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Department of English



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Semantic Shift in English and Arabic Languages

Presented by: BOUALEM Asmaa

The Board of Examiners

Supervisor: Dr. HAMERLAIN Souad

Chairwoman: Mrs. BENDOUKHA Fatima

Examiner: Mrs. HEIRECH Faiza

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Dedications

I dedicate my dissertation to my family.

*A special feeling of gratitude goes to my loving parents, the source of my
happiness and success in life.*

May Allah bless them.

To my brothers YoucefAbdelghani and Marwanne

*I also dedicate this dissertation to my Friends who have been so supportive and
encouraged the fulfillment of this work.*

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Abstract

This dissertation, a total of three chapters, is intended to investigate semantic shift as a phenomenon that exists in English and Arabic languages. In this study, we aim at better illustrating the phenomenon and we also make a comparison between the two languages to see if they share the same types of semantic shift. Through the investigation of English and Arabic words we could notice that these changed over time at the level of semantics, an etymological endeavor that shows that the phenomenon of semantic shift exists in the English language as it exists in the Arabic language. Besides, the shift is systematic since they share the same types of change. Eventually, this study aims at suggesting to foreign language learners to pay attention to this phenomenon when reading books, articles, poems from Middle English because language is dynamic and keeps changing over time. Hence, understanding these texts presupposes knowing about the actual meanings of the author.

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General Introduction

In the very early months of studying Linguistics, I thought about the theme of my Master's degree dissertation. It was very unclear at that time, but semantics and language change were always there. Such a choice was influenced by the problems that my classmates, hitherto, were facing during the history of English language lectures, and when reading some Middle English writings. I always asked myself the question "why do we have Middle English, Old English, Modern English? Whether there are differences between them? And what kind of changes from one period of time to another occur?" In trying to find an answer to this question, I have done some research in the field of etymology and was surprised to find that the English language is changing over time and mostly from a semantic point of view. This is what is called semantic shift, the change of meaning through time usually to the point that the modern meaning is radically different from the original usage.

After reading several books, I noticed that many Etymologists have poured huge amounts of ink trying to find out the most common reason for semantic shift that is shared by all languages. According to Meillet (1905) it is impossible to determine the exact causes of the shift of a particular language. I also noticed that there is a lack in proving the phenomenon of semantic shift in all languages. The interest was mostly on the English language in general, its history, how was it constructed and developed, what are the languages that helped it fill some concepts, from which languages does it borrow words, etc. So, most researchers in this field dealt with the theoretical aspects of language, history, origins and so on, but our focus will be on English words change and the reasons behind this change. For this reason, we will try to bring the maximum of words that we use in our daily life and that have changed from their original meanings or spelling.

Through this research, we aim at a better illustration of the phenomenon of semantic change, we have chosen English And Arabic languages as two examples through the analysis of the meanings of some words from both languages. This research is very important to us as future teachers of English to know not only the linguistic aspects of language but also about the language itself. Furthermore, as foreign language users we need to have an idea about the meaning of some English words that we usually use and the difference between their current and past meanings. We need to have an idea about its original meanings and it is very necessary as English learners to have a good knowledge about the language we are learning, its origins, development and the original meanings and we investigate the phenomenon in Arabic language to prove that this phenomenon does not exist just in English language but also in other languages.

We seek to examine the phenomenon of English words change through time in terms of Semantics, we will try to tour this phenomenon to see whether it is true that it exists English words that change over time, if yes how come that words change their meanings, what are the reasons? And we will make a comparison between English and Arabic languages to see if this phenomenon exists in both languages. Any language may be exposed to many changes but our focus is on the English language that is still changing, the existence of words that used to mean something and change through time for many different reasons. Our first hypothesis is that this phenomenon exists In the English language. In other words, since history has divided English to different periods of time so there are changes. The first hypothesis makes us think of the second one which is in one way or another linked to it since this phenomenon exists in English language it must exists in the Arabic language, too.

In the pursuit of our aims, our general hypothesis is that both languages share the same types of semantic change. These ones could be reformulated in the form of a research

question: what types of semantic change do English and Arabic languages shared? In order to test our hypotheses and to obtain the information required from our subjects, to fit the objectives of our study in the present research, we used one main tool; investigation.

This study is a descriptive type. It involves the Analysis of certain lexical items in relation to their current and past senses. analysis of the data was based on major types of semantic change, expansion, amelioration, restriction, metaphor. Some words will be used to exemplify each type in both languages.

The dissertation is divided into three chapters. It starts with a general introduction that deals with the background of the study and the aim of the study. The first chapter is divided into two parts, the first part deals with the background of English language and the second part deals with the background of Arabic language. The second chapter is about the reasons and types of semantic shift. Eventually, the third chapter will be devoted to the field of investigation, it deals with the analysis of English and Arabic words in terms of semantics, and checks the results so as to, gauge the truthfulness of the hypotheses.

1.1. Introduction

Etymology is the science of words. It studies the origin of language, its development, its history and the meaning of words. English language is the language that is most exposed to many studies and critics about its origins because its vocabulary is rich of borrowed and loan words from different languages. Similarly, Arabic language is also a language that has different views about its origins and etymologists are still making research about that. In this chapter, we will step back to the origins of both Arabic and English languages and their different periods of time from their emergence to the present day.

