

Linguistic Borrowing
A Cross-Cultural Study of English-Arabic Loanwords

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Abstract

In a cross-cultural relationship Standard English and Standard Arabic languages come into contact to lend and borrow words reciprocally. Usually the borrowed word does not represent a mere rigid linguistic form, but a portrayal of the cultural and historical background of the source language. Having adopted a different perspective, the study investigates the phenomenon of borrowing from a cultural viewpoint. Chapter one projects an investigation about the concept of culture and its features. Different reasons behind borrowing are dealt with as an integral part of the survey of the phenomenon of borrowing. Chapter two illustrates a sample of the English loanwords in Arabic. Chapter three demonstrates a sample of the Arabic loanwords in English. Finally, the findings and conclusions of the study are pointed out through the conclusion part.

INTRODUCTION

Words travel from one language into another as a result of language contact stimulated by a number of linguistic and extra linguistic motivations. Environmental, sociopolitical, and economical motive like war invasion, intermarriage, immigration, trading and financial bargaining, beside other instances of linguistic motivations behind contact among communities like the need for lexical gap filling, the need for new words, the tendency to use more prestigious variety, etc. are all factors that might lead to borrowing. Borrowing is the phenomenon which undertakes the word transmission process from one variety into another among the connected communities. The language that lends is the donor or the borrower language, and the language that borrows is known as the receptor or the borrowing language. The borrowed word is not transmitted to the target language merely as a rigid linguistic form but as a flexible culture concept usually associated with historical background and cultural values of a donor language.

This work aims at exploring the phenomenon of borrowing as an outcome of language and cultural contact among English-Arabic Standard languages with references to some motivations and causes behind the contact and borrowing.

The investigation in this study will be carried out according to the following procedure:

1. Undertaking a literature survey about the phenomenon of borrowing as a result of cultural and linguistic contact between Arabic and English Standard languages.
2. Locating and identifying the English-Arabic loanwords by references to the available sources like English – Arabic dictionaries and other published material (Books, journals, newspapers ...etc).
3. Classifying the loanwords according to their source into two types: those of English origin which went into Arabic and those of Arabic origin which came into English.

It is hypothesized that through various contacts among nation, English words have entered the Arabic Language. On the other hand some Arabic words have found their way into English.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Linguistic Borrowing

1.1 Cross-Cultural Borrowing

Cross-Cultural investigation occupies a significant part in sociolinguistics. It helps to determine whether generalizations made about one language group are universal or particular. The mechanism in this type of analysis is that it adopts analyzing data from two or more different cultural groups so as to decide if generalization made about members of one culture match the members of other cultures. (Richards & Schimidt. 2002: 135) Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917) first used the term culture to refer to:

That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, attitude, customs, behavior, social habits and any other capabilities and habits of the members of a particular society. (Tylor, 1903: 1)

The point of stress in Tylor's definition of the concept of culture is that of sharing man's cultural trait within a society and in relation to other members of the society. Ferraro and Andreatta (2013: 50, 56) shed some light on the characteristics of culture via the following table:

Table (1)

Characteristics of Culture	
Culture defined	Culture is everything that people have, think, and do as members of society.
Culture is shared	The shared meaning connected to things, ideas, and behavior patterns make life less ambiguous and more predictable for members of the same cultural group.
Culture is learned	Culture is transmitted not genetically but through interactions with one's cultural environment.
Culture is taken off or granted	Our own culture is so ingrained in us that are often unaware that it is even exist.

Culture influences biological process	Our bodies and biological process are influenced by culture. Certain culturally produced ideas concerning physical beauty can influence the way in which people alter their body.
Cultural universals	Despite variations in specific details, all cultures have certain common features, such as systems of governing, pattern of producing and distributing food, forms of enculturation, and family pattern.
Culture is adaptive	Culture enables people to adapt to their environments and thus increase their chances of survival. It is also possible for cultures to negatively alter or even destroy their environment.
Cultures are generally integrated	The various parts of culture (things, ideas, and behavior patterns) are interconnected to some degree. Thus a change in one part of the culture is likely to bring about changes in other parts of the culture.
Cultures changes	No culture is static. The things, ideas, and behavior patterns of some cultures changes more rapidly than others, but all cultures experience change, both internally (innovation) and externally by borrowing from other cultures (diffusion)

