



INFLUENCE OF ARABIC LOANWORDS IN ENRICHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Dr. Musa Alamin Hamouda Saeed*

Assistant professor of English language and Literature at faculty of Education, ElDaein University, Sudan.

Keywords: Arabic loanwords , Oxford English Dictionary (OED), Borrowing , Influence , Enriching, ElDaein,

ABSTRACT

This article deals with Arabic loanwords and their influence in English from a lexicographical perspective. The author will adopt the descriptive-analytical method. To create a representative sample of Arabic loanwords in English, items are extracted from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) database and Arabic dictionary as well as some observations of the author with an etymological advanced search. Among the criteria affecting the etymological tagging, the concept of two languages of origin is probably the most difficult one for lexicographers to deal with. This study presents some of the issues lexicographers are faced with in the dictionary-making process. Following that, Arabic loanwords are classified according to semantics, along with the date of their first attestation in the OED database. The study comes out with some results that economic, social and cultural influence play an important role in the path of borrowing words.

Introduction:-

There is no doubt that the languages of the world have been strongly influenced by each other, which gave the opportunity for any language to acquire vocabulary and words and add them to its own linguistic dictionary, and it was widely circulated between different languages. As a result of the increasing direct relations between England and many regions of the Arab world, loanwords from Arabic increased and were added to the English language dictionary.

An estimated 1.35 billion people speak English. The language is rich and has many relations with other languages. English consists of many loanwords which have directly or indirectly helped the language enrich itself and prosper as the medium of communication on Earth. This paper's priority is to give the reader a concise view about the role of loanwords in enriching the English language. Dating back to possibly the first literary work to the modern era of English, the paper has tried to maintain the quality and clarity about the research topic as much as possible" Jumah Y. Q. (2019).

In regard to this study which of loanwords of Arabic origin used and borrowed by English language, we can say that, for 1000 years back, Arabic was the primary international language of commerce, scholarship and politics, much as English is in today's world. In fact, over the centuries English adopted many words that were either borrowed directly from Arabic, or were absorbed indirectly through other languages, especially Spanish. Even today, Arabic still accounts for the greatest number of Eastern elements in English. The lists of examples that follow are only a brief sampling of the many more words available; perhaps some will surprise you! The names of many musical instruments -- like lute and guitar - as well as a number of technical performance terms and styles, are also from Arabic roots. Many names of familiar animals, plants, spices, herbs and drinks began as Arabic nouns: saffron, henna, camphor, cotton, apricot, lemon, lime, orange, tamarind, lilac, sherry, mango, coffee, artichoke, spinach, jasmine, ginger, tulip, lotus, shrub, giraffe, gazelle, cobra, zebra, cheetah.

Significance of the study

This article tries to trace back the roots of Arabic loan words or vocabulary that are used in English language. There is a variety of English words are of Arabic origin and many people would neglect. English language is then borrowed some Arabic words. Most Arabic loanwords in English are totally integrated into the language, since they were adopted many centuries ago and have undergone the same vowel shifts and usage changes as native English words have. Though, Arabic is very present in slightly more exotic or emphatic English words and proper names such as: tycoon, carat, chess, checkmate, Sahara, almanac, rum, musk, sesame, tariff, cashmere, mummy, coral, sapphire, jubilee, jargon, thug, Satan, fake, jungle, alchemy, zenith, safari, talc, tartar, zircon, chiffon, amber, Bedouin, Ariel.

The English language has left its permanent mark on Arabic, just as it has on many other languages around the world. In every Arabic-speaking country, people at all levels of society mix English with Arabic from time to time. Even people not fluent in English do some mixing now and then. As in many societies the world over, English is considered a prestigious language in Arabic-speaking countries. It outpaces French as [the most-learned foreign language](#) by a significant margin, and a foreign traveler to the capital cities anywhere between Morocco and Iraq can expect to get around pretty well using English. Part of this popularity is because of the perceived economic or cultural benefits that come with speaking English as a second language, though necessity also plays a huge role here.

Review of Literature:

Arabic belongs to a group of languages collectively known as the Semitic languages. To this group belong a number of languages in the Middle East, some of them no longer extant. The earliest attested Semitic language is Akkadian, a language spoken in Mesopotamia between 2500 and 600 BCE; from 2000 BCE onwards it was differentiated into Babylonian and Assyrian (Kees Vers-teegh 1996).

