

English Loanwords in Colloquial Jordanian Arabic

Mohammad Abedltif Al Btoush (Corresponding author)

Mu'tah University, Department of English Language & Literature

P. O. Box 7, Mu'tah, Al-Karak, Jordan

E-mail: mohammad_albtoush76@yahoo.com

Received: February 8, 2014 Accepted: March 3, 2014 Published: March 28, 2014

doi:10.5296/ijl.v6i2.5086 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v6i2.5086>

Abstract

The paper explores English loanwords and the reasons behind their increase in the daily speech of sample students chosen randomly at Mu'tah University in Jordan. The sample students are 25 males and 25 females of the faculties of sciences and humanities. To collect the data required, a questionnaire consisting of five questions was developed and given to the respondents. The study shows that students at Mu'tah University use English loanwords in their speech for reasons such as prestige, habits, study need and modernity. The study also reports that English loanwords are used more by subjects of the scientific faculties than by those of the humanities. In addition, females tend to employ English in their daily speech more often than males do. The main reason behind the respondents' employment of English words instead of Arabic ones is that they assume that such English words have no equivalents in Arabic and these words have become part of their habits.

Keyword: English, Loanwords, Colloquial, Arabic

1. Introduction

Colloquial Jordanian Arabic, as many other languages and dialects around the world, incorporates a lot of English loanwords which are used in Jordanian's daily speech among which is the academic sector whereby university student's exhibit lots of these loanwords. Loanwords are always around us even though we sometimes do not realize their presence. Usually, English loanwords proceed through stages till they acquire frequent usage among members of the community. At this early stage, a foreign word is used by a small group of people. In the second stage, this word acquires wider acceptability and usage where it can be called a borrowed word. In the final stage, when the word becomes popular and used even by laymen, it can be referred to as a loanword which is almost similar to the frequency of any native word used by students.

Duane (2008) defines a loanword as "a word taken from one language and used by another contemporary language, without translation, while maintaining with minimal modification the meaning it had in the source language". Many people use loanwords without any idea that they are not originally Arabic words, but it seems that the academic sphere is attracted more by having loanwords than any other sector of the community. This is attributed to the fact that, these words have to do with technological advancement and employment of up-to-date English loanwords by university students.

Students at Mu'tah University have reasons for using English words during their daily speech. These reasons are related to personal needs that include prestige, showing off, modernity, and education requirements and so on. It seems that prestige and showing off in particular are affected by factors such as the students' age, gender and education level. The usage of these loanwords has been increasing rapidly particularly among this group of the community. Some loanwords undergo morphological modifications to the extent that they appear as if they were Arabic words. The current research addresses sample of university students whose areas of specialization are other than English, in an attempt to measure the most frequent English loanwords in the course of their daily speech. To my knowledge, this is the first study that deals with this issue and tackles the reasons behind the increase of these English loanwords in the speech of sample subjects.

In examining the students' outcome of English loanwords at Mu'tah University, the paper seeks answers to the following questions:

(1) Why are English loanwords used in Colloquial Jordanian Arabic, in particular among University students?

(2) Does gender affect the usage of loaning words?

2. Literature Review

Under this heading, with relying on some scholars' point of view, loanwords are those words which come from a foreign language into another to be used by its native speakers. Loanwords are defined as words adopted from another language and completely or partially naturalized. Kemmer (2004) defines loanwords as "words adopted by the speakers of one

language from a different language (the source language)". They are also defined by Wikipedia (2006) as "words directly taken into one language from another with little or no translation".

On the other hand, Al-Qinai (2001:109) who has a more accurate vision about the understanding of loanwords, describes the process of loaning words as "the process whereby a particular language incorporates in its vocabulary words from another language which is technically designated by such terms as 'borrowing', 'loaning' or 'adoption' though the latter is usually the case". Al-Qinai (2001) also points out that 'loan' and 'borrowing' are of course metaphors, because there is no literal lending process, and also there is no transfer from one language to another, and no returning words to the source language. He continues to explain that they simply come to be used by a speech community that speaks different language from the one they originated in. Al-Qinai (2001) acknowledges that a pure language is a poor one whereby 'purity' means that a language which does not borrow any word or concept from other languages is an isolated language. Hence, it cannot cope with new innovations and other's new experiences and discoveries. Therefore, such a language has poor and old fashioned vocabulary which does not cover up-to-date concepts and any new ideas where a new concept needs to be expressed by a particular linguistic form. If the language is incapable of providing the needed suitable word for the new concept, then introducing a loanword in the native language is a possible solution.

