

“The Overuse of Italian Loanwords in the Daily Speech of Tripoli University Students: the Impact of Gender and Residential Place”

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Abstract

The study tries to explore the impact of social factors of gender and residential place on the use of Italian loanwords by Libyan university students (using Tripoli University as an example) and how the mentioned social factors affect their daily speech. To answer the questions of the study, a sample of 60 Tripoli university students are selected randomly in the campus (A) of University of Tripoli. They were divided into two groups according to their Gender and residential place. In order to collect data, a questionnaire was developed for this purpose. It generated data regarding the use of 150 Italian loanwords by both groups. The mean of using Italian loanwords in both groups was analyzed and computed using SPSS. However, the study reveals the impact of residential area where Italian loanwords were more incorporated by rural students than urbanites. The results of the study revealed that there was a significant statistical difference at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) among the means of both groups regarding the use of Italian loanwords in daily speech due to residential area. In contrasts, gender emerges as insignificant.

Keyword

Italian loanwords, Colloquial Arabic, Gender, Libya.

1. Introduction

Colloquial Libyan Arabic (CLA) is a unique dialect among other dialects in the Arabic Language. Not only CLA incorporates English, Turkish and Persian loanwords as all other Arabic dialects, but also it incorporates large number of Italian loanwords that are widely used in daily speech by Libyans. Owing to its location in the Mediterranean, Libya was a transient country, especially with merchants and armies that invaded North Africa and due to the fact that Libya was colonized in the period between (1911- 1951) by Italy and this long period of contact brought CLA in direct contact with the Italian language. Although the contact has had great influence on both Italian and CLA, Colloquial Libyan Arabic was affected by Italian language in a way that can be represented in the existence of hundreds of Italian loanwords in daily speech. By an Italian loanword is meant an Italian word that retains its basic Italian form after inserting in CLA, although it may be phonologically modified according to the sound system of CLA.

However, the people in Tripoli region were influenced by the Italian language and about 55% of Italian loanwords entered Libyan Arabic during 1911-1951 and this influence continued till 1970 when Italian troops were forced to leave as stated by Abdu (1988). Abdu shows that the Tripoli dialect is spoken by more than 65% of the total population of Libya who reside in this region and there are many Italian loanwords in daily conversation of Italian origin. However, Italian loanwords are common in such categories related to equipment, food, clothes, public institutions and household furniture. E.g. Cucina : kitchen, Cefinari: carrot, Lavandino: pool, Frizione: brakes, Ospedale: hospital, Forchetta: fork , Mobilia: furniture, Ceramica: ceramics, and Cravatta :necktie.

Nowadays, many university students still overuse Italian loanwords in their daily speech. It is of question if Libyan university students vary in their use of Italian loanwords in their daily speech according to their gender and/or residential place.

1.1 Question of the study

In examining the outcomes of the respondents, this study seeks answers for the following question:

- 1) How do the factors of gender and residential place affect the overuse of Italian loanwords by Libyan university students?

1.2 Hypotheses of the study

1. Hypothesis: 1

- H0: There is no association between gender factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech.
- H1: There is an association between gender factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech.

2. Hypothesis: 2

- H0: There is no association between place of residence factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech.
- H1: There is an association between place of residence factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech.

1.3 Significance of the study

When the researcher started his work as a lecturer at the department of English in University of Tripoli in 2014; he expected to find the overuse of English loanwords in the daily speech of students - like most of university level students in Arab world. Unlike Italian, English dominates many aspects of life such as technology and media. But surprisingly, he noticed the wide use of Italian loanwords in the daily speech of students. Studies addressing the use of Italian loanwords have been conducted by native authors who examined the morphological structure of Italian loanwords as observed from the daily speech of Libyan students outside Libya e.g. Elsubeihi (2014) in UAE and (Abdu 1988) in the USA. In contrast, the findings of the present study are based on examination of using Italian loanwords inside Libya. This paper will be of interest to Linguists involved in language change and language variation. It may be of special interest to Source Language/Foreign Language teachers particularly those dealing with teaching Italian and Arabic.

2. Literature Review

In language studies, the term “loanwords” refers to those words that come from a foreign language and were adopted and used by other language speakers. Most researchers agree that loanwords are words taken from one language and used by another. Nevertheless, it must be noted that not all foreign words are considered as loanwords; if they are not widely and often used, they will not be considered as loanwords. It is also noticeable that incorporation of loanwords is resulted gradually as noted by (Bloomfield 1933).