The phenomena of borrowing has been defined by Hock & Joseph (2009) as: "an adoption of individual words or even large sets of vocabulary items from another language or dialect" (p. 241) which, as said by them, is a "very common result of linguistic contact." Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams (2002) unanimously stated: "a borrowing occurs when one language adds a word or a morpheme from another language to its own lexicon." (p. 512) Moreover, the authors maintain: "pronunciation of the borrowed item is often altered to fit the phonological rules of the borrowing language." (p. 512) McArthur (1992) wrote: borrowing is taking "a word or phrase from one language into another, or from one variety of a language into another." (p.141) In a word, the abstract noun borrowing refers to speakers adopting words from a source language into their native language. "Loan" and "borrowing" are, of course, metaphors because there is no literal lending process. There is no transfer from one language to another and no "returning" words to the source language.

As language borrowing is too complicated, then the question arises, what are the reasons for this process? To our minds, the grounds are manifold. There is a necessity for adopting concepts along with the terms identifying them, as various cultures blend. These are items that are not presented in the recipient language. Therefore it is less complicated to adopt the concept rather than trying to formulate a new term. Frequently, there are cases when there is a need to present some specific ideas or objects, like the ones from fauna and flora.

Hosam Darwish(2015)cited both Fromkin (2003) and Ngom (2002) that borrowing words is important especially when the giving language adds new words or morphemes to the other language. The pronunciation of the borrowed item is often changed to fit the phonological system of the borrowing language. The borrowed word, of course, remains in the source language so there is no need for its return. also mentions that speakers sometimes borrow words that are not in their own language so that they can express an idea or a concept. In addition, they may borrow a word that gives them prestige though they have equivalent words in their own language.

Reasons of borrowing process from Arabic

Arabic is considered as one of the major languages with a tremendous cultural impact in the world (Sapir 1921). Serjeantson (1935) claims that the first English word loaned from Arabic is "mancus" which originates from the Arabic word "manqūsh" which means 'to sculpt, engrave, inscribe', which was often related to coins context to mean 'struck'. After its first appearance in the 770s, the word "mancus", spread quickly in Italy, and moved forward to reach England by the 780s. According to Salloum & Peters (1996) 6500 Arabic loanwords are attested in the English language, though many of them have been introduced through the Spanish language (in Thawabteh 2011: 104). Indeed, Serjeantson (1935: 213 - 220) determines that Arabic loanwords can be either direct (i.e. with no intermediate language between Arabic and English) or indirect (with notably French or Spanish as transitory languages).

Langacker (1967) argues that loaning existing words from another language is easier than creating ones. The cultural influence plays an important role in the path of borrowing words. This seems clear with many of the English words in Arabic, such as "kilowatt and telephone". The great majority of Arabic words in English are connected with the realm of science. This is quite apparent in words like —zero, Arabic Loan Words in English Language algebra, alcohol, nadir, cipher and alkali]. These words prove the Arabic influence in mathematics and science during the medieval times as said by Langacker (1967).

Salloum and Peters (1996) argue:

Arabic was the intellectual and scientific language of the entire scholastic world. The men of letters and science had to know Arabic if they wanted to produce works of arts and science [...]. Arab Andalusia by itself produced more works in Arabic than were produced in all the languages of Europe (23).

Many researchers refer the reasons behind the process of Arabic Loanwords used in English language to the early 8th century, Arab fighters invaded and took control of the Iberian Peninsula, or what is modern day Spain and Portugal. These forces were known as the Moors. During their occupation, their language spread throughout the area, and entered Latin, the language spoken by the locals.

Over the next several centuries, Christian-led forces took control of the Iberian Peninsula. However, by this time, the language spoken there had been forever influenced by the Arabic language. It is thought that, foreign words may be borrowed to express a concept or describe an object for which there is no apparent available word in their native language. This kind of borrowing is motivated by lexical needs and involves single words— mainly nouns (Holmes, 2013). Many of these words have survived. As Latin began to influence English, some of the Arabic words were passed on. To this day, many words commonly used in English have Arabic roots. Many of these words have survived. As Latin began to influence English, some of the Arabic words were passed on. To this day, many words commonly used in English have Arabic roots.

