
The Use of English on Mukalla Street Signs and Yemeni Attitudes

Keywords : Mukalla, Signs , Yemen

Associate Prof. Najat Ahmed Busabaa

Hadhramout University

Women College, English Department. Yemen

busabaa_najat@yahoo.com

Abstract

English use on Mukalla street signs is examined in this study. The paper is an attempt to study how the morphological structure of Arabic has been affected by English signs using at Mukalla streets. Yemen ; on shops, mini-markets, supermarkets, net-cafes, Malls and companies, among others. Moreover, the Yemeni customers' attitudes to the use of English loan words along with Arabic is also evaluated. 180 signs chosen randomly have been examined linguistically to find out if there is any particular influence of English over Arabic morphological structure of the street signs. In addition, a questionnaire was given to the participants to show their attitudes toward using English signs. The population of the study consisted of all the students at Hadramout University, English Departments, Faculty of Arts and Women's College. They are from different places in Yemen.

The findings indicate that the loan words are altering to suit the morphological structure and so become a part of Arabic structure where they substitute the identical ones. The participants attitudes towards these signs have shown that they are aware of and loyal to their own language. However, they prefer using English for commercial reasons.

1. Introduction

Language is used as a means of communication. Communicating with others can be done using " habitually oral auditory arbitrary symbols" (Hall,1968: 76). We use language to express our thoughts, to build up a bridge between people socially and to clarify our ideas (Chomsky,1986). However, language has other functions. It is informative as well as persuasive. The last two functions of language are most commonly used in advertisement. Herrmer'n (1999) points that the role of language that is observed in most advertisements is either informative or persuasive. When using this or that

advertisement, it attempts to catch and attract the audience attention (Ezejideaku & Nkiruku 2010), furthermore, to create a positive impression of the product or the service it offers. In addition, it aims at making a change in the opinion and attitudes of its recipients (Leech, 1966).

Street shops signs is a part of advertisement. The main purpose of any sign hanging on shops is still to make people purchase products. What is more significant is the product name itself. Choosing a name of a product is very important. What role played by a name of a product is to proclaim a benefit, distinguish one product from another and offer a new vision (Sells & Gonzales, 2012). We use this sign in English or that so as to be able to interpret the want satisfying in terms of the want and the needs.

The use of English has been recently well examined (Takashi, 1990, Escalas 1994, Ezejideaku and Nkiruku 2010, Friedrich 2002, Zughoul 2007, and Salih & El-Yasin 1994). In his study of the influence of English on Japanese, Leung (2010) points that there are many reasons for people to mix English with Japanese. English is the norm because it represents prestige to those who use it. Furthermore, Friedrich (2002) asserts that the use of English loan words into the advertising is the superiority of what is known as foreign. Moreover, Ross (1997) indicates that people preferred using English because of the fact that it seems more attractive and fashionable.

The primary reason for loan words use in the language advertising is to make the product seem more modern and sophisticated (Takashi, 1990). The appearance of signs in streets is considered by businessmen as a reflective of modernity and higher social statuses (Zughoul (2007) in one hand, in another hand the use of English in its true meaning is "all associated with trading success" (Salih & El-Yasin, 1994; 37). Griffin (2004), too, asserts that the wide use of written English on window shops, doors, or shop signs in the streets of Rome is primarily obvious for commercial purposes. Such use of English on the streets signs was phenomenal as stated by Zughoul (2007). Hence, the adoption of loan words from English appears likely to continue. This definitely might lead to a change in the use of language by the public due to the sociocultural contacts. Hence, language changes continually with people tending to speak most similarly to those around them (Friedrich, 2002).

