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LEXICAL BORROWING IN MALAYSIAN ONLINE  
NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS: A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH

Ranjini Kunalan<sup>1\*</sup>, Bharathi Mutty<sup>2</sup>, Kristina Francis<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Language and Linguistics, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia  
Email: ranjinik@utar.edu.my

<sup>2</sup> Department of Language and Linguistics, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia  
Email: bharathi@utar.edu.my

<sup>3</sup> Department of Language and Linguistics, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia  
Email: kristinaf@utar.edu.my

\* Corresponding Author

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**Abstract:**

Lexical borrowing is words that have been transferred from the native language and integrated into a different language (Hamdi, 2017). Studies on newspaper editorials have drawn a large readership, yet it is not been given enough coverage in terms of borrowed words used by the editors in English language newspapers. This paper examined the types and frequencies of lexical borrowing. This paper used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Haugen's (as cited in Annab, 2019) pioneering work of lexical borrowing was used in this research. Three forms of lexical borrowing, namely loanwords, compound blends, and loan transitions/claque were found. In this paper, four months of editorials from The Star Online were transferred into a text files by using Microsoft Word and imported into WordSmith Tool version 6 (henceforth WST 6) to generate the data. Results reflect that the highest frequency of lexical features identified was loanwords (84%), followed by compound blends (9%), and loan transitions (7.5%). The top three highest borrowed words used by editors were the words Pakatan, Datuk, and Barisan. Conclusively, as large amounts of borrowed words exist in English editorials, this phenomenon should be eliminated. This is because one of the ways to elevate Malaysian English (henceforth ME) to meet and sustain with the International level is to uphold the quality of the English language in newspapers. Besides, relevant stakeholders should work together to increase the quality of editorials as newspapers are part of authentic materials used in education.

**Keywords:**

Lexical Borrowing; Corpus; Editorials; English Online Newspapers

## Introduction

Lexical borrowing refers that the recipient language lacked the means to express the actual meaning of a particular word; thus, borrowing happens with the primary purpose of filling the gaps in the recipient language lexicon (Bahumaid, 2015). There are several types of lexical borrowing in linguistics field, for instance, compound blends, loan translations, semantic loans and so forth. In this study, Haugen's (as cited in Annab, 2019) ground-breaking work was used. There are four different types of borrowing proposed by Haugen which were loanwords, loan blends, loan translations and loan shifts. Based on Haugen's definition, loanword is a word that was integrated from one language to another but have remained the word's meaning with more or less differences at the degree of grammatical and phonological systems from the dominant language; loan blend is a hybrid of donor language and borrower language where one part of local language is kept and the other part is replaced with borrowing; and loan translation also known as *calque* is a process of morpheme-by-morpheme translation directly from source language. In Malaysia, borrowed words transferred from local languages such as Malay, Chinese and Tamil languages can be found easily in English language newspapers, such as The Star, New Straits Times, and The Sun. According to Tan (2014), these borrowings from indigenous languages include terms for festivals and religious practices, terms of respect, food names, honorific titles, and names of social and recreational activities. In addition, borrowing was usually attempted by those who are bilingual or multilingual in English.

## Objectives

There are two objectives in this study, (i) to identify the frequencies of lexical borrowing from online editorials of mainstream English newspaper, and (ii) to determine the types of lexical borrowing from online editorials of mainstream English newspaper. This study was aimed to answer two questions, (a) what is the frequency of borrowed words in the mainstream Malaysian online English newspapers editorials? and (b) what types of borrowed words can be found in the mainstream Malaysian online English newspapers editorials? Moreover, this paper focused on three main languages of lexical items used in the collected data, namely Malay, Chinese and Tamil languages. The corpus tool used in this study was WST6 and the generated borrowed words were build and classified into three groups; loanwords, compound blends, and *calque*/loan transitions.

## Materials and Method

The analysis was a combination of qualitative and quantitative study of 4 months. Corpus-based approach referred to a means of studying language by analyzing large quantities of real and electronically stored speech by using software to pick, sort, fit, count and measure (Tan, 2009). WST6 provided three aspects, namely WordList Tool, KeyWords List, and Concordance List, and each of these tools supported different functionalities in data sorting and retrieval. This research design was chosen because it was inexpensive and allowed the researcher to gather and access large data. In fact, corpus demonstrated how lexical, syntactic, morphological and discourse features were used in a sense. On the other hand, The Star Online was selected as sources with their wide circulation and readership in Malaysia. It was Malaysia's oldest surviving English publication, where The Star first appeared on 9 September 1971. In this study, all of the editorials and opinion pieces that were published between 1 January 2019 and 1 May 2019 were collected.

