

SURVEY OF ARABIC WORDS IN MIDDLE INDIA

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Arabic, originally restricted to Arabian Peninsula, became a world language by reason of the fact that it was the spoken tongue of Mohammada and his followers, who spread the Islamic religion to vast regions of the earth. As a result of religious expansion Arabic became the popular language of North Africa, Egypt, and the States of Near East ; but the influence of Arabic is left wherever there are Muslims, in precisely the same way that the influence of Latin follows the Roman Catholic faith. In the same fashion that Latin broke up into separate Romance languages, spoken Arabic diverged into a series of spoken dialects ; but the classical Arabic of the Quran is still in written and spoken use every where in the Arabic speaking world, regardless of the local spoken form.

The Arabic language spread along with the Quran, and although few Indian Muslims can understand the words in Qura'n, they have some familiarity with these words. A small but effective educational system in the Arabic medium has created a small elite literate in Arabic ; and a certain men of religion have persued their theological studies to an extent where they too are highly literate in Arabic.

The Arabic language — through the extensive trade with Arab World, the spread of Islam, and the Muslin rule in India — has indeed permeated Mediaval India. The history of Arabic influence in Middle India goes back to the 12 th century A.D. (Hiralal, 1916, 199). At present, though all Indian Muslims pray in Arabic, though most preet their friends and clansmen in Arabic some of the time, and though more Arabic Words have been adopted into the regional and tribal dialects of Middle India, rarely if ever do Indian Muslims converse in Arabic themselves.

For various reasons Islamic culture came in contact with Indian culture and interacted. The conditions and results of such interaction are often studied and discussed in terms of culture diffusion, acculturation, culture exchange or culture learning. At the abstract level, one culture may be influenced by another culture on such matters as religion, philosophy and political ideology. At the concrete level, things related to food, clothing and shelter may be learned by one culture by another. At both levels, one culture may learn more from another and vice versa, depending upon the conditions under which the two come in contact. In order to determine the directionality, content and amount of culture learning between two given cultures, social scientists look for tangible evidence of the interaction between them.

The purpose of this paper is to recognise word-borrowing as one such evidence in regional and tribal dialects of Middle India.

This survey is based on some fifteen thousand (to be exact 14891) entries which include about twenty thousand words. The words of Arabic origin number about one hundred and fifty (to be exact 147). They are presented here alphabetically.