Throughout history, languages have been loaning and borrowing from each other words and idioms as a matter of cultural exchange. Loaning words among languages is a historical and universal phenomenon that can be clearly noticed in the Arabic words which were loaned to other languages. Al-Balbki (1997:5-16) states that "Many of Arabic loanwords in English and other European languages passed first through Spanish before being taken up by the other languages. But some of these words from Arabic (a Semitic language) are in turn loanwords, from Latin, Greek, or a fellow Semitic language (e.g. Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, and Coptic)".

Bilingual speakers play an important role in expanding the usage of loanwords by bringing those words as they are into the source language and then monolingual speakers imitate them until they becomes habitualized. Weinreich (1986:11) says "it occurs new in the utterances of the bilingual speaker as a result of his personal knowledge of the other tongue. In language, we find interference phenomena which, having frequently occurred in the speech of bilinguals, have become habitualized and established to be an inherited loanword" Loaning words among languages as a linguistic phenomenon is due to language choice, which is an important issue within the field of sociolinguistics. Language choice can manifest itself as code switching, where two or more languages are used interchangeably.

People deal differently with those loanwords. Some, who are bilingual in the source language, know that these words are foreign. However, those who are not bilingual do not know that these words are foreign. Kemmer (2004) explains that some speakers of the borrowing language know the source language too, or at least enough of it to utilize language. If they are bilingual in the source language, which is often the case, they might pronounce the words the

same or similar to the way they are pronounced in the source language. For example, English speakers adopted the word 'garage' from French, at first with a pronunciation nearer to the French pronunciation than is now usually found /garaaj/.

Newman (2002) points out that loanword can be noticeably found in eight domains as the followings:

- state and economy
- science and technology
- transport, communications and travel
- arts, entertainment and education
- Units of measure, weight, etc.
- food and drink
- the military
- Other (miscellaneous).

Walters (2003) explains that English works as a means of expression of an insular population with specific political and social behaviors. English has become an international communication tool in the wake of the economic and scientific expansion of Great Britain, and later the United States. Walters also points out that English is the language of technology and scientific research. Similarly, Coury (2001:21) states that "English language is a vital means of communication for millions of people around the world. During the twentieth century, numerous technological inventions and developments, such as the telephone, fax, electronic mail, internet, etc have facilitated communication between people from all walks of life and the language that is used most is English"

Wikipedia (2006) explains that International English is the concept of the English Language as a global means of communication in numerous dialects, and movement towards an international standard for the language. Wikipedia also explains that the reasons behind loanwords by adding that idiomatic expressions and phrases, sometimes translated

Word-for-word, can be borrowed, usually from a language that has prestige at the time. Often, a borrowed idiom is used as a euphemism for a less polite term in the original language.

Kailani (1994:39) states that " many English loanwords are adopted in Jordanian Arabic. For example, in the field of medicine, many English loanwords are used such as microbe, vitamin, plaster, capsule, aspirin and cholesterol" He adds that " the expressions of foreign trade have resulted in the adoption of a number of English loanwords in Jordanian Arabic such as bank, check , million, cash and secretary"

Hazaymeh (2004) points out that "recent cultural contacts with the English –speaking countries, have a great number of loanwords into Jordanian Arabic, where aspects of English culture and language items have spread by various means such as education, technology,

trade, sports, media and communications. Industry and information technology have increased the spread of English loanwords and expression in Jordan" "Hazaymeh (2004) adds that certain factors affect code-switching to English in daily conversation in Jordan. Those factors are education, place of work, age prestige and social value. Al-Saqqa (2000:14) states "the distinction between two kinds of borrowing in Arabic is that in one kind a word is Arabicized whereas in the other kind it is non-Arabicized". She adds "Arabicized words become like Arabic word in the sense that they undergo many derivational processes of Arabic" (2000.14). On the other hand, Al-Saqqa explains that non-Arabicized words stick to one form from which no other word can be derived.

Finally, it is evident that the previous studies on English loanwords make the picture clear that English nowadays invades many languages including Arabic, because of the heavy flow of its vocabulary into these languages.