Content analysis with the use of corpus, WST6 was used. The editorials were collected from The Star Online, and saved using Microsoft Word as a plain text file. This file was subsequently imported into WST6 to generate the data, a similar approach used by Tan (2009). In addition, data from the software was extracted and categorized according to Haugen's (as cited in Annab, 2019) three types of lexical borrowing. The programs used in WST6 were KeyWords List and Concordance list with the aim of exploring the benefits of using corpus in analyzing linguistic changes in ME. To extract keywords from WST6, the reference wordlist from BNC World Edition was used in this study. BNC World Edition contained of 100 million words and it was an ideal reference corpus in linguistic research. Altogether 4 months of The Star Online editorials containing 178,935 words. Although the discussion that follows includes some quantitative data, the main approach taken here is a qualitative analysis.

### Results

From the results, most of the borrowed words used in editorials were loanwords followed by compound blends and loan transitions or claque. Loanwords dominated for approximately 84%, compound blends comprised for approximately 9% and loan transitions or claque appeared for 7.5% (Table 1).

<b>Types of Lexical Borrowings</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Loanwords	180	83.72
Compound blends	19	8.84
Loan transitions/Claque	16	7.44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1: Frequency of Each Type of Lexical Borrowings**

A total of 215 borrowings comprised of loanwords, compound blends and loan transitions or claque derived from multiple languages: Malay, Chinese, Tamil, and foreign languages (Table 2). From the collected data, borrowed words derived from Malay language comprised 167 times, and it was the most frequent language used in The Star Online editorials, this showed lexical item imported from Malay language was the most common in ME. Besides, the second highest of borrowed words used by editors was originated from Chinese language, and it occurred for 40 times. In addition, there were 11 out of 26 loanwords in Chinese language were derived from Chinese dialect, Hokkien. However, there was only 1 Tamil borrowed word used in the collected data. As a proportion of total Tamil borrowings in ME, this amount did not reflect the actual number of loanwords. This was because only four months of editorials from The Star Online, which did not include other English-language publications including New Straits Times, The Sun, The Edge and Malaysian Today, were reviewed at the current study.

Lexical features Languages	Loanwords	Compound blends	Loan transitions/Claque
Malay (n=167)	146	14	7
Chinese (n=40)	26	5	9
Foreign (n=7)	7	0	0
Tamil (n=1)	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>

**Table 2: Lexical Borrowings from Different Languages in Editorials**

The top three highest borrowed words used by The Star Online editors were the words “*Pakatan*”, “*Datuk*” and “*Barisan*” (Figure 1). This was because political issues in editorials were considered a hot topic during that period and this was the way columnists expressed their thoughts and feelings. Besides, this is because such terminologies are absent in the English language. As such, it suggests the reason why they accumulate as the highest number of borrowed words.

N	Key word	Freq.	%	Texts	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness	P	Lemma	Set
1	S	1,195	0.65	1	23,425	0.02	5,594	0.0000		
2	UMNO	400	0.22	1	43		4,760	0.0000		
3	MALAYSIA	452	0.25	1	632		4,228	0.0000		
4	PAKATAN	318	0.17	1	0		4,008	0.0000		
5	MALAY	317	0.17	1	93		3,557	0.0000		
6	MAHATHIR	259	0.14	1	67		2,934	0.0000		
7	DATUK	198	0.11	1	50		2,246	0.0000		
8	MALAYSIANS	184	0.10	1	11		2,234	0.0000		
9	PAS	228	0.12	1	320		2,131	0.0000		
10	BARISAN	174	0.10	1	20		2,064	0.0000		

**Figure 1: Keywords List from WST6**

## Discussion

Results gained are important to the context of English newspapers in Malaysia and are worth being highlighted. First and foremost, when a large number of editors use borrowed words from local languages, the standard of English-language newspapers will be compromised. Editorial is a persuasive article that might include columnist-written personal opinion. In fact, the columnists were all educated people who must have the ability to produce quality articles by using Standard English (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013). Nevertheless, the use of borrowed words from local languages by editors was in large numbers. In addition, The Star launched a program called Star Newspaper-in-Education (henceforth Star NiE) that supported teachers with a variety of materials, services and programs that assisted newspaper teaching to make English learning more enjoyable. However, if English language newspapers are to be used as educational assistance, consideration must be taken into account. The government has always stressed the importance of English especially for international communication, but the government and the private sectors continue to give poor command of English through the

media, for example, English language newspapers and English language radio broadcasts. Hence, one of the ways to help ME succeed globally is to strengthen the use of English language in newspapers before encouraging the use of newspapers in education.

In conclusion, The Star Online editors used borrowed terms frequently. Most of the lexical items have been used quite freely by editors from different ethnic groups, and most of the borrowed words used in editorials have been used to help readers understand the context. According to Masroor & Ahmad (2017), these lexical items had become a common phenomenon in English-language newspapers in Malaysia and this demonstrated 'solidarity' and 'harmony' among Malaysians in perception. However, the use of borrowed lexical items has been misunderstood and communication in English is affected among Malaysians. According to Ooi (2001), Malaysia is improving its education system to reflect Malaysia's progress, hence both government and private sectors should provide equal access to high-quality English-language newspapers and improve good English skills in Malaysia.

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