Aims of the Study

English influence on Mukalla street signs is examined in the present study. Moreover, the Yemeni responses to the use of English loan words along with Arabic is also evaluated. This paper is an attempt to study how the morphological structure of Arabic has been affected by English signs using at Mukalla street shops, Yemen. Furthermore, the study aims to reveal the customers' attitudes towards this phenomenon. This will be accounted for through the following objectives:

- Analyzing these signs linguistically taking into consideration the effect of using English on the morphological structure of Arabic.
- Evaluating the public opinion socio-culturally on the use of English along with Arabic.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study arises from the fact that there are few studies done in this field, especially in Arabic. Consequently, the present study might be a modest contribution to the field of Arabic studies done on sociolinguistics in general and morphology in particular.

2. Methods and Procedures of the Study

The research is two folds. To achieve the purpose of this study, the researcher, first observed the signs that are hanging on Mukalla streets; on shops, mini-markets, supermarkets, net-cafes, Moles and companies, among others. In such signs, it was observed that English mixes with Arabic. The researcher collected as many signs as possible. However, 180 signs have been chosen randomly. Then the researcher examined these linguistically to find out if there is any particular influence of English over Arabic morphological structure of the street signs. Second, a questionnaire was given to the participants to elicit personal information (age, sex and level of education) with regard to their opinions and attitudes toward using English signs. The questionnaire of Salih and El-Yasin (1994) was adapted using items that are relevant only to the current study. So, 18 items had been chosen from the questionnaire purposely. The population of the study consisted of all the students at Hadramout University, English Departments, Faculty of Arts and Women's College. The researcher

chose 40 students as a sample out of the population. The participants percentage consisted of 50% male and 50% female (i.e, 20 male and 20 female). Their age is 19-28 years old. They are from different places in Yemen.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections the first section is intended to evaluate the participants' attitudes of the use of English with respect to the customers' statues prestige and fame; the second is intended to evaluate the participants' attitudes of the use of English and products purchase; the third is intended to evaluate the participants' attitudes of the use of English and its effect on Arabic. The frequencies of the participants responses had been put in percentages. Both, males and females responses were estimated.

3. Findings Analysis and Discussion:

3.1. Analyzing the signs

Linguistically speaking, the signs the researcher has collected have different forms of representations. They can be categorized as follows:

- First category: signs which are purely written in English and have English word order such as GT Tiers, Gentle Oils, Shell Gold, Shield Paints, 3CD Sign. Samsung for Electronics
- Second category : sings that mix English with Arabic but still have English word order such as: Super Naba, Yemen Mobile, Yemen Soft, Malaak Sign for Printing & Advertisement
- Third category: signs written in Arabic word order using Arabic scripts and English transliteration such as: Fondug Half Moon, Sallon Gentleman, Ziyouit super star, Khatuut MIF Al ?alamiyeh, Ziyouit super falcon. Ceramic Radfaan,
- Fourth category: signs used a preposition as a land mark where they are written in Arabic scrip with Arabic word order: Magic center li tajmeel al sayidaat (for beautifying ladies), Top Car lildicoor, (for decorating), Clean House li khedmat al-nadhafa (for cleaning services) and Car-tech litasleh al sayaarat (for car repairing).

It is of no doubt that the foreign items that are borrowed from English are nouns. Onysko (2004) states that the majority of these borrowing are nouns. He asserts, " a great number of loanwords have come to from English, and melted into our culture, so deeply that we forget its origin (Onysko, 2004: 35). It happens that these nouns are companied

with an adjective to form a phrase. Looking at the categories mentioned above, these borrowing items become a part of Arabic structure where they substitute the identical ones in structure. There has also been a change in the type of words being borrowed. When one language borrows a new word or a morpheme from another language to its lexicon, the pronunciation of the borrowed items is often altered to fit the phonological rules of the borrowing language. Zughoul (2007: 308) points, "[they should] undergo phonological, morphological and semantic changes to fit the Arabic language system".