1. *aju* (n) sacred abtutions before prayer by Muslim. Arab. Wazu. وضوء
2. *avval* (adj) first, foremost. Arab. auwal أول
3. *atar* (n.) perfume, Otto. Arab. 'itr عطر
4. *adab* (n.) good manners. أدب
5. *abi : r* (n.) red (scented) dust. Arab. 'abir عبير
6. *amba : r* (n) heap. Perso-Arabic *ambār* stalks of corn.
7. *a : raj* (n) a petition, request, complaint. Arab. 'arz عرض
8. *a : lam.* (n) a flag, banner, Arab. 'alam. علم
9. *almost* (adj) a wanton. fellow. Arab. *al* (the) + *Pres. mast* (drunk, lustful). المست
10. *ala : y bala : y* (n.) disease and mishap. First el. Pers. *alay* (defiling), sec. el. Arab. *balā* (calamity) الألي بلان
11. *alah, da* : (n) separate. Perso-Arab. 'alahidda. علاحدة
12. *a : ilm.* (n) a very learned man. Arab. 'alam. عالم
13. *asba : b* (n) goods. Arab. *asba : b* أسباب
14. *i : sa* : (n) Jesus. Arab. *i sa*' عيسى
15. *ija : pha* : (n) increase, excess. Arab. *izafa*. اضافة
16. *isbi* : (n) Christian (era). Perso-Arabic *īṣawī* عيسوي
17. *isa : ra* : (n) a hint, sign. Arab. *ishāra* (t) إشارة
18. *isa : i* : (n) a Christian. Perso-Arab. عياني
19. *kabja* : (n) a receipt, Voucher. Arab. *Qaḥzah* قبضه
20. *kabi : r* (n) a personal name (the famous saint of fifteenth-sixteenth century) Arab. *kabīr* «great, elder, a nobleman» كبير
21. *karaj* (n) debt. Arab. *Qarz*. قرض
22. *kalam* (n) a pen. Arab. *Qalam*. قلم
22. *kalma* : (n) Word, saying ; the formula of the Mohammedan confession of faith. Arab. *kalimat* : Pers. *kalma*. كلمة
23. *kali* : (n) whitewashing. Perso-Arab. *Qali* قلعي
24. *kasba* : (n) a township. Arab. *qaṣaba*. قصبه
25. *kasbi* (n) a prostitute, city-dweller. كسبي
26. *kasa : i* : (n) a butcher. Arab. *qaṣṣāb*. قصاب
27. *kasu : r* (n) fault, default. Arab. *quṣūr*. قصور
28. *ka : ḡi* : (n) a Muslim Magistrate. Arab. *qāḏī* قاضي
29. *kana : t* (n) Screens of a tent, a tent. Arab. *qanāt*. قنات
30. *kephiat* (n) plentiful advantage. Arab. *kiphāt* كفاية
31. *kora : n* (n) the Quran. Pers. *quran* fr. Arab. *qur'ān* قرآن
32. *khandak* (n) ditch. Perso-Arab. خندق
33. *khabarda : r* (n) informed, warned. Perso-Arab. *khabar-dār*. خبردار
34. *khabi : s* (n) barber. Arab. *khabīs*. خبيث
35. *khayra : t* (n) charity, alms. Arab. *kḥairāt* (pl). خيرات
36. *khara : p* (adj) noxious, Vicious. Arab. *kharab* خراب
37. *kha : tir* (post position) favour, choice, for, Arab. *khatir*. خاطر

38. kha : li : (adj.) empty, void. Arab. *khālī*. خالي
39. kha : s (adj) private, personal. Arab. *khās*. خاص
40. kha : sa : (adj) excellent, Choice. Arab. *khāssat* خاصة
41. khassi : (adj) castrated goat. Perso-Arab. *khāsī* خاصي
42. khidmat (n) service, business. Arab. *khidmat* خدمة
43. khe : rat : j (n) rent, revenue. Arab. *khārāj* خراج
44. gacca : (n) payment without any gain. Perso-Arab. *gachan* «passed, elapsed».
45. gajab (n) extravagant, Vanity. Arab. *gizāf*
46. gajra : (n) thread. Arab. *ghazil*. غزل
47. gari : b (adj) poor. Arab. *gharīb*. غريب
48. gilaph (n) case, cover, quiet. Arab. *ghilāf*. sheath, cover. غلاف
49. challa : (n) a strip of ornament. Arab. *Silah* «armour» سلاح
50. chala : m (n) salute (to or by a Muslim). Arab. *Salām*. سلام
51. japat (n) Kept in subjugation. Arab. *Zabt* ضبط
52. jama : (n) assembling, gathering. Arab. *jam'* جمع
53. ja : phra : n (n) safforn. Arab. *Za'faran* زعفران
54. ja : ri (n) put in force, proclaimed. Arab. *Jarī* جاري
55. jaha : J (n) ship. Arab. *Jahāz* جهاز
56. ja : hir (n) made public. Arab. *Jahār, Jihār*. ظاهر
57. jid (n) insistence. Arab. *Jidd*. ضد
58. jumla : (n) an amount, total. Arab. *Jumal* «addition, aggregate». جملة
59. julum (n) application of force. Arab. *Zulm*. ظلم
60. jeya : da : (adj) surplus, redundancy. Arab. *Ziyāda* زيادة
61. jaba : b (n) reply, answer, Arab. *Jawāb*. جواب
62. tasli : m (n) saluting. Arab. *taslīm*. تسليم
63. tajbi : j (n) enquiry, Judgement. Arab. *tajwīz* تجويز
64. tabla : (n) a pair of single-faced drums. Arab. *tabl'a* «a single drum or doublé». طبلة
65. tari : (n) fresh, moist. Pers. *tar*. Perso-Arab. *tarī*. طري
66. taes (n) vehemence. Arab. *taish* «anger» طيش
67. ta : ga : (n) a tie of thread (for magic protection) Perso-Arab. *tāga*.
68. tama : m (adj) entire, complete, full. Arab. *tāmm, tamām*. تمام
69. tama : sa : (n) entertainment, amusement. Perso-Arab. *tamāshā*.
70. ta : ri : ph (n) Commendation, praise. Arab. *ta'rīf*. تعريف
71. tala : k (n) divorce (of wife). Arab. *talik* «divorced (woman)» طلاق ?
72. ta : luk (n) property, estate. Arab. *ta'alluq* تعلق
73. taiya : r (n) prepared, ready. Arab. *taiya* : r طيار
74. tha : k (n) layer, stratum. Skt. *Stha* : + Arab *tāq*. contam. طاق
75. dawa : t (n) inkpot. Perso-Arab. *dawāt*. دواة
76. daptar (n) register, book. Arab. *daftar*. دفتر
77. dapha : (adv.) once, instant. Arab. *daf'a* (t) دفعة

