Anglicisms in Arabic: Enrichment or Intrusion? Muhammad K. Assayyed ^(*)

Abstract

This paper examines the impact of English on Arabic, a topical theme with linguistic and cultural implications. The most direct reflection of this impact is seen in the influx of anglicisms into the lexicon of Arabic. Since media is one of "the most influential sources in the introduction of new vocabulary" (Makarova, 2012, p. 74), accordingly, this paper explores the outcomes of using anglicisms in the language of Arab media, where the presence of borrowings has increased in an unparalleled degree. The research methodology employed here consists of scanning some selected editorials of al-Ahram newspaper. The analyzed time period is from 2015 until 2018. The findings of the study show that the spread of anglicisms has often been viewed as a sign as much of the enrichment of Arabic as of its decay.

Key words: English-Arabic language contact, borrowing, anglicisms, and Al-Ahram newspaper.

0. Introduction

Arabic is still, in many people's minds, a language unaffected by English influences for its grammatical complexity and its cultural and religious significance; however, it is subject to intense influence from English. This pervasive influence, or what has been termed "Anglicization" in the literature, is noticeable in the introduction of large numbers of borrowings into Arabic. Although the English impact dates

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back to the last two centuries, the use of anglicisms in Arabic has become more widespread since the second half of the twentieth century, because of the spread of translation activities, the growing role of globalization, and the rapid development of science and technology.

At present, English is, without doubt, a lingua franca across the globe, and it is attached to modernity and prestige. Accordingly, it is the most widely spoken and written language in such domains as science, technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, business, advertising, etc. to name some. The language of Arab media is an area where the impact of English has long been perceived as being strong, yet it has not been investigated thoroughly. There is still a lack of scholarly studies that systematically investigate the language of media and utilize the methodology of corpus linguistics. Therefore, the current study investigates the usage of anglicisms in Arabic, an aspect of two languages in contact, and it focuses on the language of media, because it is suggested that this domain would provide a rather large sample of anglicisms; journalists being a group who do a great deal of borrowings.

1. Review of the literature

1.1. English as a global language

Numerous scholars and researchers shed light on the extreme rise and spread of English worldwide, such as: Conrad Andrew & Joshua Fishman (1977), Richard Watts & Peter Trudgill (2002), Robert Phillipson (1992/2009), David Crystal (2003), and finally Eva-Maria Kaufmann (2011). To begin with, since the second half of the twentieth century, English has gained the status of being a global language, namely "a

language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country" (Crystal, 2003, p. 3). Because of the increasingly globalized world, there is an for adopting language urgent need a common of communication, which would make it possible to bridge linguistic gaps between different languages and dissimilar cultures; so far, English seems to be that language. Graddol (2001) recognizes English as "a vehicular language for international communication" (p. 27). Seemingly, English is the most widely used language, simply because it is now spoken in almost every country, with more non-native speakers than native speakers.

This reflects the idea that there are large numbers of people across the world who use English. McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil (2003) comment:

English is used by at least 750 million people, and barely half of those speak it as a mother tongue. Some estimates have put that figure closer to one billion. Whatever the total, English at the end of the twentieth century is more widely scattered, more widely spoken and written, than any other language has ever been. (pp. 9:10)

To elaborate, English has secured itself the status of being the global language of the planet, due to its growing status in a number of language uses: it is the main language of publishing, economy, banking, tourism, advertising, world trade, etc. Moreover, the growing role of globalization in the whole world has "strengthened the position of English as a global language" (Cortes, Ramirez, Rivera, Viada, & Fayer, 2005, pp. 35:36). As a result, it is impossible to deny the spread of English and its

impact on nearly all other languages. "One symptom of the impact of English [on other languages] is linguistic borrowing" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 7). Actually, English has been a fertile source for borrowing words for most languages of the whole world. The concept of linguistic borrowing is a consequence of a very significant phenomenon referred to as language contact. In the following section, this phenomenon is discussed by giving a more detailed look at the contact between English and Arabic.

