

The Structure of Borrowed English Words in Sebuano

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Abstract

This paper examines the changes that English words undergo when they are borrowed into Sebuano. Borrowed English words may be affixed with Sebuano affixes, compounded, respelled, reanalyzed so that local neologisms result, have their meanings or stresses shifted and re-syllabified. Borrowed English words in Sebuano may also be a mix of Sebuano, English and even Spanish morphemes.

Keywords: compounding, affixation, blends, morphology, derivational affixes

Like all other things in this world, language changes. Though obvious, a change in language is not always easy to explain. But language change is a regular and systematic occurrence. There are many causes of language change ranging from those that have a physiological and cognitive basis and those that result from language contact. The latter results in borrowing. This, according to Arnold (2007), is "the single most obvious consequence of contact." Borrowing can affect all components of the grammar but it is "the lexicon that is most typically affected" (O'Grady and Archibald, 2000). This paper examines the

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structure of words in Sebuano and of borrowed English words in Sebuano. A brief illustration of some common word formation processes in Sebuano precedes the discussion on the changes that take place when English words are borrowed into Sebuano.

Word Formation Processes in Sebuano

Sebuano forms words through the following (but not the only) processes: compounding, affixation, reduplication, use of acronyms, blends, and onomatopoeia.

1. Compounding, a common and important word-building process in language, involves the use of two or more existing words to create a new word. This can be seen in the following examples:

himat-an-hikatulgan	tago-angkan 'uterus'
pagbalik-tidlum	tutbras 'toothbrush'
tubag-pangutana 'rhetorical question'	saka-kanaog 'going up and down'
patag-awayan 'battlefield'	
kulba-hinam 'suspense'	

2. Affixation, another common word formation process, involves the addition of an affix. Generally, linguists distinguish three types of affixes: prefix, which is attached to the front of the base, suffix which is attached to the end of the base and infix which occurs within a base. Affixation is exemplified in the following:

Prefixation	Suffixation	Infixation
<i>nagbasa</i> 'is/was reading'	<i>hatagan</i> 'will give'	<i>tinun-an</i> 'student'
<i>napili</i> 'is/was chosen'	<i>abuhon</i> 'gray'	<i>Binisaya</i> 'in Bisaya'
<i>kaatbang</i> 'opponent'	<i>bugason</i> 'pimply'	<i>tinulo</i> 'in three parts'
<i>makigbugno</i> 'to engage in a fight'	<i>lawasnon</i> 'bodily'	<i>binuhat</i> 'made'
<i>mainit</i> 'warm'	<i>gugmahanon</i> 'full of love'	<i>dinapit</i> 'invited/guest'

3. Reduplication is the repetition of a part of the base or of the entire base. This is exemplified in the following:

Partial reduplication

magtutudlo 'teacher'
 mananambal 'healer'
 magsusulat 'writer'
 lumalabay 'transient'
 lumulupyo 'inhabitant'

Full reduplication

tabitabi 'gossip'
 inaina 'stepmother'
 balaybalay 'playhouse'
 puyopuyo 'live-in partner'
 dali-dali 'quickly'

4. Acronyms are formed by taking the initial letters of some or all the words in a phrase and pronouncing them as a word. The following are examples of acronyms:

Ludabi - Lubas sa dagang Bisaya
 Bathalad – Bathalan-ong halad sa dagang
 ARMM – Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
 DAR – Department of Agriculture
 MNLF – Mangkay na lang forever 'Forever an old maid'

5. Blends are formed by joining non-morphemic parts of two or three already existing words. Some examples of blends are:

batadila – 'grammar' from batad and dila 'tongue'
 sugilagming – 'short story' from sugilanon 'story' and gagmay/gagming 'small/short'
 (makig)duhawit – 'to do a duet' from duha 'two' and awit 'song'
 sutukil – a place where food that is served is either broiled, boiled, or eaten raw
 from sugba 'broil,' tula 'boil,' and kilaw 'to eat something raw'
 sayawit – 'sing and dance program' from sayaw 'dance' and awit 'song'
 prikanor – 'a dish consisting of prito, kanin and knorr'

6. Onomatopoeia involves the use of words whose sounds are imitative of their meaning. Some examples of onomatopoeic words are:

aw-aw 'barking of a dog'
 tuktugaok 'crowing of a rooster'
 pag-unga 'lowing of a cow'
 tuktok 'knock'
 miyaw 'meow'

Borrowed English Words in Sebuano

The words that are here identified as borrowings from English may, in fact, be borrowings from Spanish. However, they have been

identified as such since borrowing from Spanish is said to have ended with the end of colonial rule whereas borrowing from English did not end when the Philippines gained its independence (McFarland, 1998). The borrowings are considered contemporary and to have come from English. The data for this part of the paper are from stories and articles in *Bisaya* published in the last three years.

Borrowing, needless to say, affects the borrowing language and the borrowed words. When words are borrowed, they may undergo the same word formation processes that so-called 'native' words do but the changes that borrowed words undergo may result in local neologisms. The changes may involve reanalysis, re-spelling of borrowed words, meaning shifts, phonological and morphological changes.