The table is adopted from Ferraro and Andreatta (2013: 50)

1.2 Language Contact and Linguistic Borrowing

It is axiomatic reality that whenever there is a cultural contact of any form, linguistic contact shows up as a result (Bakalla, 1984: 66). Human population evolves towards rapprochement among people and contact between cultures. No matter the contact is a cooperative or a conflictual one, language is powerless facing the influences of new contacts. To be affected by other languages is not considered to be weakness for a variety but as enrichment for its culture and population unless the language is learned in another language. (*Dhannawi*: 2004:5) Borrowing is a term used in linguistics to refer to a linguistic FORM taken over by one language from another (Crystal, 2003: 56). The most common form borrowed through English-Arabic contact is loanword which refers to a word come to be used in language from another language with some adaptation to the system of the new language. When borrowing is a single word, it is called a loanword (Richards & Schindt, 2002: 57). Loanwords are of three main types as is discussed by (Sinha, 2005):

1. **Pure Loanwords:** the form and meaning are borrowed with no or some modifications. Examples: *Carbon, video, bas, chromosome, etc*
2. **Loan Blend:** the meaning and part of the word is borrowed with addition of native syllables. Examples: الديمقراطية، الفاشية، البايولوجيا.
3. **Loan shift:** words that are a combination of foreign and native morphemes are called loan shifts. Latin morphemes like *ex* is combined with English words to give extra meaning. Examples: *ex-husband. Exclude, exchange, etc* (Sinha. 2005: 173-4).

1.3 Reasons behind borrowing

The following are some of the main factors that motivate borrowing among languages:

1. Lexical holes or lexical lack where the receptor language lacks the form in the donor language makes a necessity for borrowing (Behrens and Parker, 2010:118, Field. 2002: 4).
2. The prestige of the donor language is another motive behind borrowing in which speakers seek a more prestigious variety as a sign of social superiority and education (Barber, and et al. 2012:189-190. Field, 2002: 4).
3. Trading in the ancient times was a great motive behind borrowing. Traders travel to distant places and by their return they carried foreign words with them (Sinha. 2005: 171).
4. To cope with the youth generation who is not much familiar with the recessive language, borrowing helps in replenishing old words (Field. 2002: 4).

English-Arabic loanwords transmission have experienced the points mentions above in addition to other motivations which might lead to cultural contact like war invasion, intermarriage, migration and moving to Western countries, etc.

CHAPTER TWO

English Loanwords in Arabic

Chapter two provides a list of some English loanwords which found their way into Arabic language. The pieces of information gathered are: the English words, the Arabic words, the meaning of the word, and the resource of the word.

Table (2)

A list of Some English words in Arabic

English	Arabic	Meaning	Source
Adrenaline	الأدرينالين	The clear inside part of an egg that is white when cooked	OALD: 21
Calcium	الكالسيوم	A chemical element. Calcium is a soft silver-white metal that is found in bones, teeth and chalk.	OALD: 207 M: 884
Cathedral	الكاتدرائية	Main church of a district, under the care of a bishop.	OALD: 230 MH: 199
Chimpanzee	الشمبانزي	A small intelligent African ape	OALD: 253 M: 862
Chromosome	الكروموسوم	One of the very small structures like threads in the nuclei	OALD: 258 M: 892
Computer	الكمبيوتر	An electronic machine that can store, organize and find information, do calculations and control other machines	OALD: 308 M: 905
Demography	الديموغرافيا	The changing number of births, deaths, diseases, etc. in a community over a period of time: the scientific study of these changes	OALD :404
Gene	الجينة	A unit inside a cell which controls a particular quality in a living thing that has been passed on from its parents	OALD: 644
Geology	الجيولوجيا	The scientific study of the earth, including the origin and history of the rocks and soil of which the earth is made	OALD: 648 MH: 489
Influenza	الإنفلونزا	An infectious disease like a very bad cold, that causes fever, pains and weakness	OALD: 789 MH: 590
Oxygen	الأوكسجين	A chemical element. Oxygen is a gas that is present in air and water and is necessary for people, animals and plants to live	OALD: 1090
Raccoon	الراكون	A small American animal with grayish-brown fur, black marks on its face and a thick tail	OALD: 1217 M: 572
Watt	الواط	A unit for measuring electrical power	OALD: 1740 MH: 1335