3.2. Evaluating the public opinion socio-culturally:

3.2.1 The use of English and the customers

Signs that are attracting customers' attention, pointing to the users' fame, prestige and good reputation among the customers, arousing the customers' curiosity and others are summarized in table (1&2) below for females and males respectively:

Table No (1): Findings of the Females/ Women's College

No	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		Fre.	Per.	Fre.	Per.	Fre.	Per.	Fre.	Per.	Fre.	Per.
1	People are attracted by street signs that have foreign names.	3	15%	12	60%	1	5%	4	20%	0	0%
3	Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shop signs because they know their effects on attracting people to their shops	7	35%	5	25%	5	25%	3	15%	0	0%
4	A foreign name of a sign might mislead the customers.	3	15%	8	40%	4	20%	5	25%	0	0%
7	The foreign signs raise the customers' curiosity more than the Arabic ones.	4	20%	8	40%	3	15%	4	20%	1	5%
8	Shopkeepers use foreign signs in order to be more	3	15%	13	65%	2	10%	1	5%	1	5%

	<i>distinguished from other shops which use Arabic signs</i>										
11	<i>A foreign name of a sign indicates the user's prestige, fame, and social status.</i>	4	20%	6	30%	5	25%	4	20%	1	5%
12	<i>A foreign name of a sign indicates the feeling of being inferior to foreign countries.</i>	2	10%	5	25%	9	45%	2	10%	2	10%
17	<i>A foreign name of a sign increases the sale of the goods.</i>	5	25%	9	45%	4	20%	2	10%	0	0%
18	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shops' signs because they think that these names are more popular among the customers.</i>	0	0%	9	45%	7	35%	3	15%	0	0%

Table No (2): Findings of the males /Faculty of Arts

No.	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		Fre	Per	Fre	Per	Fre	Per	Fre	Per	Fre	Per
1	<i>People are attracted by street signs that have foreign names.</i>	1	5%	12	60%	3	15%	0	0%	4	20%
3	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shop signs because they know their effects on attracting people to their shops</i>	2	10%	11	55%	2	10%	4	20%	1	5%
4	<i>A foreign name of a sign might mislead the customers.</i>	3	15%	8	40%	6	30%	3	15%	0	0%
7	<i>The foreign signs raise the customers' curiosity more than the Arabic ones.</i>	1	5%	8	40%	4	20%	5	25%	2	10%
8	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign in signs order to be more distinguished from other shops which</i>	0	0%	14	70%	3	15%	3	15%	0	0%

	<i>use Arabic signs.</i>										
11	<i>A foreign name of a sign indicates the user's prestige , fame, and social status.</i>	1	5%	6	30%	7	35%	6	30%	0	0%
12	<i>A foreign name of a sign indicates the feeling of being inferior to foreign countries.</i>	3	15%	6	30%	7	35%	3	15%	1	5%
17	<i>A foreign name of a sign increases the sale of the goods.</i>	6	30%	8	40%	3	15%	3	15%	0	0%
18	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shops' signs because they think that these names are more popular among the customers.</i>	4	20%	6	30%	5	25%	4	20%	1	5%

Results reported in table (1 & 2) show that 75% females and 65% males positively agree with the statement in item (1), that the use of English attracts the customers attention. Besides, they agree (60% of females and 65% for males) that the shopkeepers use these signs on their shops because they know the influence of these signs on the customers (item 3). These findings go ahead with what Takashi (1990) and Ezejideaku and Nkiruku (2010), suggest that the primary reason for loan words used in the language advertising is to make the product seem more modern and sophisticated and to catch the audience attention. Concerning whether the use of English instead of Arabic will raise the curiosity of the customers (item 7), 60% of females and 45% of males responded positively to this where 25% of females and 35% of males disagreed. Nonetheless, 55% of females and males agreed that the use of English might mislead the customers, where as 25% disagreed and 20% remained undecided (item 4). This might indicate the fact that customers might associate brand names with foreign names and thus might be misled by the products they purchase (Salih & El-Yasin, 1994).

