

Loanwords in Arabic and English: A Comparative Approach

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1- Introduction

1.1 Reading the history of both Arabic and English unveils many areas of interest. One of these areas is loanwords. It is almost a universal feature of the world's languages to borrow from one another. This results in the fact that some languages, such as Latin, are usually classified as lending or donor languages; however, when such languages lose their 'prestige', they stop playing that role. Other languages are classified as borrowing languages. However, some linguists object to the use of 'borrowing'; they think that it is not accurate because "it implies that the element in question is taken from the donor language for a limited amount of time and then returned, which is by no means the case. The item is actually copied, rather than borrowed in the strict sense of the term" (Aitchison: 114).

However, this classification is not permanent because Arabic which was at a certain point in time classified as one of the lending or donor languages to English (e.g. *minaret, Bedouin, sultan, emir, ghoul, hijab, hajj*) is now borrowing words from English e.g. internet, cassette, radio, seminar, microwave, ...etc. In other words, its role as a donor language has remarkably decreased.

This paper adopts a comparative approach with the aim of revealing many of the similarities and dissimilarities between Arabic and English in borrowing words from other languages. It also explores areas such as the technical definition of loanwords (not just the simple common definition of 'words borrowed by one language from other lexically richer languages'), the role of religion in borrowing loanwords, the semantic changes underwent by loanwords including generalization, specialization, amelioration, pejoration and transfer, clues in proper and place names and finally the role of the Arabic Language Academy in handling and Arabicizing loanwords.

1.2 To collect the data for this paper, that is, following the history or the

development of the loanwords in question, three major dictionaries are used, namely, *Webster Collegiate Ninth New Dictionary* (1991), *A Dictionary of Persian Loanwords in the Arabic Language* (1990) by Al-Sayyid 'Addi Shir (the dictionary contains loanwords from other languages including Turkish, Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Sanskrit, Kurdish, Latin...etc) and *The Dictionary of Arab Names* (1991) compiled by four outstanding Egyptian scholars, namely, Dr. El-Said Badawi, Dr. Mahmoud Hegazi, Dr. Ali El-Din Hillal and Farouk Shousha.

1.3 An important fact is that tracing the history of a loanword in English is sometimes a difficult task due to a number of reasons, the most important of which is that a word may pass through a number of languages before 'settling down' in the borrowing language, English:

The history of a loanword may be quite complex because such words have often passed through a series of languages before reaching English. For example, *chess* was borrowed from Old French in the thirteenth century. The Old French word (pl. *eschés*, sing. *eschec*) was, in turn, a normal development of the medieval Latin *scaccus*, borrowed from Arabic, which had earlier borrowed it from Persian *shah* 'king'. Thus the etymology of the word reaches from Persian, through Arabic, Latin and Old French. (Pyles: 292)

Even authorized dictionaries acknowledge this fact by referring in many cases to the uncertainty of the origin of the word. The following example, taken from *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (1993), emphasizes this fact:

gewgaw (Origin uncertain: perh. redupl. of OFr. *gogue* game, joke or *f.gaw* v.)

1.4 The same difficulty is faced in tracing loanwords in Arabic, but in a different way, that is, throughout the history of Arabic, unlike English, very few studies have tackled the history of loanwords, or even divided the history of Arabic into distinctive periods similar to those of English (similar to what was done with Arabic literature regarding the division its history into distinctive periods). This point of view is supported by Roufa'il Nakhla Al- Yasou'i (1986):

It is clear for experts that tackling the history of loanwords in Arabic is a tough area because Arabs, and those who inherited their language, did not attempt to study loanwords scientifically, as many European peoples did, nor did they 'devote' dictionaries to tracing the origin of loanwords. They were just content to describe such words as 'foreign'⁽¹⁾. (169, translation is mine)

2- Linguistic Classification of Both Languages:

2.1 One of the basic facts that should be stated from the very beginning is how linguists classify both Arabic and English. There are two major classifications of languages: typological and genetic (or genealogical). The former is based “on a comparison of the formal similarities which exist between languages” (Crystal, *Encyclopedia*: 293). In other words, it is an attempt “to group languages into structural types, on the basis of phonology, grammar or vocabulary, rather than in terms of any real, or assumed historical relationship”(ibid: 293). According to this classification, the world's languages are classified into four types: “isolating, agglutinative, incorporative, and inflective, these being exemplified, respectively, by Chinese, Turkish, Eskimo and Latin” (Pyles: 65). According to this classification, Arabic is a clear case of inflective languages, where “grammatical relationships are expressed by changing the internal structure of the words – typically by the use of inflectional endings” (Crystal, *Encyclopedia*: 293). English, on the other hand, is a confusing and borderline case, that is, linguists believe that English can be classified under more than one category. As a consequence, Crystal tries to reach a kind of middle ground and classify it as 'three-in-one':

Isolating: The boy will ask the girl.

