugar' and *tarčin /* 'cinnamon'.

2.8. Religious and Sufi expressions

The eighth thematic area is *religious and Sufi expressions* which take very important place in the Bosnian language vocabulary primarily because these expressions are most often irreplaceable, so they are presented today in both spoken and standard language. These are the following lexema *abdesthana/* 'place for taking ablution'; *abuzemze (abu-zemze)/* 'water from

well Zemze close to Kabba in Mekka'; *binamaz/* 'a Muslim who doesn't perform salat on regular basis'; *derviš/* 'dervish'; *din/* religion; *đunah/* 'sin'; *hanikah/* 'tekke' with boarding school for darvish' and *mevlevihana/* 'Mevlevi order tekke'.

2.9. Occupations

The ninth thematic area occupations can be divided into two subgroups:

1. Occupations that include the following words: *baštovan/* 'gardner'; *dadilja/* 'nanny' and *historismshaznadar/* 'safe keeper'; *muhurdar/* 'stamp keeper'; *tefterdar (defterdar)/* 'highly positioned finance officer' and it has archaic meaning 'accountant, finance officer'. In addition there are other archaic words such as: *kešiš/* 'monk, monarch'; *suvarija/* cavalier, *pejik (peik)/* 'messenger'; *tahsildar/* 'tax officer' and *lala/* 'courtier, educator'. Word *hizmećar/* 'servant' is featured with expressivity.

2. Craftsmen: *bazarđan (bazerđan, bazrđan)/* 'trader, seller in a fair'; *nalbant (a) (nalbantin)/* 'horse blacksmith'; *zeger/* 'jeweller'. All three words are archaic, thus they are not frequent in contemporary Bosnian Language however a word *bazarđan/* 'trader' occurs in some well-known *Sevdalinka*.

2.10. Music instruments

The tenth thematic area *music instruments* such as: *naj/* 'nay', *saz/* '[saz] string instrument', *tambura/* 'tambouritza', *zurna/* 'surnay'. Presence of these music instruments in this area witnesses cultural influence of the East to these areas.

2.11. Animal

The eleventh thematic area *animals* includes the following words: *samur/* 'sable'; *šakal/* 'jackal' and archaic word *čagalj/* 'jackal' and *lejlek/* 'stork'.

3. Conclusion

Based on the above we may conclude that the Persian Origin Words which experienced *zero semantic extension* in Bosnian language are mostly related to expressions limited to narrow specialized areas that we thematically grouped in: flowers, fruits, vegetables, herbs; dishes, furniture and different objects; buildings, rooms, different places; apparel, cloths, and jewelry; colors, metals, minerals and chemical elements; food, drinks and spices; religious and sufi expressions; occupations; music instruments and animals^{iv}.

Many of the words listed above were introduced to the Bosnian language together with the newly-introduced lifestyle, which is the reason why it was common to borrow the word together with its original, source language meaning. Its meaning is kept as long as such condition exists and then it is lost either after the word is lost or it is kept as a feature of

certain time (Baotić 2007: 11).

In addition, we notice that the majority of thematic areas contain a number of expressions that are irreplaceable or are very difficult to replace. Thus, there is no replacement with corresponding lexic-semantic equivalent in Bosnian language. These words are present in everyday use and as stated by Bugarski: „they are the most regular, standard words and in their absence we would hardly discuss the everyday issues. How could we sleep without *bed sheets*/ 'čaršaf', *pillow*/ 'jastuk' and *comforters*/ 'jorgan', or wash our face without *soap*/ 'sapun' and *towels*/ 'peškir'? What would we wear if not *socks*/ 'čarape' and *slippers*/ 'papuče' or *sandals*/ 'sandale', maybe *boots*/ 'čizme' with thick *sole*/ 'đon'? How would we drink *jogurt*/ 'jogurt', *tea*/ 'čaj' with *lemon*/ 'limun' or *coffee*/ 'kafa' with *spoon*/ 'kašika' of *sugar*/ 'šećer'? Eat *scramble eggs*/ 'kajgana' or a *pie*/ 'pita' or *rolls*/ 'sarma' with *rice*/ 'pirinač'? Sip *brandy*/ 'rakija' or smoke *tobacco*/ 'duhan'? If needed how would we put a *button*/ 'dugme' in the *pocket*/ 'džep', and *scissors*/ 'makaze', *hammer*/ 'čekić', *nails*/ 'ekseri' and other *alat tools*/ 'alat' into a *box*/ 'kutija' or into a *case*/ 'sanduk'? How would we joyfully yell/ 'galamiti' in the *garden*/ 'bašta' or in a *boat*/ 'čamac'? For us to say that something is soft as *cotton*/ 'pamuk' or hard as *steel*/ 'čelik' – or in general express the whole array of basic terms. “(Bugarski, 1996: 204). From the above citation we notice a significant number of oriental origin words, i.e., Arabic, Turkish and Persian origin that are present in our everyday language. It is interesting to note that this paragraph contains mainly words of Persian origin.

In addition to words that are irreplaceable here we can notice words that have their corresponding lexical-semantic equivalent in Bosnian language but the Persian origin word such as *erende* (*rende*), is in use more often than its local equivalent *ribež*, *ribača*/ 'grater'. Also, a word *merdevine* is used more than word *ljestve*/ 'ladder', than word *baštovan* instead of *vrtlar*/ 'gardner'; *testera* instead of *pila*/ 'saw' etc.

In addition to these Persian origin words that are widely used today both in spoken and standard language, in the abovementioned thematic areas we can notice a number of archaic words and they belong to a passive lexical level.

From the above it is clear that the Persian origin words that experienced *zero semantic extension* in Bosnian language greatly enriched Bosnian vocabulary. Its special value is the fact that they are rarely replaceable and they are present in spoken language. On the other hand, archaic words and historicisms witness a past time, centuries long culture and tradition and its use today gives a note of patina.

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ⁱBosnian language vocabulary is characterised by a number of words of eastern origin, i.e. words from Turkish, Arabic or Persian, have a prominent place. Compared to Turkish and Arabic, lexis of Persian origin is the least present – in Škaljić's *Dictionary of Turcisms* there were total 1031 words of Persian origin, out of which 653 basic words and 378 derivatives (Akopdžanjan, 2010: 180).

ⁱⁱIn course of our research of the semantic adaptations of Persian words in Bosnian language we used R. Filipovic's methodology (1986).

ⁱⁱⁱThis refers to the Dictionary as an Appendix of the book *Words of Persian Origin in Bosnian Language* by Đenita Haverić and Amela Šehović which is currently in the final stage of its development.

^{iv}Surely, in addition to the above there are more thematic groups that we failed to mention in this paper because they contain insignificant number of words.