Concerning (item 11); the relation between the use of English and the customers' prestige, social and economic statues and fame, 50% of females and 35% of males agree that the use of English names indicates that the customer is more prestigious , while 30% disagree

for males and 25% for females. This shows that the use of English is relatively not in concern with the customers prestige. This contradicts what Leung (2010) has claimed that English is the norm because it represents prestige to those who use it. This can be justified due to the fact that Yemeni and Japanese customers are completely different in their attitudes and cultural awareness of using English. In (item 12), 45% of males agree that the use of English indicates the feeling of inferiority to other countries, where as 45% of females were neutral. Nevertheless, in (item 17) customers are pursuing after the products in shops with English signs because 70% of both sides agree that the use of a foreign name increases the sale of the products while 10% disagreed. Such a thing emphasizes the fact that using English on signs might increase products sale among the customers which agrees with what Friedrich (2012) asserts that using English symbolizes the superiority of what is known as foreign and so they feel distinguished. This could be clearly observed among female customers. Besides, 70% positively agreed with the fact that shopkeepers use foreign signs in order to be more distinguished from other shops.

3.2.2. The use of English and the product purchase

English as an indicator of brand name of products and its effect on the process of buying is shown in table (3 & 4) for females and males respectively

Table No (3): Findings of the Female/ Women's College

No.	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
2	Foreign street signs promote and publicize goods.	1	5%	3	15%	15	75%	0	0%	1	5%
4	A foreign name of a sign might mislead the customers.	3	15%	8	40%	4	20%	5	25%	0	0%
5	The foreign name of the sign indicates that the goods are foreign.	0	0%	5	25%	6	30%	6	30%	3	15%
16	A foreign name of a sign shows the source and the brand of	0	0%	5	25%	12	60%	2	10%	3	15%

<i>goods.</i>											
17	<i>A foreign name of a sign increases the sale of the goods.</i>	5	25 %	9	45 %	4	20 %	2	10 %	0	0 %

Table No (4) Findings of the males/ Faculty of Arts

No.	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
2	<i>Foreign street signs promote and publicize goods.</i>	2	10 %	2	10 %	11	55 %	0	0%	5	25 %
4	<i>A foreign name of a sign might mislead the customers.</i>	3	15 %	8	40 %	6	30 %	3	15 %	0	0%
5	<i>The foreign name of the sign indicates that the goods are foreign.</i>	1	5%	5	25 %	3	15 %	8	40 %	4	20 %
16	<i>A foreign name of a sign shows the source and the brand of goods.</i>	3	15 %	7	35 %	3	15 %	4	20 %	3	15 %
17	<i>A foreign name of a sign increases the sale of the goods.</i>	6	3%	8	40 %	3	15 %	3	15 %	0	0%

Results reported in table (3-4) indicate that English street signs are of no effect on promoting and publicizing goods since the participants responds negatively (20% for both females and males only agreed whereas the majority remained unanswered (item 2). Such attitude might be closely related to their view that the use of English is definitely misleading them as 55% of both sides positively agreed (Item 4). The participants' attitude is negative to the fact that using English signs indicates that goods are foreign as 45% of females and 65% of males disagreed to this. The results of item (2, 4,5) contradicted the result indicated by Salih and El- Yasin (1994). To the participants of the current study, it is not always the case that English name means foreign products. Whether the foreign sign refers to the product being foreign, the participants response negatively. Similarly to females the product brand name is not an indicator of the of the product itself. Nevertheless, both sides (70% of females and males) positively agreed that the foreign name of a shop increases the product sale(item 17) such results go ahead with Salih and El- Yasin (1994).

3.2.3. The use of English and its effect on Arabic

whether English impact on Arabic is real has been obviously shown by the results indicated below.