1.2. Contact between English and Arabic

When English and Arabic come into close contact, keeping them discrete is something that seems impossible. The interaction between the two languages has produced a number of linguistic consequences. The influx of Arabic words found provides invaluable evidence in English about these consequences. To illustrate, English has loaned thousands of words from Arabic such as wadi, tariff, sofa, sheikh, Sharia, mummy, mosque, harem, emir, dragoman, coffee, carob, amber, admiral, alcohol, etc. Salloum and Peters (1996) explain that "there are over 6.500 English basic words of Arabic origin or transmitted through Arabic. These words are from different subjects: like architecture, agriculture, ... literature. mathematics, mechanics, medicine, music and physics which Arab has great contributions in these subjects" (p. 23).

But, Arabic exerts practically no influence on English nowadays. This is related to the idea that when two cultures and their languages come into close contact, "if one is more dominant or advanced than the other, the directionality of culture learning and subsequent word-borrowing is not mutual,

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but from the dominant to the subordinate" (Higa, 1979, p. 278). To put it succinctly, as Arabic belongs to a less developed civilization nowadays, the influence is strongly biased in favor of the English language. Undoubtedly, English has had a major impact on Arabic for the last decades, especially on the vocabulary level. Consequently, in today's world of wide international communication and intercultural connections, the study of anglicisms is a significant factor in illustrating the influence of English upon Arabic.

To conclude, English is perceived as the actual universal language. The global spread of English that has accelerated as never before is reflected in English words and sometimes expressions being borrowed by other languages, and as a result English has become a main supplier of borrowings to most languages around the world, including Arabic.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. What is an anglicism?

The concept of Anglicization usually indicates the process changing something of to more English patterns. Etymologically, this term is derived from the verb anglicize, a relatively new term which means "to make (someone or something) English in nationality, culture, or language, ... to adopt the English language, [or] to turn into an English form" (McArthur, 2005, p. 142). Tam (2011) defines Anglicization as "a process in which the English language has exerted influence upon other languages and transformed them according to the linguistic rules of English" (p. vii). This kind of influence brings forward borrowing linguistic elements from English into other languages; such an element is known as an anglicism.

According to Sicherl (1999), an anglicism is defined as "a word borrowed from the English language which is adapted with respect to the linguistic system of the receptor language and integrated into it" (p. 12). The shortcomings of Sicherl's definition are readily apparent. Although the definition nearly emphasizes the idea that once elements are borrowed, they remain forever with the recipient language, it was rejected on the grounds that it has a very narrow vision as it takes into consideration only the most noticeable items of a language, i.e. the individual lexical items, and it ignores the morphological, syntactic, and other linguistic features. Hence, a wider definition is necessary.

Gottlieb (2005) provides a very broad definition of anglicism, namely "any individual or systematic language feature adapted or adopted from English, or inspired or boosted by English models, used in interlingual communication in a language other than English" (p. 163). Gottlieb's definition is inspired by the notion of anglicisms put forward by Picone (1996) who points out that anglicisms cover the following entities: "any borrowing from English that constitutes a new word, morpheme or locution, ... any semantic extension of a pre-existent word, morpheme or locution ... that is due to contact with English" (p. 3), or any "morphosyntactic structural innovation ... attributable to language contact with English" (p. 4). In brief, as far as the global influence of English on other languages is concerned, the term anglicism is used as an umbrella label for any sign of phonological, morphological, semantic, pragmatic, stylistic, and cultural syntactic, occurrence due to language contact with English.

2.2. Lexical vs. morphosyntactic anglicisms

Generally speaking, borrowing appears in both lexical and structural levels. When the lexis of a donor language has an impact on the lexis of a borrowing language, lexical borrowing takes place. Lexical borrowing "has become the established term to describe the process of the transfer of lexical material another language" (Zenner language to from one & Kristiansen, 2014, p. 1). To put it more clearly, lexical anglicisms refer to the incorporation of words from the vocabulary of the English language into that of another. The incorporation of lexical patterns results in acquiring such new elements as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and even verbs. The process of borrowing such elements is the simplest way since they are "less tightly knit, easily isolated as loan words and more open for new additions from the recipient language" (Muysken, 1981, p. 191). Although any language can borrow lexical patterns, it is notable that some word classes are more likely to be borrowed than others. Very often, nouns are the most numerous type, because borrowing occurs in most cases in order to name unfamiliar or new objects, ideas, concepts, and cultural phenomena.