3. Methodology

The current research targeted a random sample including 50 Jordanian students, 25 males and 25 females majoring in different fields of specializations at Mu'tah University. Two variables are handled regarding conducting such a study: gender and faculty (i, e sciences and humanities). Five questions consisting of yes-no questions and some multiple choice items are distributed to the respondents who are asked to decide their choices and to give reasons or explanation for those choices. The questionnaire is aimed at acquiring the data necessary to answer the two research questions mentioned earlier. It was reviewed by two EFL experts who approved its face and content validity to answer the research questions which look for the reasons behind the increase of English loanwords in Colloquial Jordanian Arabic. The questionnaire is given to the subjects during the first semester of the academic year 2013. The frequency of the subjects' responses to the questionnaire are calculated and tabulated.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In this section the researcher focuses on the results of the questionnaires and responses of the study subjects and analyzes the information represented in the tables.

4.1.1 Do you use English words in place of some Arabic words in your every day Arabic Speech?

Eighty eight percent of the subjects reported using English words in place of Arabic words. However, females tend to use English words slightly more than males do, as the former's percent is 46%. The respondents gave examples of English words like 'ok', 'CD' (a compact disc) 'e-mail', 'internet', 'missed', 'call', 'message', and 'sorry'. Some subjects explained that they use English words for ideas and objects that have no Arabic equivalents such as 'I phone' (brand of portable media players) and 'DVD'(digital video disc). On the other hand, 12% of the subjects do not use English words in place of some Arabic words in their every day speech. They explained that they live in an Arab community whose official language is Arabic and they feel proud of their language. As such, Arabic is quite enough to

accommodate what they want to say. With regard to the faculty variable, the percent of respondents belonging to the scientific faculties outnumbers the percent of those belonging to the humanities (the percent of the former is 56% and the latter is 32%). This is attributed to the fact that lots of English words are employed in the teaching process in the scientific faculties. The following tables summarize the results.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentages of Gender Variable of the First Question

Male Respondents			Female Respondents		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %
Yes	21	42%	23	46%	44	88%
No	4	8%	2	4%	6	12%
Total	25	50%	25	50%	50	100%

Table 2. Frequency and Percentages of the Faculties of Sciences and Humanities

Scientific Faculties			Faculty of Humanities		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %
Yes	28	56 %	16	32%	44	88%
No	3	6%	3	6%	6	12%
Total	31	62%	19	38%	50	100%

4. 1.2 Do you feel prestigious or modern when using English words in your Arabic speech?

In answer to the above question, 48% answered 'yes', 34% reported 'no' and 18% reported 'sometimes'. There is a difference between males' and females' responses in the sense that the females' responses outnumber those of the males'. The subjects who chose 'no' considered using English words in their Arabic speech do nothing for their prestige and most of them state that they can be prestigious when they speak Arabic. On the other hand, 48% of the respondents consider that using English words in their Arabic speech is a matter of prestige because people of high class know more than their mother tongue, especially English which is considered as the international language and the language of education, technology, science and media. Concerning the faculty variable, there is also a noticeable difference in the percentage of subjects' answers in both faculties. That is, respondents of the scientific faculties tend to employ English words in their speech for showing off and having prestige. The results are presented in the following tables.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentages of Gender Variable of the Second Question

Male Respondents			Female Respondents		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent%
Yes	10	20%	14	28%	24	48%
No	8	16%	9	18%	17	34%
Sometimes	7	14%	2	4%	9	18%
Total	25	50%	25	50%	50	100%

Table 4. Frequency and Percentages of the Faculties of sciences and Humanities

Scientific Faculties			Faculty of Humanities		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent%
Yes	13	26%	9	18%	22	44%
No	12	24%	7	14%	19	38%
Sometimes	6	12%	3	6%	9	18%
Total	31	62%	19	38%	50	100%

4.1.3 Where do you use English more?

When the subjects were asked "where do use English more?", 6% of the male respondents chose 'home', 18% chose 'university' and 26 chose ' with friends'. However, female subjects use English words more at home (28%), but less with friends (4%).The subjects (both males and females) who chose 'home' (34%) explained that they prefer communicating in English with the house-maids or servants who do not know more Arabic and that they employ English words in chatting. Those who chose 'university' (36%) explained that they use English as a study need. However, 30% use English with friends among which 26% males, but 4% females, where the former consider employing English words in their daily speech as part of their habits and to show off. However, according to the faculty variable, subjects in the scientific faculties use English words more at university and with friends (24%, 30% respectively) than do their counterparts in the humanities (14%, 6% respectively). The following tables summarize the results.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentages of Gender Variable of the Third Question

Male Respondents			Female Respondents		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent%
Home	3	6%	14	28%	17	34%
University	9	18%	9	18%	18	36%
With Friends	13	26%	2	4%	15	30%
Total	25	50%	25	50%	50	100%