CHAPTER THREE

Arabic Loanwords in English

Chapter three includes a list of some Arabic loanwords which found their way into English language. The pieces of information gathered are: the English word, the Arabic word, the meaning of the word, and the resource from which the word is taken from.

Table (3)

Aubergine	أبازنجان	A vegetable with shiny dark purple skin and soft white flesh	OALD, 2013: 85
Coffee	القهوة	A hot drink made from coffee powder and boiling water. It may be drunk with milk and/or sugar added	OALD, 2013: 284 MH: 239
Cotton	القطن	A plant grown in warm countries for the soft white hairs around its seeds that are used to make clothes and thread	OALD, 2013: 343
Jihad	الجهاد	A holy war fought by Muslims to defend Islam	ODFW, 2010: 175 (Oxford Dictionary for Foreign Words and Phrases)

A list of Some Arabic words in English

English	Arabic	Meaning	Source
Alizarin	العصارة	A red pigment present in madder root, used in dyeing	MH, 2013:46 (المورد الحديث)
Alchemy	الكيمياء	A form of chemistry studied in the Middle Ages which involved trying to discover how to change ordinary metals into gold	MH, 2013: 45 (المورد الحديث)
Alcohol	ألكحول	The clear liquid that is found in drinks such as beer, wine, etc. and is used in medicines, cleaning products, etc.	OALD, 2013: 35 (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary) MH, 2013:45
Algebra	الجبر	A type of mathematics in which letters and symbols are used to present quantities. Literally, the reduction	OALD, 2013: 36

Kohl	الكحل	A black powder that is used especially in Eastern countries. It is put around the eye to make them more attractive	ODFW, 2010: 158 M, 2006: 106
Koran (also Qur'an)	القرآن	The holy book of the Islamic religion, written in Arabic, containing the word of Allah as revealed to the prophet Muhammad	OALD. 2013: 857
Sugar	السكر	A sweet substance, often in the form of white or brown crystals, made from the juices of various plants, used in cooking or to make tea, coffee, etc.	OALD, 2013: 1547 MH: 1175

CONCLUSION

Cultural contact of any form results in linguistic contact. Linguistic borrowing in most cases exhibits as a response to language borrowing. A number of motivations stand behind the phenomenon of borrowing. As a result of cultural and linguistic contact between Standard English and Standard Arabic languages so many words travel among the two languages. The loanwords are adapted in accordance to the linguistic system of the receptor language in many levels as phonology, morphology, and semantics. The following is a summary of the conclusions detected:

1. English loanwords in Arabic in most cases gain the prefix {al-} e.g:
Raccoon *الراكون*
2. In some cases the suffix {al-} is not omitted but is modified to accord the linguistic system of the receptor language. It is worth mentioning that the suffix loses its function. e.g: Aurbengine
البانجان
3. Arabic loanwords in English in most cases lose the prefix {al-} e.g:
cotton *القطن*
4. When entering Arabic, English loanwords show tendency to substitute certain consonant phonemes that have no similar counterpart in Arabic with ones close to their manner or place of articulation. Examples: /p/ into /بـ/ e.g: Computer *الكومبيوتر*, /g/ into /غـ/ e.g: Demography *الديموغرافيا*, /t/ into /طـ/ e.g: Watt *الواط*, etc.
5. Having no exact alternative, particular Arabic phonemes are replaced by others from English when Arabic words travel to English language. Examples: /قـ/ into /kـ/ *القهوة* Coffee, /طـ/ into /tـ/ e.g: *القطن* Cotton, /حـ/ into /hـ/ e.g: *الكحل* kohl, etc.

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