The girl will ask the boy.

Inflecting: the biggest boys have been asking.

Agglutinating: anti-dis-establish-ment-arian-ism. (*Encyclopedia*: 293)

2.1.1 However, it is important to indicate that some linguists criticized this (typological) classification:

The trouble with such a classification was that, though apparently objective,

it was not really so, but was instead based on the now discarded theory that early peoples spoke in monosyllables. Furthermore, the difference between agglutinative and inflective was not well defined, and there was considerable overlapping. Nevertheless, the terms are useful and widely used in the description of specific languages or even groups of languages. (Pyles: 66)

2.2 The genetic classification, on the other hand, is based on “the assumption that languages have diverged from a common ancestor” (Crystal, *Encyclopedia*: 293). That is to say, it tries to explore what can be called the ‘familial’ relationships between languages; that is, it is “made on the basis of such correspondences of sound and structure as indicate relationship through common origin” (Pyles: 66). This approach has been widely used since it was introduced at the end of the 18th century.

2.2.1 According to this classification, Arabic is classified as a non-Indo-European language, more specifically, a Semitic language. The importance of this group of languages is that “two of the world's most important religious documents are written in Semitic languages – the Old Testament in Hebrew...and the Koran in Arabic” (Pyles: 67). English, on the other hand, is classified as an Indo-European language, more specifically a Germanic language: a group which includes other languages such as Dutch, German, Danish ...etc.

3- Loanwords in Arabic and English:

3.1 Loanwords have been a linguistic phenomenon in both Arabic and English for hundreds, even thousands, of years which is the case of many languages of the world. For example, before the emergence of Islam, Arabs were in the custom of moving outside the Arabian Peninsula to trade with other countries such as Abyssinia, the Levant and Al Hira. As result, Arab merchants acquired many words (loanwords) from the languages spoken in those regions. Those loanwords became in the course of time part of the vocabulary of Arabic. Not only that, the Arabs introduced some linguistic changes (phonological and morphological) to make such words match the rules of Arabic grammar (see Hussein: 38) ⁽²⁾.

Hussein also adds that when the Qur'an was revealed, it contained those loanwords

which had already become part of the (Arabic) vocabulary used by Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula. He mentions a lot of examples from different languages as shown by the following table (loanwords will be written in bold in both Arabic verses and their translations):

Verse	Translation	Origin
يؤتكم كفلين من رحمته (الحديد: 28)	"He will bestow on you a double portion of His mercy" (Iron: 28)	Abyssinian
على الأرائك ينظرون (المطففين: 23)	"On thrones (of dignity) will they command a sight (of all things)" (Dealing in Fraud: 23)	Syriac
كتاب مرقوم (المطففين: 20)	"(There is) a register (fully) inscribed " (Dealing in Fraud: 20)	Hebrew
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم (الفاحة: 5)	"Show us the straight way " (Opening Chapter: 5)	Latin
هذا فليذوقه حميم وغساق (ص: 57)	"Yea, such! – Then shall they taste it – a boiling fluid, and a fluid dark, murky, intensely cold " (Sad: 57)	Turkish

(Translation used is that of Abdullah Yusuf Ali)

Arab poets used other words such as the following verse by Al Buhtury, one of the most famous and skillful poets in the history of the Arabic language:

وأنوشروان يزجي الصفوف تحت الدرفس

And Anushrwaan is leading the troops under the **banner**

(Translation is mine)

The word written in bold is the Persian word for flag or banner, although Arabic has الراية (meaning flag or banner) and العلم (meaning flag or banner) for the same purpose.

3.2 Since its birth, English has been borrowing words from other languages especially its ‘mother’ language, Germanic, then from Latin, French, Greek, Arabic...etc.

One of the most common sources of new words in English is the process simply labeled **borrowing**, that is, the taking over of words from other languages. Throughout its history, the English language has adopted a vast number of loanwords from other languages, including alcohol(Arabic), boss(Dutch), croissant(French), lilac(Persian), piano(Italian), pretzel(German), robot(Czech), tycoon(Japanese), yogurt(Turkish) and zebra(Bantu).(Yule: 52)

Even during the modern English period (1500-1800) when Shakespeare(1564-1616) was writing his masterpieces, he faced difficulty in expressing the subtle meanings he had in mind because English lacked expressive lexical items. In other words, he expressed “a certain impatience with the language: Shakespeare often cannot wait for the right word to come, and so invents a word of his own” (Burgess: 76). This fact (lexical poverty) is supported by other scholars because during the Modern English period, “around 13,000 new loanwords entered the language in the sixteenth century alone, and of these 7,000 were from Latin” (Culpeper: 25).