Table 6 . Frequency and Percentages of the faculties of Sciences and Humanities

Scientific Faculties			Faculty of Humanities		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent%
Home	4	8%	9	18%	13	26%
University	12	24%	7	14%	19	38%
With Friend	15	30%	3	6%	18	36%
Total	31	62%	19	38%	50	100%

4.1.4 Do you use English more when speaking to males, females or both?

When the subjects were asked this question, 38% of male subjects reported using English with males and females, 8% with females and 4% with males. However, 4% of female subjects use English with males, 20% with females and 26% with both sexes. Using English by the respondents with both sexes has to do with the situation which requires it. 20% said females because they are females who use English with other female friends or classmates. Only, 8% of male subjects use English with females to show off. As far as the faculty variable is concerned, respondents in the scientific faculties use English more with friends (36%) than do the subjects in the faculty of humanities (22%). Meanwhile, the percentage is the least in respondents' talk at home (4%) in both faculties, but 38% of their talk at university.

The results are summarized in the in the following tables.

Table 7. Frequency and Percentages of Gender Variable of the Fourth Question

Male Respondents			Female Respondents		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent%

Males	2	4%	2	4%	4	8%
Females	4	8%	10	20%	14	28%
Males & Females	19	38%	13	26%	32	64%
Total	25	50%	25	50%	50	100%

Table 8. Frequency and Percentages of the faculties of Sciences and Humanities

Scientific Faculties			Faculty of Humanities		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent%
Home	1	2%	1	2%	2	4%
University	12	24%	7	14%	19	38%
With Friend	18	36%	11	22%	29	58%
Total	31	62%	19	38%	50	100%

4.1.5 Do you think that Arabic is able to accommodate technical terms?

26% of the male and 30% of the female subjects felt that Arabic is unable to accommodate technical terms and they gave some examples of such terms which have no equivalents in Arabic like 'I phone, I pad' (brands of portable media players) and 'DVD' (digital video disc) and so on. Nevertheless, 24% and 20% of male and female subjects respectively disagreed and felt that Arabic is able to accommodate technical terms and gave examples of some terms that are arabicized like /hatif/ for telephone and /Hasuub/ for computer. Having a look at the faculty variable on the other hand, it is observed that 24% of the subjects in the scientific faculties do agree that Arabic is able to accommodate technical terms and 38% disagree. The percentage of subjects in the faculty of humanities is 20% of respondents who are in agreement with the idea of accommodation of Arabic with technical terms, but 18% of those are in disagreement. It can be inferred that scientific faculties are more apt with technical terms in English than the humanities due to the use of English in the scientific courses.

The results are summarized in the following tables.

Table 9. Frequency and Percentages of Gender Variable of the Fifth Question

Male Respondents			Female Respondents		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %
Yes	12	24%	10	20%	22	44%

No	13	26%	15	30%	28	56%
Total	25	50%	25	50%	50	100%

Table 10. Frequency and Percentages of the faculties of Sciences and Humanities

Scientific Faculties			Faculty of Humanities		Cumulative	
	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %	Frequency	Percent %
Yes	12	24%	9	18%	21	42%
No	19	38%	10	20%	29	58%
Total	31	62%	19	38%	50	100%

It is significant to note the difference between the gender and faculty variables in responding to the five questions above. Females and subjects of the scientific faculties tend to employ English loanwords in their daily speech more often than males and students of humanities do.

5. Conclusion

The study has reported on the use of English loanwords by students whose majors are not English at Mu'tah University. The study findings support that English is the language of science and technology and these findings are also constant with Hazaymeh (2004) who points out that certain factors such as education, place of work, age, prestige and social value affect code-switching to English. It is significant to note that English loanwords are employed more by subjects of the scientific faculties than those of the humanities. This leads us to say that English is required for the scientific study fields like medicine, programming, engineering and so on. It is evident that English loanwords are penetrating and increasing rapidly on the students' daily speech at Mu'tah University. It remains a question for future study to investigate the usage and penetration of English loan words by other various sectors of the Jordanian community.

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Appendix

List of Some English Loanwords in Colloquial Jordanian Arabic (Students at Mu'tah University)

Prestige, mobile, keyboard, memory, profile, missed call, download, like, e-mail, face book, twitter, film, cafeteria, chapter, online, offline, computer, silent, refresh, block, lenses, update, chat, add, new look, coffee shop, delete, cancel, CD, DVD, I phone, I pad.