The second type of linguistic borrowing is structural borrowing that stands for the borrowing of grammatical structures. Structural borrowing includes "phonological, morphological and syntactic borrowing" (King, 2000, p. 83). There are different types of structural borrowing. Firstly, morphological borrowing "would primarily involve the transfer of affixes from one language to another" (p. 83). An example of morphological borrowing is the word *algebra* which was

borrowed from Arabic. As it is apparent, it preserves the definite marking of its source /al-djabr/. Secondly, syntactic borrowing refers to "the transfer of syntactic structure without the transfer of (visible) grammatical forms" (p. 84). For instance, the French word order, such as the noun-adjective form, as in *attorney general* is transferred into English. The third type of structural borrowing is a calque. A calque (or loan translation) refers to "a complex lexical unit (either a single word or a fixed phrasal expression) that was created by an item-by-item translation of the (complex) source unit" (Haspelmath, 2009, p. 39). For example, the Arabic phrase /yal[§]b dawr/ is thought to be a loan-translation of the English "play a role" (where the constituent elements of the phrase *play a role* are translated item by item into Arabic equivalent morphemes).

As far as cultural borrowing is concerned, this term can be used to refer to "the borrowing of terminology for concepts hitherto foreign to a culture, occurs most likely in situations of contact between two different cultures where new artifacts and concepts are introduced, entailing the borrowing of their designations" (Wohlgemuth, 2009, p. 28). Therefore, cultural borrowings are words utilized to fill cultural gaps in the borrowing language's store of words. The direct borrowing of the English word *McDonald's* into Arabic as /maakdunaldz/ is a typical example of the introduction of the English culture of food.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection and Procedures

The best way to account for anglicisms into Arabic is to collect data from a specific set of newspapers. Therefore, in order to achieve the aims of the present study, randomly selected articles of one of the most widely circulating Egyptian daily newspapers, al-Ahram, serve as the corpus of the study. The analyzed time period is from 2015 until 2018. The corpus comprises major groups of articles on international news, national news, editorials, classified ads, advertisements, sections on industry and agriculture, and so on. The purpose of this paper is to describe and analyze changes in the Arabic language and more specifically in the language of media over the investigation period and across different text types.

4. Analysis and Discussion

To begin with, the impact of English is nowadays considerable in all areas, and many English words are introduced into the vocabularies of other languages. This impact is also observable in modern standard Arabic. Generally speaking, borrowings have either been looked upon more positively as "enrich[ing] the recipient language with material from other languages and expand[ing] speaker's choices of lexical and stylistic expression" (Maral-Hanak, 2009, p. 163), or they have "been categorically condemned for damaging local languages in their expressive and functional potential" (House & Cogo, 2017, p. 98). Thus, anglicisms, being a direct result of bilingual language contact situations between English and Arabic, can be a double-edged weapon capable of producing both positive and negative outcomes on Arabic. That is, a seemingly positive influence is often accompanied by an unfavorable side and vice versa.

The positive effect of borrowing is represented as being one of the simplest and most common processes by which Arabic renews and develops its capacity, more specifically its lexicon. Undoubtedly, Arabic has been enriched by the addition of thousands of lexical items related to all or nearly all of knowledge. Some تكنولوجيا domains examples are /tiknuluujiyya/ (technology), فيدبو /fiidiyuu/ or /viidiyuu/ (video), بطارية /tilifizyuun/ (television), بطارية /battaariyyah/ دبلوماسية , imbiryialiyyah/ (imperialism)/ إمبريالية (battery) (diplomacy), أكاديمية /?akadimiyyah/ /diblumaasiyyah/ (academy), فلسفه /falsafa/ (philosophy), دكتور /duktuur/ (doctor), /brutiin/ (protein), بروتين anfiluwanza/ (influenza), أنفلونزا ماجستير ,hurmuun/ (hormone), موبايل ,hurmuun/ (mobile) هرمون /magistiyr/ (master), کلية /kulliyyah/ (college), etc. to name some. These anglicisms have entered Arabic through several different channels, e.g. arabicization, translation, borrowing, or calquing, and they illustrate the importance of English borrowings and the significant role they play in developing and enriching the Arabic lexicon.