78. *da : wa : (n) urging, persistence. Arab. dā'wā. دعوى*
79. *dala : l (n) broker, agent. Arab. dallāl. maden dala : l «Cupid, the middle man». دلال*
80. *dima : k (n) mind. Arab. dimagh «pride, haughtiness». دماغ*
81. *duka : n (n) a shop. Arab. dukkān. دكان*
82. *nakal (n) replica, imitation, copy. Arab. naql. «mimicking, acting, telling». نقل*
83. *naksa : (n) design, drawing, portrait. Perso-Arabic. naqsha نقش*
84. *nakad (n) ready money, cash. Arab. naqd. نقد*
85. *najar (n) seeing, scanning. Arab. nazr. نظر*
86. *naba : b (n) Vice-regent. Arab. nawab (pl. of na'ib) نواب*
87. *na : la : yak (adj) unfit, incompetent. Perso-Arab. nā-lā'iq. نالائق*
88. *phaki : r (n) a religious medicant (Muslim), Muslim beggar. Arab. faqīr. فقير*
89. *phajar (adv.) daybreak, the first prayer time for a Muslim. Arab. fajr. فجر*
90. *phaud (n) Troops, army, Arab. fauj فوج*
91. *phatah (n) Victory, success ; successful. Arab. fathāh. فتح*
92. *phi : ka : (adj.) diffused, scattered ; pale. Arab. faikh «being diffused». فيخ*
93. *phikir (n) careful thought ; device. Arab. fikr. «thought, advice». فكر*
94. *phadi : hat (n) disgrace, ignominy. Arab. faẓīhati فضيحة*
95. *bakeya : (n) arrears, dues ; old. Arab. baqāyā (pl. of baqiyat) بقية*
96. *badal (n) exchange, substitution. Arab. badal. بدل*
97. *bayhiya : (adj.) excellent. Arab. bara'at «being perfect in virtue and beauty». براءة*
98. *buruj (n) a tower. Arab. burj. برج*
99. *be : ba : k (adj) complete, entire, Perso-Arab. bi-bāq. بي باق*
100. *be : ima : n (adj.) faithless. Perso-Arab. bi-īmān. «without religion or faith» بي ايمان*
101. *be : sak (adv.) certainly ; Perso-Arab. bi-shakk «without doubt». بي شك*
102. *badle : (adv.) substitution. Arab. budlā' (pl. of badīl) بدله*
103. *maktab (n) a school (for Muslim boys). Arab. maktab. مكتب*
104. *majbu : t (adj.) firm, strong. Arab. mazbūt. مضبوط*
105. *majlis (n) an assembly. Arab. majlis (Sg.), majālis (pl.) مجلس*
106. *majumda : r (n) a surname. originally the title of an officer under the Muslim rule. Perso-Arab. majmu'-dār. «record-keeper, revenue accountant». مجمدار*
107. *marji : (n) choice, wish. Perso-Arab. marzi مرضي*
108. *masjid (n) a mosque. Arab. masjid. مسجد*
109. *mahal (n) a building, inner or outer quarters of a building ; area ; palace. Perso-Arab. mahalle' «part of a town», Arab. mahallat «street quarter». محلة*
110. *ma : t (n) Checkmate. Arab. mā't «conquered». مات*
111. *ma : ph (n) forgiveness, pardon, excuse. Arab. mu'āf «forgiven ; rent free». معاف*
112. *ma : phik (adv.) corresponding to, fit, suitable. Arab. muwāfiq. موافق*
113. *ma : lum (n) known. Arab. ma'lūm معلوم*
114. *Mohammad (n) name of the prophet of the Muslim religion. Arab. muhammad. محمد*
115. *musalma : n (n) a Muslim. Perso-Arab. مسلمان*