According to Hitti (1976), no people in the world manifest such enthusiastic admiration for literary expression and moved by the word, spoken or written, as Arabs. Hardly any language seems capable of exercising over the minds of its users such as irresistible influence as Arabic. Whoever knows Arabic and is acquainted with lexicography, grammar, rhetoric, Arabic poetry and prose recognizes in fact to supremacy of the Qur'an (Ibn Khaldoun, 2010, 375). In fact, the Qur'an has helped to expand the scope of Arabic as it was known in the early seventeenth century. Islam and Qur'an have helped to open new horizons and fields of study including philosophy and linguistic forms.

Winford (2002) states that, language mixture doesn't require speakers of different languages to have actual social context. Lexical borrowing can be maintained through book borrowing by writers, lexicographers, teachers and others who pass the new vocabulary via religious texts, literature distinctions and so on.

Arabic is one of the Semitic languages, is the language of the Qur'an, Muslim's holy book. The language develops through two processes: internal restructuring and borrowing. Borrowing isn't limited to words only but it can extend itself to sounds, grammatical morphemes, syntactic patterns and semantic associations.

According to Mohamed Elmasry (2007) in his published article in www.islamichistorymonth.com that, reference books devoted to tracing the English words borrowed from Arabic are rare. Most were written some time ago and do not include contemporary scholarship or changes in our language. The most recent is more than three decades old -- Arabic Contributions to the English Vocabulary, by James Peters and Habeeb Salloum (1973). Two other useful, but dated, titles are: A History of Foreign Words in English, by Mary S. Serjeantson (1935) and Arabic Words in English, by Walt Taylor (1933).

Methodology

This study aims at investigating the influence of Arabic loanwords in enriching English Language from the Old English period to the present days. To create a representative of groups of Arabic loanwords in English, items are extracted from the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) with an etymological advanced search. The author will attest a group of 100 Arabic loanwords used in English language. It is a reality that, Several factors can affect the creation of a representative database of Arabic loanwords in English. The author will describe and analyze those borrowings and an examination of their level of integration into the lexis of Modern English in regard to OED (from a phonological and morpho-syntactic and lexical point of view). This analysis of Arabic loanwords is dictionary-based and the etymological

tagging of the OED is adopted as in the following method:

Soda /səʊdə/

{mass noun} carbonated water (originally made with sodium bicarbonate) drunk alone with mixed alcoholic drinks...

- **ORIGIN** late middle English (sod)a .. from Arabic suwwad 'saltwort'.

Nadir /neɪdɪə/

noun [singular] the lowest or most unsuccessful point in a situation.

- **ORIGIN:** late middle English in (nadir (SENSE 2 OF THE noun)): via French from Arabic Naẓīr (as-smat) 'opposite (to the Zenith).

tobacco /təbəkəʊ/

{mass noun} a preparation of the nicotine-rich leaves of an American plant, which are cured by a process of drying and fermentation for smoking or chewing...

- **ORIGIN:** mid 16th century : from Spanish Tabaco, said to be from a Carib word denoting a tobacco pipe, but perhaps from Arabic.

Coffee /kɒfi/

{mass noun}

a hot drink made from the roasted and ground seeds (coffee beans) of a tropical shrub....

- **ORIGIN:** late 16th century : from Turkish kahveh, from Arabic qahwa, probably via Dutch koffie.

Below are some of list of 60 loanwords of Arabic origin that are used in English Language. The author has exerted effort to collect as more as possible words by consulting dictionaries, previous studies and periodicals. It seems that English is rich of Arabic vocabulary as a result of the reasons of borrowing (social factors, economical factors, cultural factorsetc) mentioned in literature review in the above lines.