Some researchers believe that “loanwords” are “borrowed words” and there is no difference between the two concepts. This can be shown by the works of Abdullah & Daffar (2006). Kemmer (2014) defines loanwords as words adopted by the speakers of one language from a different language (the source language). He also points out that a loanword can also be called borrowed word.

Other researchers distinguish between “borrowing” and “loanwords” such as: Al Saidat (2010), Mwita (2009), and some of them make distinctions between the two terms. One of these clear distinctions is made by Clyne (1987) who shows that when borrowing is a single word, it is called a loanword. But if borrowing exceeds one word, it will be called code-switching. Clyne (ibid) points out that code-switching is the alternative use of two languages either within a sentence or between sentences.

In contrast, the notion of loanwords was introduced as “Arabized words” by other researchers e.g. Al Khrisat & Mohammad (2014) who set the difference between Arabized word and Dakheel word as a result of the process of Arabization of “Dakheel words”. Arabization or “Ta’reeb” as defined by American Heritage Dictionary (2009) is “to make Arabic in form, style or character”. It is noted here that “Arabized words” are treated as if they are of Arabic origin. “Dakheel word” is a “borrowed word from another language” (Seebawaih, 1966). In the process of borrowing, phonetics and/or morphological changes may occur in order to comply with Arabic language. Al Khrisat & Mohammad (ibid) show the difference between the “Arabized words” and the “borrowed” ones - these words are labeled “Dakheel”. He notes that “borrowed words -Dakheel - are different from “Arabized words” in what is called and known in Arabic as “wazen” referring to the base form _ for all derivatives_ of the three-letter word, consisting of three syllables and producing three sounds, 'fa'ala', 'fa' 'a' and 'la'. Then, some modification would be done to meet the 'wazen'. This process of modification is usually done by addition, deletion or combination of certain sounds to fit the structure of the borrowing language. If no modification is applicable, they will be used in the same way. He gives examples of khorasan “Iran” of the latter. In addition, he claims that Arabization is a method used by speakers of Arabic in old times and this process is represented by writing foreign words in a way that comes close to Arabic pronunciation. The borrowed words undergo certain phonological patterns and they are accommodated to the native phonological patterns. E.g. Cravatta /kirwata/ “neck tie” and Grillo/ zigrillo/ “roach” in Libyan Arabic.

However, loanwords have been the concern of some modern and contemporary Libyan orientalists and lexicographers. For example, the semantic changes in Italian loanwords and the adaptations they have undergone as a result of their being borrowed in CLA were identified by Abdu (1988). He identified a number of Italian loanwords in CLA and he was able to classify them into twenty two semantic categories. Abdu (ibid) studied the nature of these words as observed from the speech of Libyan students in the USA. He also studied loanwords' integration in the speech in of CLA speakers with the identification of the semantic fields.

It is believed that speakers of one and the same speech community vary in their use of loans on various linguistic levels. Their language obviously reflects their level of education, their occupation, their socio- economic status, and sometimes their age and gender. There are two variables that are the main point of attention in this study: gender and place of residence.

2.2. Gender

The relationship between gender and language has always been the concern of language researchers. An increasing amount of findings suggest that women are likely to use verbal interaction for social purposes (Colly et al 2004). Other scholars explore the difference between males and females use of loanwords such e.g. Veht (2014) who suggests that females have more positive attitudes towards loanwords than male. In contrast, according to Meyerhoff (2006) a variable can be considered stable if there is no evidence that one of its variants is the preferred variant and is pushing out the other one

Regarding loanwords in Arabic, many studies found gender as an important variable that affects using loanwords. One of these amazing studies is conducted by Al Btoush (2014) who examines the impact of gender on using loanwords among Jordan university students. He claims that female students tend to use loanwords more than males and this is due to the fact that females tend to be more prestigious. In addition, Habib (2005) examines the role of social factors including gender and place of residence on lexical borrowing in the speech of Colloquial Arabic of migrant families in Hims, Syria. She shows that females tend to use prestigious variant of loanwords more than the males.