Table No (5): Findings of the Females/ Women's College

No	Items	Strongly agree		agree		Neutral		disagree		Strongly disagree	
6	<i>It is better for shopkeepers to use Arabic signs for their shops instead of foreign ones.</i>	6	30 %	6	30 %	5	25 %	2	10 %	1	5%
7	<i>The foreign signs raise the customers' curiosity more than the Arabic ones.</i>	4	20 %	8	40 %	3	15 %	4	20 %	1	5%
8	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign signs in order to be more distinguished from other shops which use Arabic signs.</i>	3	15 %	13	65 %	2	10 %	1	5%	1	5%
9	<i>The foreign name of the signs shows that the shopkeeper does not have a sense of loyalty and belonging to his Arabic language and culture.</i>	0	0%	2	10 %	9	45 %	6	30 %	3	15 %
10	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign signs because they think foreign countries are models of us.</i>	0	0%	9	45 %	5	25 %	5	25 %	1	5%
13	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shop signs because Arabic has no equivalents for these names.</i>	1	5%	5	25 %	3	15 %	7	35 %	4	20 %
14	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shop signs because they think Arabic is not creative</i>	0	0%	0	0%	10	50 %	5	25 %	5	25 %
15	<i>The customers do not feel at ease with Arabic names of signs</i>	2	10 %	3	15 %	10	50 %	4	20 %	1	5%

Table No (6) : Findings of the males/ Faculty of Arts

No	Items	Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly
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		Agree				Disagree					
6	<i>It is better for shopkeepers to use Arabic signs for their shops instead of foreign ones.</i>	6	30%	5	25%	3	15%	6	30%	0	0%
7	<i>The foreign signs raise the customers' curiosity more than the Arabic ones.</i>	1	5%	8	40%	4	20%	5	25%	2	10%
8	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign signs in order to be more distinguished from other shops which use Arabic signs.</i>	0	0%	14	70%	3	15%	3	15%	0	0%
9	<i>The foreign name of the sign shows that the shopkeeper does not have a sense of loyalty and belonging to his Arabic language and culture.</i>	1	5%	5	25%	7	35%	6	30%	2	10%
10	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign signs because they think foreign countries are models of us.</i>	3	15%	8	40%	3	15%	6	30%	0	0%
13	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shop signs because Arabic has no equivalents for these names.</i>	4	20%	4	20%	4	20%	5	25%	3	15%
14	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shop signs because they think Arabic is not creative</i>	6	30%	3	15%	6	30%	2	10%	3	15%
15	<i>The customers do not feel at ease with Arabic names of signs</i>	2	10%	8	40%	4	20%	2	10%	4	20%

The use of Arabic instead of English is highly being estimated by the participants. As shown in table (5& 6). In their attitude to whether it is better for shopkeepers to use Arabic signs for their shops instead of foreign ones (item 6), 60% of females and 55% of males were positively agreed where as 15% of females and 30% of males disagreed. It is of no doubt that English has been purposely used by the shopkeepers. The majority of the participants agreed that English

will raise the customer curiosity (item 7). To this attitude, 80% of females and 70% of males agree with the shopkeepers' intention to make their shops more distinguishable from others. Furthermore, To them, it does not mean that the shopkeepers are not loyal to their language. (item 9) or that the shopkeepers do not have equivalent in Arabic (item 13). However, by asking them whether using English name instead of Arabic indicates that Arabic is not creative has been denied by the participants. 50% of females and 45% of males disagreed (item 14). Such result indicates that the customers are aware of the fact that the shopkeepers should use Arabic instead of English because Arabic is their language and by using Arabic they will show how they are proud and loyal to their mother tongue. And that Arabic is still possessing a good place among its speakers. However, the customers attitude in item 15 is contradictory to their attitude in item 6 as only 25% of females and 30% of males disagreed. How it comes that they prefer using Arabic and at the same time they are with using English. The researcher believes that the main reason to do so is to facilitate the process of trading for "utilitarian goals".