English word	Arabic origin	Arabic Meaning
Admiral	أمير البحر (a.mīr al.baḥr))	Ruler of the sea
Alcohol	الكحول (al-kuḥul)	a mixture of powdered antimony
Alcove	القبة (al-qub.bah))	a dome or arch
Algebra	الجبر (al-jabr)	to reduce or consolidate
Algorithm	خوارزمية (khawa-rizm)	a theory or logical process
Alkaline	القلوي (alka.lieen))	Alkaline
Amber	عنبر (ānibar))	Amber (Yellowish-brown)
arsenal	دار السلاح (dār as.silah))	House of weapons
Attar	عطر (ātir))	a perfume or sweet fragrance
Caliber	() قالب	a quality
Camel	جمل (ḍamal)	A large ,long necked ungulate mammal of arid country with long leg
Candle	قنديل (gindeel)	A night light or a lamp
Captain	قبطان (qubṭa-an))	the person in command of a ship
Caravan	قيروان (qirawan)	a mobile home
Cave	كهف (kahf)	A cave or
Check	صك أو شيك (ṣik or ṣuk)	financial instrument or legal monetary document
Chemistry	الكيمياء (al-kimija)	chemistry
Cipher	شفرة (ṣf.ra)	Code
Coffee	قهوة (qah.wa)	coffee , a drink
Cotton	قطن (quṭn/)	Cotton
Crimson	قرمزي (qur.mizi)	pink , colour
Cup	كوب (kawb)	Teacup or a mug
Curcuma	نبات الكركم (nabat.al-kur.kum)	a plant
Divan	ديوان (dai.wan)	Sofa, a cushion
Drub	الضرب (al-ḍrab)	Beat or whip
Earth	أرض (arḍ)	soil , ground
Elixir	إكسير (iksīr)	Philosopher's stone
fatwa	فتوى (fat.waa)	fatwa
Gazelle	غزالة (gha.zāl)	Gazelle
Giraffe	زرافة (zar.āfa)	Giraffe
gypsum	جبس (jibṣ)	Gypsum(bandage or plaster)
hazard	زهر (zahr)	Dice
Islam	اسلام (is.lām)	Islam
Jar	جرة (jur.ah))	Jar
Jasmine	ياسمين (yasmīn)	Jasmine
Jinn	جن (jini)	Jinn (sane)
Kohl	كحل (ku.ḥul)	Kohl (eyeliner)
Lemon	ليمون (lemon)	Lemon
magazine	مخزن (makh.zan))	a storehouse
Maneuvering	مناورة (mu.nawarah)	Manoeuvring (steering)
massage	مسح (masih)	Massage
Mirror	مرآة (mi-ror)	Mirror (glass)
Mummy	مومياء (mu.miyia)	Mummy

Nadir	نظير (nazīr)	Nadir
Octopus	أخطبوط (okh.tabuṭ))	Octopus
ream	رزمة (ruz.mah)	ream
Safari	سفر (safar)	Safari (trip)
Saffron	زعفران (zu.āfaran)	Saffron
Sahara	صحراء (ša.hrá))	Sahara (dessert)
Salad	سلطة (ša.la.ṭa)	Salad
sherbet	شربات (shar.bāt))	drink
Soda	صودا (šoda)	Soda (drink)
Spinach	سبانخ (saban.Ḳ)	Spinach (fruitful tree)
Story	أسطورة (os.tōrah)	Story
Sugar	سكر (suk.kar)	sugar
Sultan	سلطان (sul.ṭan)	Sultan . (king)
Tariff	تعريفة (tä.rifa)	Tariff (cost)
Tobacco	تبغ (tabq)	Tobacco
Waist	وسط (waṣṭ)	Waist (middle)
Zero	صفر (šifr)	zero

Discussion

During the process of borrowing a language adaptation and assimilation process occurs on various levels of linguistic nature: among them numerous changes in phonetics, orthography, or morphology.

According to (Daulton, 2011):

Lexical borrowing refers to adopting an individual or large set of words or vocabulary items – including roots and affixes, sounds, collocations, and grammatical processes – from another language or dialect .

Tracing the list of borrowed Arabic words above it is realized that English language make use of the whole frame or lexical feature of the words with no or little slight lexical change as in (sugar : /suk.kar/ سكر , Salad: سلطة /ša.la.ṭa/, Safari: سفر safar /safar/, massage: مسح /masih/). The changing takes place at two levels: phonological and morphological level. English adapted and borrowed words into lexical English words. The examples and the list of the loan words above indicate that lexical borrowing is a common phenomenon across language communities. Jassem (2012 a-h ; 2013 a-h) revealed that, all such terms have true Arabic cognates, with the same or similar forms and meanings. However, the different forms are displayed due to the natural and possible causes of linguistic change. For example the English and French word "approach" comes from Arabic qareeb 'near, approaching' via reversal and changing /q/ to /ch/; For example, English, French, and Latin observe comes from Arabic baSar, abSara (v) 'see' via reordering and replacing /b & S/ by /v/; for example, English 'sheep' comes from Arabic kabsh 'male sheep' where /k & sh/ merged into /sh/.