1.2. Part one: Background of the English Language

1.2.1. Indo-European Languages and the Germanic Branch

1.2.1.1 Indo-European

Indo-European speech is the source of many European and south Asian languages such as the English language. It is not possible to study the history of the English language without going back on the history of Indo-European languages because English language is strongly related and similar to many Indo-European languages such as Germanic and Swedish ones. “For example, German vater, singun, lebein and stein resemble their English translations father, sing, live and stone.” (Charles Barber, 1993 p58)

Who were the Indo-Europeans? It is generally believed that they were an agrarian population coming from an area near the black sea and Caspian sea and who lived in south eastern Europe “They appeared on the finger of Mesopotamian area and around 1500BC” (Charles Barber, 1993 p 58).

What language do they speak? Indo-European languages contain a huge number of branches and millions of speakers, people from different races and cultures use it and become its native speakers. The languages of Indo-European share certain grammatical vocabulary and sound relationship and some features. Examples of some languages that derive from Indo-European:

English	German	Swedish
Stone	Stein Sten	
Bone	Been	Ben
Home	Heim	Hem
Rope	Reif	Rep

These are words that are somehow similar to each other because they all derive from one language. So, what are the main branches of the Indo-European group? Celtic, Hellenic, Italic, Latin and the Germanic group from which English derives.

1.2.1.2 The Germanic Branch

It is a language used by those speakers who lived in Denmark, it was spread over a huge area, it has also many dialectal differences, it was divided into North Germanic, West Germanic and East Germanic. The north Germanic languages are Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic and Faeroese, the East Germanic group has many languages but the most known one of that we have a certain background Gothic, the west Germanic languages are High German, low German and English. There are many changes from Indo-European to Germanic. In fact, the Germanic branch has different words that do not exist in the Indo-European languages. Besides Germanic languages have two tenses present and preterit and some Indo-European vowels were modified in

Germanic, Actually, The Germanic branch of Indo-European languages is the most branch that interests us because it includes English.

1.2.2 Old English

Old English is the period extending from 450 to 1150. It is the earliest historical form of English language spoken in England and southern and eastern Scotland brought to Great Britain by Anglo Saxon settlers probably in the midcentury. During the 5th AD three Germanic tribes (Saxon, jutes and angles) came to the British Isles from various parts of northwest Germany as well as Denmark. These tribes were warlike and pushed out the most of the original Celtic speaking inhabitants from England into Scotland, wales and Cornwall. One group migrated to the Britannic coast of France where their descendants still speak the Celtic language of Bretons today.

Through the years, the Saxons, jutes and angles mixed their different Germanic dialects to form what linguistics refers to as Old English or Anglo Saxon, the word English was in old English 'Englic', and that comes from the name of the Angles were named from Engle their land of origin. Old English replaced many Romanic languages such as Celtic and Latin, in this period the Anglo Saxons dominated England so their language become dominant too, this west Germanic language had four main dialects Mercian, northambian, Kentish and west Saxon.

The vocabulary of old English was different from today's English: driven was drifen, good was god, friendless was fréondléas, thankful was pancful, etc. Old English was different from English now in many aspects not only the vocabulary but also in grammar, pronunciation, syntax that is why present English speakers cannot understand it.

poem from old English

Fæder ure þu þee art on heofonum;

Si þinnam age hal god

to becu me þin rice

gewur þe ðin willa

on eorðans waswa on heofonum.

urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us todæg

And forgyf us ure gyltas

Swaswa we forgyfa ðurum gyltendum

And ne gelæd þu us on costnunge

ac alys us of yfeles oþlice

You might be surprised to discover that this is actually English! Not present day English of course, but Old English, which was spoken between 700 and 1100 AD. The purpose of this passage is to give you an idea about the history of English. This is the translation of the passage to English today.

Our father

Our Father who is in heaven,

hallowed be the name.

The kingdom come.

They will be done
 on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread,
 and forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us,
 and lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
 Amen.

1.2.3 Middle English

The transition between the old English period and the early one is called middle English. It is the period from 1150 to 1500, middle English is the change of English caused practically by William the conqueror who invaded Britain at that time so French has influenced the English language, toward the end of old English period an event occurred which had a greater effect on the English language this effect was the Norman conquest in 1066. such event resulted in the reduction of inflection and the loss of a great number of Germanic vocabulary, in that period was a kind of linguistic division, where the lower class used English and the upper class used French, so middle English was the period when English was ignored.

At that period, English was trilingual, Latin was used in churches, for the government, French which was used and eventually English by the country's population. At that time, English took its vocabulary from different languages such Latin and French.

In the 14th, English became dominant in Britain again, but with many French words added such liberty government, agriculture and many other words. This language is called middle English, it was the language of the great poet Chaucer (1140-1400).

The most important process in the change from middle English to modern English is the great vowel shift.

The great English poet of the middle ages is Geoffrey Chaucer who is known by his Canterbury tales. In this period, many Germanic words and grammatical rules, verbs and pronunciation of old English have been changed.