4. Conclusions

The widespread of English all over the world has left its influences on the Arab world, too. A salient feature of Arabic is the use of novel words of English on street shops, cafes, supermarkets and Moles. The impact of English on Arabic has already seen in the form of words hanging on Mukalla streets mixing with the Arabic ones to construct a compounding meaning which eventually led to a change in the structure of Arabic proves to be essential. The finding of altering the borrowed to suit the phonological, morphological and syntactic features of Arabic are consistent to Onysko, (2004) and Leung (2010). The participants attitudes towards these signs have shown that they aware of and loyal to their own language. However, they prefer using English if the reason is for "Trading Utility", otherwise Arabic – to them- should be the norm. These findings were closely linked to the findings of, Salih & El-Yasin (1994), Friedrich (2002) and Leung (2010).

الملخص

الانجليزية المستعملة على لافتات الشوارع بالمكلا- اليمن

وموقف المستهلك اليمني منها

الكلمة المفتاح : مكلا ، لافتات ، اليمن

أ.م.د. نجاة أحمد بوسبعة

أستاذ مشارك- قسم اللغة الانجليزية، جامعة حضرموت - اليمن

تستهدف هذه الدراسة الكلمات الانجليزية المستعملة على لافتات الشوارع بالمكلا- اليمن ، للمحلات التجارية، و الأسواق المصغرة، و محلات السوبر ماركت ، والمقاهي، والشركات وغيرها. ومدى تأثير ذلك على البناء الصرفي للغة العربية من جهة ، ومن جهة اخرى تستهدف معرفة موقف المستهلك اليمني من استعمال هذه الكلمات جنبا إلى جنب مع اللغة العربية، ولتحقيق ذلك تم اعطاء المشاركين استبياناً. و شمل مجتمع الدراسة جميع الطلاب في جامعة حضرموت من أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية ، كلية الآداب و كلية البنات الذين هم من أماكن مختلفة في اليمن . وتشير النتائج إلى أن الكلمات المستعملة و المستعارة من الانجليزية على لافتات المحلات التجارية تتغير لنتناسب مع البناء الصرفي للغة ، وبذلك تصبح جزءا من هيكل اللغة العربية. اما فيما يتعلق بمواقف المشاركين فقد أظهروا وعيا و اخلاصا تجاه لغتهم الام ، ومع ذلك فإنهم يفضلون استعمال اللافتات باللغة الإنجليزية إذا كانت الاسباب تجارية بحثة.

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A questionnaire

Dear participant, the researcher is conducting a study entitled " The Use of English on Mukalla Street Signs and Yemeni Attitudes. You are kindly requested to fill in the information below and respond to the questionnaire items.

Sex

Male Female

College :

Arts Women

No	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	<i>People are attracted by street signs that have foreign names</i>					
2	<i>Foreign street signs promote and publicize goods.</i>					
3	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shop signs because they know their effects on attracting people to their shops</i>					
4	<i>A foreign name of a sign might mislead the customers.</i>					
5	<i>The foreign name of the sign indicates that the goods are foreign.</i>					
6	<i>It is better for shopkeepers to use Arabic signs for their shops instead of foreign ones.</i>					
7	<i>The foreign signs raise the customers' curiosity more than the Arabic ones.</i>					
8	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign signs in order to be more distinguished from other shops which use Arabic signs .</i>					
9	<i>The foreign name of the sign shows that the shopkeeper does not have a sense of loyalty and belonging to his Arabic language and culture.</i>					
10	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign signs because they think foreign countries are models of us.</i>					
11	<i>A foreign name of sign indicates the user's prestige , fame, and social status.</i>					
12	<i>A foreign name of a sign indicates the feeling of being inferior to foreign countries.</i>					
13	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shop signs because Arabic has no equivalents for these</i>					

	<i>names.</i>					
14	<i>Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shop banners because they think Arabic is not creative.</i>					
15	<i>The customers do not feel at ease with Arabic names of signs.</i>					
16	<i>A foreign name of a sign shows the source and the brand of goods.</i>					
17	<i>A foreign name of a sign increases the sale of the goods</i>					
18	<i>. Shopkeepers use foreign names for their shops' signs because they think that these names are more popular among the customers.</i>					

Thanks for your cooperation