In this regard, the author quoted Fournier P., Latrache R.(2020) :

Many Arabic loanwords in English are exclusively defined according to religious criteria when broader definitions are attested in Arabic. However, the semantic areas those loanwords cover are restricted and conditioned by translators when integrating the English language. Indeed , especially in the 19th century, direct translations from famous Arabic books ,whose topics mainly deal with religious matters, necessarily restrict the scope of the meanings of the original Arabic words in English. The topics of translated books are therefore determining parameters in the survey of semantic properties of loanwords. It appears that this translation phenomenon from literary sources can account for the great majority of Arabic loanwords in English.

The author has classified the Arabic loanwords based on some factors that many scholar shad referred the reason of borrowing:

- Islamic loanwords : *fatwa*: ,*islam*: اسلام (is.lām) , *Admiral*: أمير البحر (a.mīr al.baḥr),
- Cultural (prestige) loanwords: *sahara* , *safari* , *Maneuvering* , *Earth* , *Cave* , *Captain*.
- Social and economic/mathematics loan words: Alcohol : الكحول (al-kuḥul) , *Candle* : قنديل (gindeel) , *Algorithm*: خوارزمية (khawa-rizm).

Any language, which borrows lexical units from other ones, may face a problem of integrating the new words into its lexical stock. Scholars identified two significant procedures known as adaptation (also called complete nativization) and adoption.

To sum up discussion on this regard, it is clear that the complexity of a dictionary - making process is reflected in this case study of Arabic loanwords in English. Determining the origins of words can be challenging for lexicographers because it appears that it is difficult to account for all the loanwords of Arabic origin in English language.

Conclusion

The process of loaning words can go in both directions between English and Arabic languages when they are in contact. However, there is an asymmetry where more words go from one side to the other. Based on the previous history of loaning, there are many factors that influence the matter of loaning; these factors could be cultural, scientific or political reasons. Determining the origins of words can be challenging for lexicographers because it appears that the etymological tagging of the OED can raise questions. In this study, the author presented the following classification of Arabic loanwords/ borrowings in contemporary English: phonological borrowings, prosodic borrowings, graphemic borrowings, morphemic borrowings (transference of bound morphemes), morphological borrowings (transference of morphological patterns), semantic borrowings (transference of sememes), lexical borrowings (transference of lexemes), and syntactic borrowings (transference of syntactic rules).

References:

- 1) Banu, R. (2000). Bangladeshi English: A new variety. *Journal of the Institute of Modern Languages* (issue 1999-2000), 53-68.
- 2) Bila Ievgeniia Sergiivna, *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on the English Language in Ukrainian Context*, November 2020 Pp. 294-306 ,DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/elt3>.
- 3) Crystal, D. (1995). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.3)
- 4) Darwish, H. (2015). Arabic Loan Words in English Language. In *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 20(7),
- 5) D. A. CAMERON (1892) *AN ARABIC-ENGLISH VOCABULARY*, London.
- 6) Daher J. (2013). *Lexical Borrowing in Arabic and English*. New York University, Study Paper at the following
- 7) Hoque, M. A., Ali, M. M., Puteh-Behak, F., & Baharun, H. (2021). Lexical borrowings from the English language into Bangla short stories. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(1), 158-172. Doi: 10.52462/jlls.
- 8) Kees Versteegh (1997) *THE ARABIC LANGUAGE*, Columbia University Press, New York
- 9) link: <http://www.vocabula.com>.
- 10) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2005). Oxford: Oxford University Press. (7th ed.) pp. 105-109.
- 11) Suleiman Abo.Quash(1997) *Ten Thousand words of Arabic Origin, Kuwait.*, سليمان ابو قوش (1997) *عشرة الاف كلمة انجليزية من اصل عربي- الكويت*