3.3 R.A. Hudson (1996) states the following reasons for users of any language to borrow words from another language: “one reason for using a word from such a language is to pretend, just for a moment, to be a native speaker with whatever social characteristics we associate with the stereotype” (55). However, this is not the only ‘logical’ reason for borrowing words from other languages; the more practical reason, “of course, is that there is simply no other available word” (ibid: 55).

3.4 Another important issue related to borrowing words from other languages in both Arabic and English is register; in other words, the loanwords acquire the same prestige of their ‘mother’ languages .For example, in English, Latin words are usually regarded as ‘learned’ and ‘formal’ words because Latin at the time of borrowing was “the language of scholarship, the law and so on—in fact, it was the High language in a diglossic situation, with English as the Low (and French in between as the language of the court)” (Culpeper: 56).

3.4.1 This difference in register led to the so-called *Inkhorn Controversy*, which is “a debate about the merits or otherwise acquisition of ‘artificial’, ‘bookish’ Latin

vocabulary- the vocabulary coming from the inkhorn- in place of ‘natural’ , ‘common’ Germanic vocabulary” (Culpeper: 27). He, Culpeper, refers to the fact that Germanic loanwords are usually regarded as informal, whereas Latin loanwords are the formal ones with French occupying a middle ground. He sums up the differences between loanwords taken from both languages as follows:

Germanic	Latin
frequent	rare
spoken	written
informal	formal
private	public
simple	complex
concrete	abstract
affective	neutral

He concludes that these stylistic differences between both languages can “be explained by looking at the historical development of English loanwords. The bulk of Latin vocabulary entered the language during the Renaissance, which was a period of lexical upheaval” (ibid: 27).

This phenomenon is also apparent in Arabic especially when using the Turkish loanwords (as will be shown later): most Turkish vocabulary is used in colloquial Arabic and very few Turkish loanwords became part of Standard Arabic (see Al Yasou’i)⁽³⁾.

4-Rise and Decline of Lending Languages:

4.1 Reading the history of the world's languages(see Crystal and Malmekjaer) reveals that human history witnessed the flourishing of some languages that acted as lending or donor languages due to being languages of science, knowledge, technology and sometimes religion, e.g. Latin, Greek, Arabic...etc. For example, Latin was the language of religion and literature in Europe for a long time especially during the Middle Ages. Culpeper points out that “many literary, scientific and religious texts were in Latin, since Latin was the language of scholarship and scholarly literature” (25). However, “it was not until the Renaissance in the sixteenth century that borrowing from Latin took off” (ibid; 25).

4.1.1 As for Arabic, it also acted as a lending language to European (and other) languages due to the role of religion, that is, one of the ultimate aims of early Muslims in life was to spread Islam all over the world. Al-Yasou'i points out that “Muslims' conquests went beyond the borders of the Arab World to ...India in the seventh century, Iran in 652...till they reached Russian cities in 1266” (124, translation is mine) ⁽⁴⁾. He mentions thirty seven languages including European languages, particularly English, that borrowed words from Arabic when Muslims were in Andalusia for eight centuries until they left it in 1492. Arabic at that time represented the language of scholarship and science. Pyles supports the same point of view:

A number of words ultimately Arabic, most of them having to do in one way or another with science or with commerce, came during the Middle English period, usually by way of French or Latin. These include amber, camphor, cipher, cotton, lute, mattress, orange, saffron, sugar, syrup and zenith. (311)

4.1.2 Al-Yasou'i cites interesting examples of Arabic words that entered European languages including the following (pages 132-140):

Hungarian	Armenian	Greek	Russian	English	French	Arabic
alixir	iksir	elixirion	elexir	elixir	elixir	الإكسير
alkémia	alkimia	alkhimiya	alkhimia	alchemy	alchimie	الكيمياء
amir	amir	émiris	émir	ameer	émir	أمير
tsoukor	chakar	zakhari	sakhar	sugar	sucre	سكر
siroup	charab	siropi	siropp	syrup	sirop	شراب
kâmfor	kapour	kafoura	kamfara	camphor	camphre	كافور
minaret	minaré	minarés	minaret	minaret	minaret	منارة

4.2 As for Romance languages (French, Spanish and Italian), they acted as lending languages to English for a long period of time, especially French. The coming of the Normans in 1066 heralded that “French became the official language of law and

administration” (Culpeper: 25). French in the course of time became the language of etiquette, dress and cooking. The use of French by the ruling classes popularized a lot of French words, but it never happened in the history of England that people spoke French in the street. However, the French culture and style of life continued to have a powerful impact:

Even when English displaced French after about 200 years, French culture exerted a powerful influence. Over 10,000 words were adopted from French during the Middle English period (e.g. parliament, baron, manor, noble, liberty, government, arrest, judge, jury, prison, beef, lettuce, mutton, pork, sausage, dress, jewel, cloak, virtue, art, beauty, romance). In many cases, Old English words were replaced by French ones (e.g. OE stow- Fr. Place, OE wyrd –Fr. fortune). (Culpeper: 25)

4.2.1 However, it should be pointed out that Classical and Romance languages ceased to act as lending languages because “these languages experienced a decline in prestige”(ibid: 25) and this is why “French borrowing has been in decline since the Middle English period, and Latin since the end of the seventeenth century”(ibid:25). Consequently, English is nowadays “borrowing from languages which have not been traditional sources for vocabulary. For example, one study suggests that Japanese accounts for 8 per cent of borrowings in the last fifty years, and African languages for 6 per cent” (ibid: 25-26).

We have continued to borrow words from other languages. Because of the growth of world trade, and Britain's large part in it, we have borrowed words from distant and exotic countries: *pyjamas* from India, *bamboo* from Malaya, *maize* from the West Indies, *budgerigar* from Australia, *tomato* from Mexico, *coffee* from turkey, and *tea* from China.(Barber:218)

Another important fact that should be mentioned in this respect is that English is nowadays borrowing fewer words than before because “nowadays most new words are formed ... by compounding” (Culpeper: 26). Arabic, on the other hand, has been borrowing words from different languages before and after the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, the text that represents a junction in the history of the Arabic Language. As

mentioned earlier, there are a number of languages such as Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, Syriac...etc that acted as lending languages to Arabic throughout its history. There are other languages that acted as minor sources of loanwords such as Greek, Latin, Romance languages (especially French and Italian).

4.3 In tracing the history of loanwords in Arabic, Al- Yasou'i came to a lot of significant conclusions. Even before the emergence of Islam, Arabs had been borrowing words from Aramaic till the sixth century especially in the areas of agriculture, industry, commerce, navigation, science and Christianity e.g. onko الأَنك (lead), bakorto باكورة (first fruits of something), talmido تلميذ (pupil)...etc.

4.3.1 As for Hebrew, although a Semitic language like Arabic, he (Al- Yasou'i) indicates that Arabic did not borrow many words from Hebrew except a few ones related to the Jews and Judaism e.g. teba تابوت (coffin), guey hinnom جهنم (hell), tora التوراة (Torah), chebet سبط (old Jewish tribe)...etc.

4.3.2 Persian also acted as lending or donor language to Arabic for a number of centuries. He also indicated that the Arabs conquered Iran in the seventh century and dominated it till 1220. They spread Islam in those lands and found that the Persians were a people of civilization and this made them borrow hundreds of words from Persian e.g. owg أوج (peak), parvahan برهان (evidence), gohbod جهبذ (a good critic), dowreh دورق (pitcher) ...etc.

4.3.3 As for Greek, although the Arabs did not conquer Greece, they came in contact with the Greeks for a number of generations. The Arabs were so much interested in Greek philosophy and read it in its original language or in its Syriac translation. On the other hand, Lower Greek, after the emergence of Christianity, remained for a long time the language used by all the Roman-ruled peoples, side by side with their original languages. This is why when the Arabs conquered countries like Egypt and Syria, they came in contact with the Christians who used Lower Greek. As a result, the Arabs in the course of time borrowed many words from those peoples e.g. ovrizon إبريز (pure gold), ethir أثير (air), sofizma سفسطة (sophistry), sapon صابون (soap)... etc.

4.3.4 As for Turkish, when the Sultan of Turks, Selim the First, defeated the Mamluks in 1516, he dominated Syria, Egypt, what is between the two rivers

(Mesopotamia), Lebanon and Palestine till the collapse of the Ottoman Sultanate in 1918, after their defeat in the First World War (1914-1918). For four centuries, a lot of Turkish words infiltrated into colloquial Arabic, but very few became part of Standard Arabic e.g. kaftan قفطان (a kind of cloak), bey بك (master), boghaz بوغاز (strait), tersane ترسانة (arsenal)etc.

4.3.5 Al-Yasou'i indicated that Arabic borrowed few words from other minor languages like Romance languages: French parlement برلمان (parliament), Italian borsa بورصة (stock exchange) and Spanish tabago الطباق (tobacco), Latin papa البابا (Pope), German zink زنك (zinc), Russian mazout مازوت (mazut), Chinese tchha شاي (tea)...etc.