Needless to say, some anglicisms have gained popularity to the extent that they have become an integral part of the Arabic lexical repertoire and a native speaker cannot identify them without some knowledge of etymology and language history. The reason is that "when a foreign word falls into the fountain of a language, it will get driven around in there until it takes on that language's colour and resembles a native term in

spite of its foreign nature" (Onysko, 2007, p. 60). Such borrowings are heard in everyday activities and can be utilized freely in all contexts in which they occur in English; such برلمان ,kumbiyuutar/ (computer), برلمان ديمقر اطية (parliament), /diimuqraatiyyah/ /barlaman/ (democracy), and so on. Other anglicisms are utilized only among educated people and can be found only in certain types of publication, such as أيديولوجية idiyuluujiyyah/ (ideology), ثيوقر اطية /eiyuqraatiyyah/ (theocracy). ديماجوجية /diymagugiyyah/ (demagogy), and لوجستية /lujistiyyah/ (logistics), these borrowings are not yet understood by all Arabic speakers.

The main aspect of the recent controversy about anglicisms is the high percentage of English borrowings that have introduced into the Arabic lexical system. Arab linguists, themselves, might consider whether there is any number of borrowings in Arabic that could be considered too high. What almost everyone agrees on is that the current influx of English borrowings is unprecedented in the history of Arabic. Generally, the mechanism of borrowing has been criticized by Fawcett (1997) "for its exotic flavour" alone (p. 34). He thinks that "retaining the source language name may be seen as cultural imperialism" (p. 35). As an attempt to avoid this situation, Haspelmath (2009) suggests that "all languages have the means to create novel expressions out of their own resources. Instead of borrowing a word, they could simply make up a new word" (p. 35).

Thus, if Arabic has no suitable equivalent, it could meet its needs for vocabulary through the use of other Arabic word

formation mechanisms to create new linguistic elements such as derivation, compounding, analogy, coinage, and metaphor. For example, instead of using the word فيس بوك /fysbuk/, the Arabic equivalent فيس الوجوه /kitab al-wujuuh/ could have been used. Mazid (2011) mentions that the Arabic equivalent للوجوه كتاب /kitab al-wujuuh/ is more adequate equivalent, because it fulfils all requirements of a good translation, i.e. clear, natural, correct, and faithful. In brief, it is fair to say that the theoretical potential of derivation as a means of word formation in the Arabic language has not been matched by practical achievement.

Arabs are proud of their language for its historical and religious importance as a primary way of preserving their literature and heritage, in addition to being identified as the main language of Islam, the Qur'an, the hadith, and the Shari'ah. It is natural, therefore, that some Arab linguists, politicians, and lay people alike express their opinions about the English lexical impact and a growing number of critics express their views about how to contain this change which they perceive as language decay and a long-term threat to Arabic. Emery (1982) suggests that many Arab purists discourage the use of borrowings, as they have "a feeling ... that loan words will destroy the 'spirit' of the language" (p. 86). Indeed, the current extent of using anglicisms is leading to language decline or infection and is a sign of the denaturalization and fragmentation of Arabic.