1. According to Gonzalez (in Bautista, 1996) borrowing results in local neologisms, among others. Examples of these are:

Seb. *karnap* 'to steal a car' from an analogy of *kidnap* (a backformation from *kidnapper*) which means to abduct and detain (a person or an animal), often for ransom

Seb. *kaptimbol* 'team captain' from *captain* and *ball*, where *ball* replaces *team* and is joined to *kaptim* 'captain'

Seb. *holdaper* 'one who engages in armed robbery', the *-er* suffix is used to denote doer

Seb. *pikpakiter* 'a pickpocket', *pickpocket* being reanalyzed as a verb, thus the *-er* suffix

Seb. *dypni* 'jeepney', a blend of *jeep* and *jitney*

2. On the other hand, McFarland (1998) notes the changes that take place when words are borrowed. One change involves spelling, that is, a word is given a Sebuano orthography. This change is exemplified in the following:

<i>pisikal</i> 'physical'	<i>bayrus</i> 'virus'	<i>toksin</i> 'toxin'
<i>kendi</i> 'candy'	<i>bakterya</i> 'bacteria'	<i>teknik</i> 'technique'
<i>kemikal</i> 'chemical'	<i>alerdyi</i> 'allergy'	<i>seksi</i> 'sexy'
<i>medikal</i> 'medical'	<i>isyu</i> 'issue'	<i>kompyuter</i> 'computer'

The change in spelling may be accompanied by a stress shift as *pisikál*, *kemikál*, *medikal* now take the stress on the final syllable. In *alérdyi*, the stress shifts from the first (antepenultimate) to the second syllable (penultimate). In *téknik*, the shift is from the second to the first syllable.

3. Another change involves a shift in meaning with or without a change in spelling. There may be a change in the stress. This is seen in the following:

pulis 'policeman'	indibag 'without doubt/absolutely sure'
mister 'husband'	sosyal 'fashionable/high class'
misis 'wife'	(i)bulgar 'to divulge/make public'
bilib 'impressed'	(pag)·amén 'a gesture of respect shown by touching an older person's hand to one's forehead'
istambay 'idler' from stand by	
salbids 'summarily killed' from salvage	

The word, *salbids*, has taken a meaning entirely opposite its meaning in English. *Pulis*, from police which consists of a body of persons is now just a single person, police being now *polisya* or *kapolisan*.

4. Still another change involves a re-syllabication (from monosyllable in English to disyllable in Sebuano) or a reduction of a diphthong into a monophthong or stress shift with no change in spelling. This can be seen in the following:

base (pronounced ba·se from English base/based on)
 populár
 naturál
 personál
 mayór

In the last four examples, the change in pronunciation also involves a stress shift from the first to the last syllable.

5. Borrowing results in the addition of morphemes in the Sebuano lexicon. Consider the following examples:

kompositor 'composer'
 pintor 'painter'
 publikador 'publisher'
 imbestigador 'investigator'
 imbentor 'inventor'
 pikpakiter 'pickpocket'

In English, the suffix *-er/-or* refers to a person who does whatever the base/root means. When borrowed into Sebuano, the *-er/-or* has the

same meaning.

Additionally, borrowing results in a mix of morphemes as will be seen in the following examples:

Seb. prefix + English word	Seb. prefix + English word + Spanish suffix
pag-tour 'to tour'	gidisenyo 'designed'
gipa-renovate 'to have something renovated'	pagmentinar 'maintenance'
na-composed 'composed'	kalehitimo 'legitimacy'
pagpakig-bonding 'the act of bonding'	makonsiderar 'may be considered'
mag-date 'to have a date'	naorganisar 'organized'
	pagkombensir 'the act of convincing'
Seb. prefix + English word + Seb. suffix	English word + Seb. suffix
gidiskasihan 'was discussed'	politikanhon 'political'
maamendahan 'may be amended'	suportahan 'let us support'
maaprobahan 'may be approved'	disisyonan 'let us decide on ...'

As can be seen, the words in the upper second column have suffixes which resemble those of Spanish words (the *-o* of Spanish nouns, the *-ar* and *-ir* of Spanish infinitives). According to McFarland (1998), Filipinos have a tendency to Hispanicize English words, that is, "the English word is replaced by the corresponding Spanish word – or the spelling and pronunciation are changed so that they look and sound as if they had a Spanish origin, even when there is no corresponding Spanish word." This tendency results in such words as the following:

ordinaryo 'ordinary'	komunidad 'community'
boksingero 'male boxer'	bakasyon 'vacation'
bagahē 'baggage'	prestihiyoso 'prestigious'
responsable 'responsible'	estilo 'style'
personalidad 'personality'	esena 'scene'

Boksingero is from English 'boxing' and the suffix *-ero/ -era* which may be a Hispanization of the genderless *-er/-or* of English.

When compounds are borrowed, the whole compound may be borrowed but is given a Sebuano orthography as in:

nayt klab 'night club'
tutbras 'toothbrush'

Alternatively, the compound may have one constituent rendered in Sebuano as in the following:

sugang pangsenyas 'signal light'
sugang pangtrapiko 'traffic light'

Other phonological and morphological changes may be observed in the examples here presented but only the most obvious have been discussed. The examples also show that affixation is a very productive word formation process in Sebuano. Practically every content word that is borrowed may be affixed. It is conjectured that in the not so distant future, more and more English words will be borrowed. What is the impact of borrowing on the borrowing language? What has been discussed in this paper illustrates the impact of borrowing on the lexicon, phonology and morphology of Sebuano. Given the social relationship between Sebuano and English, lexical borrowing is likely to become more extensive not only in science and technology. The borrowing of basic vocabulary and numerals which is more prevalent in the spoken variety may extend to the written variety. Other derivational affixes may be borrowed, too. Certainly, it is not far-fetched to think that our grandparents would probably not recognize Sebuano fifty years from now.

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