4.3.6 Recently English as the most important language and the lingua franca of the whole world seems to be the major lending language to Arabic especially in the field of technology e.g. computer, disk, search engine, internet ...etc

He came to the following statistical facts:

Apart from the fact that we may have more than one form of the word in Arabic, we made sure of the origin of the number of foreign words (loanwords) that entered Arabic: 988 loanwords from Aramaic, 854 from Persian, 472 from Greek, 32 from Turkish, 67 from Latin, 42 from Hebrew, 17 from Italian, 12 from French, 31 from other languages. (286, translation is mine)⁽⁵⁾

Some linguists might disagree with these statistics; for example, some may think that the words that Arabic borrowed from Turkish are certainly more than 32. However, it is a commendable study in this field, which should be approached by other researchers.

5- What Is a Loanword?

A loanword can be simply defined as a word borrowed by one language from another language; however, a technical definition is far deeper and more comprehensive than this. It involves other features (semantic, phonic, cultural...etc) including the following:

5.1 Direct and Indirect Loanwords:

Loanwords can be generally classified as direct i.e. the ones taken directly from a language and indirect the ones taken from a language although they originally came from

another language. For example, English borrowed words like ‘noble’, ‘cloak’, ‘virtue’ and ‘baron’ from French, but “an enormous number of French borrowings had originally come from Latin... Most of these were from areas such as religion, science, law and literature (e.g. scripture, client, conviction, library, scribe, dissolve, quadrant, medicine, ulcer)” (Culpepper: 25). However, this is not the only example because “even before the Conquest a number of Greek words entered English by way of Latin, in addition to some very early loans that may have come into Germanic directly from Greek, such as *church*” (Pyles: 297).

Similarly, Arabic borrowed words from Persian such as السراية (court or big house), طباشير (chalk), ماخور (brothel)...etc (more examples are found in Shir). However, there are other loanwords that entered Arabic through a number of languages, that is, indirect loanwords. Shir mentions examples including the following: صندوق (box) a Persian word originally taken from Russian, خان (shop) a Persian word originally taken from Aramaic and بارجة (warship) a Persian loanword originally taken from Greek ...etc

5.2 Classification of Loanwords:

David Crystal (1992) classifies the loan process into a number of types according to form, meaning, pronunciation and translation...etc:

Several types of loan process have been recognized such as **loanwords** (where both form and meaning are borrowed, or assimilated with the some adaptation to the phonological system of the new language)...; **loan blends** (where the meaning is borrowed, but only part of the form)...; **loan shifts** (where the meaning is borrowed, and the form is native)...; **loan translations** (where the morphemes in the borrowed word are translated item by item). (205)

Pyles has a different classification actually based on usage: he classifies loanwords into **popular loanwords**, namely, “those of oral transmission and are part of the vocabulary of everyday communication” (294) and **learned loanwords** meaning those that “owe their adoption to more or less scholarly influences” (ibid: 294). He adds that popular loanwords have become an integral part of English vocabulary and commonly and extensively used in daily life to the extent that “those who use them are seldom aware

that they are of foreign origin” (ibid: 294). Learned loanwords, on the other hand, are usually used in academic writings, scholarly research or written text in general, but they “may in time become part of the living vocabulary, even though their use may be confined to a certain class or group” (Pyles:294).

5.3 Semantic Changes:

Loanwords become in the course of time part of the lexical stock of the language, users of language, if not specialists, will never know that a certain word has been borrowed from another language; and even if they know, they use it because it has become ‘a lexical fact’ i.e. they have to use it to express the meaning they would like to convey to the other users of language, who definitely know that meaning. Thus there is no wonder that these loanwords undergo the same processes of semantic changes that the other words of language do; “a word may, as it were, go downhill, or it may rise in the world; there is no way of predicting what its career may be”(Pyles: 247). Culpeper points out that there are a number of semantic processes that some loanwords (like other original words in the language) undergo as a result of the changes that occur in people's lives and reflected in their languages. These processes include the following:

5.3.1 Generalization:

He describes this process as widening of meaning; that is, when the word starts to refer to more items or referents than before. Pyles has a similar definition, “A sense (of a word) may expand to include more referents than it formerly had” (242).

Many English and Arabic loanwords have undergone this process. In English, for example, a word like ‘mill’ has been generalized: it was earlier used to refer to a place where things are made by the process of grinding to be used for food. The grinding element has been eliminated, so that “we may speak of a woolen mill, a steel mill or even a grin mill” (Pyles: 243). Looking this word up in *Webster Ninth new Collegiate Dictionary* reveals its Latin origin:

(ME mille, fr. OE mylen, fr. LL Molina, molinum, fr. Fem. And neut. of molinus of a mill, of a millstone, fr. L mola mill, millstone; akin to L molere to grind more at meal)⁽⁶⁾

Arabic, on the other hand, has similar examples like الخيال which was originally

borrowed from Persian to mean 'thinking' or 'illusion', but this meaning has been generalized to also mean 'imagination' and 'inspiration' (see Shir: 59).