On the other hand, a number of scholars argue against any meaningful differences in men's and women's language e.g. Weatherall (2002). Others show that males interpret language differently compared to females e.g. (Mesthrie et al, 2009) who point out that females over-report their use of prestige language forms whereas males under-report their use of such forms. Veht (2014) interprets that women claim they use high-status forms when they do not, whereas men claim they use vernacular forms when they actually use more prestige forms.

It is interesting to know if there is any impact of gender regarding the use of English and Italian loanwords in the daily speech of Libyan university students.

2.3 Place of residence

The place of residence factor has been found to be affecting the use of loanwords in Arab World. Loanwords can be seen in a way that they characterize the speech of people reside in urban cities. It has been shown by Abdullah & Daffar (2006) that the place of residence has a significant influence on using loanwords in the speech of southern Iraqis. They found that the adoption of loanwords is more frequent in the speech of speakers whose place of residence is in the urban cities. On the other hand, those whose permanent residence is rural have the tendency to use the loanwords borrowed from other less prestigious languages such as Persian. In contrasts, Habib (2005) examines the role of social factors (including place of residence) on lexical borrowing in the speech of Colloquial Arabic. She claims that residential area plays significant roles in linguistic variation of the use of loanwords. She found that linguistic maintenance or variations are more likely to characterize the speech of rural people who tend to use loanwords to appear urbanites.

3. Methodology

3.1 Subjects of the study

All subjects are university students selected randomly in the campus (A) of the University of Tripoli. The subjects were 30 males and 30 females. All the subjects are from the western governorates of the Tripoli region including: Saraj, Siyahieh, Wershafaneh, Zahra, Saiad, Sidi Jaber, Awlad Ahmed and Ghalalbeh.

3.2 Instruments of the study

In order to collect the data, the researcher designed a questionnaire. Part one includes general demographic information of the informants including the concerning mentioned variables. As for part two, it consists of 150 Italian loanwords used in daily speech.

3.3 Procedure of the study

To answer the questions of the study, two groups are assigned. Group one contains 30 rural subjects while Group two contains 30 urbanites subjects. The questionnaire is given to subjects in both groups to identify words they know, use or even hear in their daily conversation. Responses will be calculated only if respondents say they “use” loanwords. If they responded they only “hear” or “know” without responding they use it, their responses will not be calculated. After collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher compared the means of both groups using SPSS in accordance with their place of residence and/or gender.

3.4 Variables of the study

The variables of the study are two independent variables and one dependent variable. The independent variables are gender and place of residence while the dependent one is the use of loanwords in daily speech.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the study

To test the validity of the study, the researcher interviewed 28 informants randomly. 14 were rurals while 14 were urbanites. He gave them a list of Italian loanwords to be found in Libyan Arabic and asked them to identify words they know or use or even hear in their everyday speech. Their responses of “hear” or “know” Italian loanwords were eliminated unless they respond they “use” it. They were asked to express their own opinions about the meaning of words and their denotations. In light of the interviews, necessary modifications were made. However, in order to test the reliability of data collected, the responses of the 28 informants were correlated with the results of both groups. The reliability values obtained from Pairson correlation were found to be suitable (85%).

3.6 Analysis procedure

The T test statistical procedure was used in order to examine if there was any statistical significance between the two groups according to their residential place and/or gender.

4. Result and Discussion

In this section, the researcher is interested in finding if there is a statistically significant association between gender and place of residence factors in one hand and the students’ overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech on the other hand. To make sure that both groups are equivalent, the mean of age between the two groups was computed as shown in Table1:

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
age of P.	GROUP 1	30	21.3000	1.62205	.29614
	GROUP 2	30	21.2667	1.68018	.30676

Table1: comparing the mean of age between the two groups

As can be seen from Table 1, the mean score for group one was slightly similar to the second group’s mean score (21.30; 21.26) respectively. It indicates that the T value of participant’s age was .078. Thus, it is not statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq 0, 05$) and both groups are equivalent.

4.2.1 Gender

The mean score of using Italian loanwords in both groups was computed. Group one (males) show slightly lower mean in using Italian loanwords than group two (females). The mean score of both groups is shown in the following table:

	sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Percentage of using loanwords	male	30	74.53	12.470	2.277
	female	30	77.37	14.490	2.646

Table.2 the mean of using Italian loanwords according to Gender in both groups

In examining if there is a statistically significant association between gender factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), T test was used. The results are shown in the following table

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df.	Sig.
	Male	30	74.30	12.726	.812	58	.207
	female	30	77.37	14.490			

Table.3 Results of T. test regarding the impact of Gender on using loanwords

As can be seen from table 3, T. value is not statistically significant at (0.05). So, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no association between gender factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech was accepted.