116. *musalma* : ni : (adj.) behaviour or custom of a Muslim. *Perso-Arab. musulmāni*. مسلماني
117. *mula* : ka : t (n) a meeting, visit. *Arab. mulāhkat* «being let into one another» ملاقات
118. *muluk* (n) country, territory. *Arab. ملك*
119. *muha* : n (n) an outlet. *Skt. mukṣat Arab. maʿān* (a stage, halting place) *contam.*
120. *murabba* : (n) candied fruit, jam, *Arab. murabbā, murabbab*. مربى
121. *mola* : yam (adj.) soft, delicious. *Arab. mulāyim*. «wholesome, tender». ملائم
122. *mulla* : (n) a Muslim priest. *Arab. muʿallā* «elevated». ملا
123. *maolbi* : (n) a learned man. *Perso-Arab. mauḥwī* مولوي
124. *maula* : na : (n) a learned judge or scholar. *Perso-Arab. Maulā-nā* (our lord). مولانا
125. *re* : la : (n) assembling for a march. *Arab. riḥlat* «marching». رحلة
126. *satranja* (n) the name of chess. *Perso-Arab. Shatranj*. شطرنج
127. *saphar* (n) journey, travel. *Arab. safr*. سفر
128. *sai* : s (n) a syce, horse-keeper, *Perso-Arab. sayīs*. سائس
129. *sa* : yar (n) a poet. *Arab. Shāʿir*. شاعر
130. *su* : ba : (n) a province. *Perso-Arab. šūba*. صوبہ
131. *hak* (n) right, rightful ownership or possession. *Arab. ḥaḡ (q)* حق
132. *haki* : kat (n) truth. *Arab. ḥaḡiqat*. حقیقت
133. *had* (n) limit, boundary. *Arab. ḥad (d)* حد
134. *halka* : (n) revenue-division. *Arab. ḥalqah*. حلقہ
135. *hawa* : (n) air, wind. *Arab. hawā*. ہوا
136. *hajja* : m (n) barber. *Arab. ḥajjām* حجام
137. *ha* : jir (n) present ; at hand. *Arab. ḥāzir*. حاضر
138. *hamla* : (n) attack, assault, invasion, *Arab. ḥamla (t)*. حملہ
139. *harne* : sa : (adv.) always, *Arab. hamīsha*.
140. *ha* : l (adv.) present time. *Arab. ḥāl*. حال
141. *ha* : siya : (n) edge, border, hem. *Arab, ḥāshīya (t)*. حاشیہ
142. *hukum* (n) order, command, *Arab. hukm*. حکم
143. *huju* : r (adv.) Sir. *Arab. huzur*. حضور
144. *isti* : pha : (n) resignation. *Arab. istiʿfā*. استعفی
145. *Kabar* (n) a grave. *Arab. qabr*. قبر
146. *kabi* : la : (n) a whole family ; the wife, *Arab. qabīla (t)*. «tribe, family». قبیلہ
147. *ta* : ki : d (n) reminder, pressure. *Arab. taʿkīd*. تاکید

Analysis of the Data :

The linguistic influence of Arabic, a semitic language, upon non-semitic dialects of Middle India has been enormous. The Urdu of this region is basically Indo-Aryan language, however, it is written with modified forms of the Arabic alphabet and as replete with Arabic words and forms.