5.3.2 Specialization:

Culpeper refers to it as “narrowing of meaning” (38) and Pyles as “a process in which, by adding to the features of meaning, the referential scope of a word is reduced” (244). Both English and Arabic have examples of loanwords that underwent this process: in English, for example, a word like ‘clerk’ started with the sense of a clergyman, but nowadays it is used to refer to shop or hotel worker, scholar and office worker.

Looking the word up in *Webster Ninth new Collegiate Dictionary* reveals its Greek origin:

(ME fr. OF cleric&OE cleric, cleric, both fr. LL clericus, fr.LGK klerikos, fr. GK kleros lot, inheritance(in allusion to Deut18:2), stick of wood; akin to GK klan to break—more at halt)

Arabic has similar examples that reveal the same process; for example, word like صوان came from Persian meaning ‘A big tent’, but it nowadays is used to refer to the tent pitched to receive mourners when someone dies (see Shir: 109).

5.3.3 Amelioration:

Amelioration is the elevation of meaning, in other words, the meaning of a word becomes ‘exalted’ or acquires better connotations and associations than it formerly had. In English, a word like ‘nice’ was borrowed from Latin to mean ‘ignorant’, but in the course of time, it was used to indicate the positive meaning we know today. This means that “what has been added has ameliorated or elevated the semantic content of the word” (Pyles: 248). The following entry reveals the history of the word:

(ME, foolish, wanton, fr. OF, fr. L nescius ignorant, fr. nescire not to know—more at nescience).

Similarly, in Arabic we have loanwords that underwent the same positive change like الروضة (literally garden) which was originally borrowed from Persian with the meaning of ‘a swamp of sand and weeds’ but in the course of time it acquired positive connotations and elevated meanings to mean ‘garden’⁽⁷⁾.

5.3.4 Pejoration:

Pejoration is the opposite of amelioration, that is, it refers to “a change of meaning in which a word acquires a negative evaluation” (Crystal, *Encyclopedia*: 419). In English, for example, a Latin word like ‘notorious’ started with the meaning of ‘widely known’ but nowadays it is used with the sense of ‘widely and unfavorably known’. The etymological history offered by *Webster Ninth new Collegiate Dictionary* supports the above semantic change:

(ML notorius, fr.LL notorium information, indictment, fr.neut.of(assumed)LL notorius making known, fr. L notus, pp. of noscere to come to know—more at know)

In Arabic, we have similar cases: a word like توز, tuz, the Turkish word for ‘salt’, was neutrally used to refer to the substance in question. However, it is nowadays used as a kind of swearword. It is also important to point out that this process of pejoration was associated with a change of register: this word is only used in informal contexts, although its ‘neutral’ meaning ‘allows’ it to be used in all contexts, whether formal or informal!

5.3.5 Transfer:

Transfer refers to the shift of meaning a word undergoes throughout the history of language “so that the word refers to different -though often closely associated- set of things” (Culpeper: 38). Pyles cites the example of ‘long’ and ‘short’ as have been “transferred from the spatial concepts to which they ordinarily refer and made to refer to temporal, as in *a long time, a short while*”(244). Culpeper cites a more interesting and detailed example, namely, that of ‘bureau’ and how its meaning changed over a long period of time:

Twelfth century	coarse woolen cloth
Thirteenth century	cloth covering tables and counters
Fourteenth century	counting tables
Fifteenth/sixteenth century	writing table
Seventeenth century	room containing the table people working in the room, department, agency

The entry provided by *Webster* emphasizes the foreign origin of the word and the

interpretations suggested by Culpeper:

(F, desk, cloth covering for desks, fr. OF burel woolen cloth, fr. (assumed) OF bure, fr. LL burra shaggy cloth)

Unfortunately, in Arabic we do not have a historical dictionary that gives us the etymological history of words (see the conclusion). However, Shir provides examples in his dictionary that can indicate the same phenomenon in Arabic. For example, بريد (mail or post) is a Persian word meaning ‘to carry and transfer’ then in the course of time it came to mean ‘mail or post’. He also says that it can be of a Latin origin referring to the animal that carries the mail, then it entered the Arabic language to mean the mail itself.

6- Life and Death of Loanwords:

6.1 Metaphorically speaking, many loanwords pass through three stages: birth, life and death. In other words, many of the “loanwords have, as it were, a life of their own that cuts across the boundaries between languages” (Pyles: 293). This simply means that many of the loanwords are borrowed, used for a while and then users of language stop using them for different reasons. That is to say loanwords undergo ‘conventionalization’ which is a gradual process in which the loanword progressively permeates a larger and larger speech community, then the users of language stop using it till it becomes ‘dead’ and labeled as ‘archaic’. For example, many of the words that English borrowed from Latin are no longer used and regarded as ‘archaic’. Users of English even introduced some morphological changes to Latin words to acquire an English ‘morphological character’. For example the plural of the Latin ‘phenomenon’ is ‘phenomena’ according to the Latin plural rules, but many of users of English use the English ‘phenomenons’. The same holds true for ‘foci’ and ‘focuses’, the former is the Latin plural of the singular ‘focus’, but rarely used nowadays except in scientific contexts; the English version ‘focuses’ is used instead. However, it should be mentioned that this did not happen to Latin only, but to other languages as well including French, Greek, ...etc.