4.2.2 Place of residence

The mean score of using Italian loanwords in both groups was computed. Group one (rurals) show higher mean than group two (urbanites) show lower one with 87.80 and 64.10 respectively. The mean score of both groups is shown in the following table:

	place of residence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Percentage of using loanwords by students live in	village	30	87.80	4.294	.784
	city	30	64.10	7.787	1.422

Table.4 the mean of using Italian loanwords according to residential place in both groups

In examining if there is a statistically significant association between place of residence factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in both groups in their daily speech at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), T test was used. The results are shown in the following table

Place of residence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df.	Sig.
village	30	87.80	4.294	14.59	58	.005
city	30	64.10	7.787			

Table.5 Results of T. test regarding the impact of residential place on using loanwords

As can be seen from table 5, P. value is statistically significant at (0.005). So, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no association between residential place factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech was rejected. Thus, alternative hypothesis which states that there is an association between residential place factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech is accepted.

Thus, the findings of the present study have been found the impact of residential place to be affecting the use of loanwords by Libyan university students. Rural students showed higher tendency in their overuse of Italian loanwords. This can be related to the fact that in Libyan context, the dialect of village is represented by the overuse of Italian loanwords. Italian loanwords characterize the speech of rural people more than urbanites. However, the finding of study is consistent with the finding of Habib (2005) who show impact of residential place on the overuse of loanwords and that loanwords characterize the speech of people reside in rural places.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated the sociolinguistics variation in the use of Italian loanwords in the daily speech of Libyan university students in the Tripoli region. The results showed the association between place of residence factor and the students' overuse of Italian loanwords in their daily speech is highly statistically significant. The results showed that rural students overuse Italian loanwords more than urbanites do. In contrasts, the results showed that the association between gender factor and the students' use of Italian loanwords in their daily speech is insignificant.

Based on the findings of the present study, further research is required in order to present other variations using other variation levels such as age and education level. It remains a question for future study to investigate the integration of Italian loanwords into CLA and to study the changes that borrowed words undergo at phonological and morphological levels. In addition, further research is required in order to know the sociolinguistic motivations for using such loanwords in Libyan context.

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"الإستخدام الزائد للكلمات الإيطالية المستعارة في الحديث اليومي لطلاب جامعة طرابلس : تأثير النوع (الجندرية) ومكان الإقامة على الإستخدام اليومي لهذه الكلمات"

إعداد الباحث

جلال الدين يعقوب ابداح

قسم اللغة الانجليزية - جامعة طرابلس / ليبيا

ملخص الدراسة:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى اكتشاف اثر العوامل الاجتماعية للجندرية (النوع) ومكان الإقامة على استخدام الكلمات الإيطالية المستعارة في الحديث باللغة العامية في الحياة اليومية لدى طلبة الجامعة الليبيين (جامعة طرابلس كمثال) وكيفية تأثير العوامل المذكورة سلفا على استخدامهم لهذه الكلمات المستعارة. لاجابة اسئلة هذه الدراسة، تم اختيار عينة عشوائية من 60 طالبا وطالبة من جامعة طرابلس / قاطع أ . تم تقسيمهم الى مجموعتين بناء على الجندرية (النوع) و مكان السكن. لغاية جمع البيانات ، تم تصميم استبانة مخصصة لهذه الغاية. هذه الاستبانة قامت بجمع بيانات بخصوص استخدام 150 كلمة ايطالية مستعارة ودرجة في الكلام اليومي لدى الطلبة. تم احتساب متوسط استخدام هذه الكلمات باستخدام معالج البيانات الاحصائي SPSS . كشفت الدراسة تاثير مناطق السكن على استخدام الكلمات الإيطالية المستعارة حيث اظهرت ان هذه الكلمات تستخدم من قبل القرويين اكثر من سكان المدينة حيث اظهرت الدراسة وجود فرق ذو دلالة احصائية عند ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) في متوسط المجموعتين بخصوص استخدام الكلمات الإيطالية المستعارة . بالمقارنة ، لم يظهر اي فرق ذو دلالة احصائية خاص بالجندرية (النوع) في متوسط المجموعتين.