Therefore, the extensive borrowing from English may gradually lead to phonological and other structural changes in Arabic recipient in a kind of domino effect. In other words, as a result of the heavy borrowing from an individual source, i.e. English, a sort of language change happens in Arabic. This is motivated by the fact that Arabic has borrowed and assimilated large number of words and expressions; however, a unfortunately, these items are introduced into Arabic at an increasing speed. Further, some of these borrowings are introduced into Arabic without putting restricting rules, and as a result one word such as semiotics could be transferred in symyaaiyah/, سيميائية /symyaaiyah/, سيمياء symyaa/, سيميائية سيمولوجيا ,/symiyulujiya/ سيميولوجيا ,/simyulujiya/ سميولوجيا /symulujiya/, and سيميونية /symulujiya/. Another example of this problem is the word mobile for which there are numerous جوال ,/maħmuul/ محمول ,/mubayil/ موبايل ./maħmuul /jawwaal/, نقال /naqqaal/, and هاتف متحرك /haatif mutaħarik/. This provides invaluable evidence of the idea that there is no full agreement among Arab academies on the translation of such English terms.

the Arabic words موجه /ðaakira/, رسومات /rusuumaat/, خاكرة /moaga/, موجه /maasiħ daw?iy/ or ناسخ ضوئي /naasix/, respectively.

This shows that the problem is not with the equivalent term rather it is the acceptance of this term among people. There are many reasons why anglicisms are used instead of its native counterpart. According to Ngom (2002), foreign words are used "simply because such linguistic units are associated with prestige, even though there may be equivalents in the borrowing language" (pp: 37-38). In other words, it may be due to the novelty and positive connotation of the English word, or due to the old-fashioned nature or negative connotation of the Arabic word. A more quantifiable reason for adopting an anglicism can be its meaning, if it is more appropriate for the desired expression. By examining anglicisms and their Arabic counterparts in the Al-Ahram corpus, it is possible to reveal the entire scope of their meaning. By analyzing the differences in these meaning, it often becomes clear that an anglicism and its counterpart are not perfect synonyms. This is one possible reason why Arabs sometimes find that an anglicism, and not its Arabic counterpart, is more appropriate to express a specific meaning.

As mentioned previously, a new trend in products, services, or thoughts can initiate the emergence of a new Arabic word or the integration of a word of foreign origin. This has often been the case when new concepts or objects were imported from a foreign country. Thus, the influences exerted by English on Arabic can, in turn, make some changes to the formation of Arab culture and identity in so many different

ways. The deep penetration of English features into the recesses of Arabic vocabulary may result in the loss of culture, identity, and specificity of the Arabic language, and hence Arabic may be marked by its insecurity in the face of English. That is why; the process of borrowing foreign elements into Arabic "has received much opposition from language purists, who fear that the assimilation of foreign terms may change the identity of Arabic and, if applied to excess, would even result in some form of a hybrid language" (Baker, 1987, p. 187).

To conclude, the English influence is perceived by some critics as language decay and a long-term threat to the integrity or existence of Arabic. Ibrahim (2009) indicates that "with the spread of English language and globalization, the threat is directed not only towards the Arabic language, but is extended towards the culture and identity of the Arabs themselves" (p. 156). That is to say, Arabic is not only used as an instrumental tool for communication, but also as a carrier and main manifestation of culture and shaper of individual and group identities. One may interpret the current significant increase of anglicisms in the Arabic language as an aspect of cultural change in the Arab world that is a result of globalization.

5. Conclusion

This paper clarifies the impact of English on Arabic and determines the extent of language change which is biased in favor of the dominant language, i.e. English. This influence is tremendous, both linguistically and culturally, and its most direct reflections in Arabic is the introduction of new English borrowings. In cross-language settings, these borrowings can

be looked at from at least two different perspectives, positive and negative. That is to say, although these anglicisms have brought some advantageous influences or would bring some advantageous influences on Arabic, the improper use of borrowings may not be beneficial to the development of Arabic, and it may ruin the Arabic language. Actually, the increasing use of anglicisms in everyday activities makes people more concerned about their own language. From a sociolinguistic point of view, people's perspectives about the degree of influence exerted by English on Arabic is of great significance, especially when taking into consideration that globalization and the American culture manifest themselves in the English language. To sum up, the influences exerted by English as a global language may contribute to the emergence of a new variety of Arabic in the long run. Most importantly, the unprecedented spread of anglicisms serves to facilitate the loss of culture, identity, and specificity of the Arabic language.

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