6.2 In Arabic, there are similar cases of words that were borrowed from other languages, used for while and then became ‘archaic’ in the course of time. For example Arabic borrowed فالودج from Persian (a kind of dessert made of flour, honey and water). This word is no longer used and only found in books of history, literature...etc when talking about the history of Arabs or the history of their literature. The same holds true

for words borrowed from other languages e.g. Aramaic *salto* إصليت (a kind of sword), Hebrew *gadich* جدث (grave), Greek *stoma* سطم (the pointed end of the sword)...etc (see Shir).

7- Clues in Proper and Place Names:

7.1 In his book, Culpeper devotes a whole chapter entitled “Clues in Place Names” to trace loanwords in place names in England. He points out that following the history of those who invaded and/or settled in England reveals a lot about the history of the English language giving due attention to loanwords to support the above fact:

The most important factor in the development of English has been the arrival of successive waves of invaders and settlers speaking different languages. The history of place names in Britain is closely connected to the dominance of various languages at various points in time. (1)

He mentions a lot of examples proving his point of view including the following:

Pen (Welsh) = top, hill (e.g. **Pendle**)

Castra (Latin) = camp, walled town (e.g. **Lancaster**)

By (Scandinavian) = village (e.g. **Kirkby** and **Crosby**)

Beau (French) = beautiful (e.g. **Beaumont**)

7.2 I believe that what Culpeper did can be easily and satisfactorily done in Arabic to follow the infiltration of loanwords into Arabic. Names of people in Arabic do help to reveal similar facts. *The Dictionary of Arab Names* (1991) provides many interesting examples. The authors conducted a survey of Arab names ending up with a huge sample of 18,509 names representing the common names in all the Arab countries. The etymological and linguistic analyses provided by the authors create insights into the infiltration of loanwords throughout the history of the Arabic language. These loanwords were used as names for people due to their beautiful, lofty and interesting meanings including the names of flowers, power-implying words, names of animals and birds...etc.

The authors in the English introduction refer to the difficulty of tracing loan names, especially if the name in question came from more than one language:

In the case of non-Arabic names, authentication of their etymology was

attempted, with mixed results. As might be expected, in some cases there has been considerable difficulty in deciding whether an originally non-Arabic name came into society directly from its language of origin or via another language. This problem is especially apparent in the case of names of Persian origin, some of which seem likely to have come via Turkish. (IV)

7.2.1 The dictionary abounds in many examples that clarify the above fact including the following:

Name	Origin	Meaning
شيرين (Sheriin)	Persian	nice – beautiful – sweet – cute
دينا (Diina)	Hebrew – Aramaic	religion – debt
ساويرس (Sawiris)	Latin	lover of justice or right-serious- strict
شوشة (Shuusha)	Persian – Aramaic	a bullion of gold or silver
جبريل (Jibriil)	Hebrew	the man of God
سونيا (Sunia)	Russian	Russian form of Sophia meaning wisdom
نيرمين (Nermin)	Persian	soft – subtle - serene
مارسيل (Maarsil)	French from Latin	courage or hammer
يارا (Yaara)	Persian or Turkish Or Syriac	ability - courage – power - necklace
بيطار (BiTaar)	Latin	veterinary
لونا (Luuna)	Latin	the moon
ليديا (Lidia)	Greek	a girl from Lydia (an old town in Asia)
روفائيل (Rufaa'iil)	Hebrew	cured by God
شنودة (Shenuuda)	Coptic from Hieroglyphic	the son of God

Name	Origin	Meaning
شهرزاد (Shahrzaad)	Persian	son or daughter of the city- native – national – free - smiling face
شیری (Sheri)	Coptic	daughter

7.2.2 Also many of the names of places in the Arab world reveal the infiltration of loanwords. For example, Fatma Mahgoub (1992) mentions the foreign origin of ‘Baghdad’; “a Persian word meaning gift from Allah” (Vol. VII: 266)⁽⁸⁾. Shir also refers to another city in Iraq, namely, Al-Anbar; he says that it is a Persian word meaning ‘fat’. In addition, it is widely known that ‘Alexandria’, was named after Alexander the Great who invaded Egypt.