The directionality of word-borrowing is understandable and predictable. Due to Muslim rule in India, Arabic was more dominant than the regional dialects, the directionality of culture learning and subsequent word-borrowing was not mutual but from dominant to the subordinate. Regional dialects of Middle India have borrowed a great number of words from Arabic but not vice versa.

Cultural dominance, which is highly correlated with economic and military dominance, is often defined in terms of achievements in arts, sciences and technology and, thus, the dominance-subordination relationship between two cultures that come in contact with each other can be determined almost immediately.

Here the assumption is that everything cultural is linguistically coded. Thus, the richer a culture, the richer the vocabulary of its language. As mentioned above, although the number of borrowed words cannot be regarded as the absolute or exact amount of learning one culture from another, it may be considered as a relative index of cultural growth and cultural learning in two different ways. For example, if the Middle Indian culture has increased its vocabulary by 1696 Perso-Arabic words, we may infer that at least 10% of the growth of Middle Indian culture in Mediaeval India was due to its contact with Perso-Arabic culture.

The statistical data on borrowed words in Middle Indian dialects provide us with convincing evidence that above mentioned assumption is valid.

The etymologie of Arabic loan words have been presented in the word-list, but reports on who the original borrowers were of such loanwords are very scarce. Studies of first borrowers are needed so that at least part of the process of learning between two cultures may be made clear. In general, it is known that those who come in contact with and acquire new knowledge from foreign cultures use foreign words in an attempt to disseminate their knowledge. It seems that, unless these people have some kind of leadership or the knowledge or things that they want to introduce have practical relevance to the life of their fellow country men, they are not successful in having their loanwords accepted commonly. In the case of Middle India, the original borrowers of Arabic words seem to have been clergy men, professionals, administrators, scholars, artists and skilled workmen like cooks and tailors.

It is interesting to note that borrowed words introduced by skilled workmen and used in such practical areas as cooking and dressmaking are pronounced in close approximation to their original pronunciation as compared to those introduced by intellectuals. This phenomenon indicates that the intellectuals tend to borrow Arabic words through the eye, while others borrow through the ear.

There seem to be several reasons for borrowing Arabic words. One reason is linguistic innovation. When new things or concepts were learned by the borrower culture from the donor-culture, there arose a linguistic need to name in borrower-language. It innovated new words to name them. Another reason for borrowing was social prestige. People who wanted to exhibit their familiarity with Perso-Arabic culture, tended to use Perso-Arabic words as proud evidence of such familiarity.

Arabic loanwords are like immigrants in many respects and there are analogous relations between the two. Both involve national sentiments in some way and thus, both received governmental control.

The question of what words people borrowed from Arabic language is worth pursuing, because it can reveal what they learned from Perso-Arabic culture. The Arabic words that have been borrowed are mostly content words like nouns and adjectives. So called function words like preposition and conjunction are rarely borrowed.

Arabic loanword is only historically and etymologically foreign, but psychologically it is as indigenous as any other word once it is commonly used. It seems that it is the nature of linguistic nationalism that should be investigated rather than the extent of psychological tolerance for the use of loanwords.

The author is convinced that word borrowing from Arabic is a cultural behaviour and its process and results reflect the basic aspects and characteristics of the cultures of both borrowing and the borrowed.



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Abbreviations

: Sign of lengthening.
adj (ective)
adv (erb)
Arab (ic)
Contam (ination)
n (oun)
Pers (ian)
pl : plural
Skt : Sanskrit