7- The Role of the Arabic Language Academy:

7.1 The Arabic Language Academy is an academic linguistic institution whose main role is to ‘protect’ the Arabic language keeping it pure and correct. To keep the purity of Arabic, it plays a key role in confronting the torrent of loanwords entering Arabic especially those coming from English, the most important language today (since the 17th century). However, there are loanwords that infiltrated Arabic and became an integral part of people's ‘lexical life’ to the extent that they could not have been replaced like aspirin, penicillin, bilharzia, piano ...etc. Other words have been replaced by Arabic equivalents, but the suggested equivalents are not used; examples include تلفاز (television), مذيع (radio), دار الخيالة (cinema)...etc

7.2 It tries to provide an Arabic equivalent to the loanword in different ways including translation (e.g. goalkeeper became حارس مرمى - literally the one that protects the goal), coinage (balloon became النفاخة—literally the thing blown), and affixation(e.g. Marxism became الماركسية)⁽⁹⁾ to make the new word match the Arabic morphology... etc.

8- Conclusion:

At the end of this paper, I hope that researchers and scholars in the Arab world will give due attention to this field and feel that it is my duty to suggest the following:

1- We, Arabs, lack a historical dictionary of words that reveals their etymology, semantic

changes, spelling changes ...etc. In other words, we do not have a dictionary like *Webster* that gives the history of the word and whether it is a loanword or an original Arabic word.

2- There should be more studies tracing the origin of loanwords and the semantic changes they underwent.

3- Studies tracing the development of place and proper names are needed to reflect the development of the Arabic language through contact with the other languages.

4- Mass media should play their role in spreading the choices suggested by the Arabic Language Academy to keep the purity of Arabic.

Endnotes

1- The original reads:

"من الواضح للخبراء أن معالجة هذا الموضوع شديدة الوعورة، لأن العرب ومن ورثوا لغتهم في العصور الأخيرة لم يدرسوا أصل الكلمات الدخيلة في لسانهم درساً عملياً، كما فعل معظم شعوب أوربا، ولم يعينوا مثلهم في القواميس مصدر تلك الكلمات إلا ندره، مكتفين بالقول أنها دخيلة". (169)

2- The original reads:

"ولكن العرب بسبب تنقلاتهم واشتغالهم بالتجارة، وارتحالهم بالشقاء والصيف، وسفرهم إلى الشام والحبشة والحيرة، علقت بألسنتهم ألفاظ أعجمية، ثم غيرت بعضها بالنقض، والتخفيف من ثقلها، واستعملتها في أشعارها ومحاوراتها حتى جرت مجرى العربي الصريح، ووقع بها البيان، وعلى هذا الحد نزل بها القرآن، وهذا ما رجحه أبو عبيد القاسم بن سلام.

فالأصل أن هذه الألفاظ أعجمية، ولكن العرب نقلوها واستعملوها وعربوها وهو ما نميل إليه". (38)

3- The original reads:

"واندمجت مئات الكلمات في اللغة العامية. مع ذلك لم تقتبس العربية الفصحى من التركية سوى كلمات قليلة". (272)

4- The original reads:

"لقد تجاوزت فتوح العرب من عصور عديدة حدود العالم العربي...فتحوا الهند في القرن السابع، وإيران سنة 652،...فقد فتحوا سنة 1226 أهم مدن روسية". (124)

5- The original reads:

" قد ذكرنا في الجداول السابقة أنه قد اندمج في لغتنا بغض النظر عن وجود صيغتين أو أكثر لكلمة عربية واحدة، 988 كلمة آرامية، 854 فارسية، 472 يونانية، 32 تركية، 67 لاتينية، 42 عبرانية، 17 إيطالية، 12 فرنسية، 31 من لغات أخرى". (286)

6- The abbreviations used in research include the following:

F (French)

Fem (feminine)

fr. (from)

Gk (Greek)

L (Latin)

LGk (Late Greek)

LL (Late Latin)

ME (Middle English)

OE (Old English)

OF (Old French)

pp (past participle)

7- The original reads:

"الروضة من الرمل و العشب مستنقع الماء ونحو النصف من القرية ماء. وفي الكليات الروضة بقية الماء في الحوض. وهي معربة عن ريز وهي بقية الماء في الإناء وهي مشتقة من ريختن أي صب وأخذتها العرب وتصرفت بها". (75)

8- The original reads:

"وقيل إن بغداد كلمة فارسية معناها بالعربية هبة من الله". (Vol. VII: 226)

9- The original reads:

"المصدر الصناعي وهو المصدر الذي يحتوى على كسرة وياء مشددة مفتوحة وتاء، ويدل على الاتجاهات والمذاهب والمعنويات، والظواهر الطبيعية، والأمراض وأسماء العلوم". (114)

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