1.2.4. Early Modern English

Early modern English was transformative for both England and the language. It was the time of revolutionary development. It is the first step in the construction of the English identity that is why modern English readers are able to understand texts written in EME for instance the first edition of King James Bible and the work of William Shakespeare. The early modern English of the early 17th century form the base for the grammatical and orthographical conventions survive in modern English. Early Modern English is the period from 1500 to 1700, it is the first step during which English speakers took a serious look at their own language, most influential with regard to EME were the works of William Shakespeare (1546-1616) for this reason EME is often referred to as Shakespearean English.

There are important reasons behind the development of English in this period, the translation of Bible into English, the impact of the printing press which is the key development of standard form of English, the Renaissance and great vowel shift.

1.2.5. Late Modern English

The Early modern period is that period expanded from 1800 to the present day. It is the period of expansion, England was spread around the world by the British colonization and

empire-building and American activities. BrajKachruhas proposed three circles of English: an inner circle of natives, an outer circle where English is used as second language and, an expanding circle of foreign language.

The pronunciation, grammar and spelling of late Modern English are essentially the same as early modern English, but the late modern English has significantly more words due to several factors: the industrial revolution, British Empire, etc.

During the late modern period the vocabulary of English has continued to expand as the early modern period, numerous words continued to be formed from Latin and Greek. This method is used particularly for the vocabulary of science, like genre, oxygen, molecule, hibernate, penicillin. Some of the vocabulary of sciences has gained more general currency, when that happened these words changed their meanings for example Atonic-powerful-shattering, Allergic-indicating a disinclination od dislike.

There are some borrowed words from French, for example critique, montage, etiquette. Borrowed words from Italic for example studio, German and many other languages. In this period, English started to establish herself as a global or international English, world English or common English. Recently, English has become a lingua franca for communicative purposes, a language that is spoken and understood by many countries where English is not a native language English is the main language in many places, an important language in others and spoken as a second language in most of the rest of the world. However, there are some significant differences in pronunciation, spelling and word usage around the world. This is what is called varieties of English: Australian, south African, British and American English.

1.3. PartTwo: Background of Arabic Languages

1.3.1. Arabic Language in the Age of Ignorance

The Arabic language belongs to the southern branch of the Semitic western languages, this branch back to the north and south of the Arabic island and Ethiopia, the standard Arabic emerged in the north of the island, its origins back to the old northern Arabic that was spoken by Adanites, it is different from old southern Arabic that arose in the south of the island and was known in the past by Himyarite and it was spoken by quahtons.

There are a lot of views concerning the origins of Arabic language, some of them said that there was a person called yarab who used this language first that is why it took its name Arabic from yarab. It is also mentioned in the prophetic saying that the prophet Ismail is the first who talks Arabic, for others Arabic was the language Adam in paradise but there is no scientific evidence or prophetic saying that prove these claims.

Arabic was the Arabs before the Islamic age, in the era which is known as the age of ignorance. In this period of time, the Arabic language was mostly used in poetry, this period of time known by its rich vocabulary, its figurative language and polysemy.

Some studies of the history gave us some poems of that period written in Arabic language called pendants which is a kind of poems that includes more than one thousand verses. Arabic language in that time was used orally, they used it also to write their political covenants. So, Arabs used the Arabic language in the age of ignorance for political, commercial and literally reasons.

1.3.2. Arabic language in the Islamic Age

The revelation of the Quran is considered as the most important period for the development of the Arabic language. The Quran united its different dialects in one language of Ethiopia and it added to its dictionary new words and gave new senses or meanings to other words.

The grammar, vocabulary and rules of Arabic were enhanced by the Quran in that time. The Arabic language was spread by Islam through the world starting from the south to take the place of old southern Arabic passed by the Mediterranean Sea to the east and north of Africa. After that, it spread to Spain and isles of the Mediterranean Sea.

The effect of the Arabic language was on many languages such as Turkish and Parsee. The Arabic language in the Islamic age was known as the language of the holy Quran and it still is.

1.3.3. Arabic Language in the Age of Umayyad

The period after the death of prophet Mohamed called Umayyad age. In this period of time Arabic language was written without any intonation. However, when alomassar turned into Muslims and lived with Arabs, tones and intonations started to emerge and even the Koran become intonated.

In this period aboualawad adjusted words of the Koran again, so he puts points on and under the alphabet after that Ahmad Ariba made changes and adjusted words again and these repairs developed to what is now. But lexicography of the alphabet started in Abdelmalek son of Marwan era.

In the Umayyad age, Arabic language become global, universal, international language with the Islam expansion to regions sited near the Arabic island, at that time Arabic language became the official language of those regions, and its use became a kind of prestige until the second century of migration, after that they started to use hybrid Arabic affected by their mother tongues, that is why we find these different varieties of Arabic language. After the end of Umayyad age Arabic language moved from poetic sayings to scientific domains.

1.3.4. Arabic language in the Abbasid Age

The Abbasid age witnessed the first step in the development and prosperity of Islamic civilization in the east and west of Islamic world and Spain. when translation started to appear, they translated from Parsee and Greek to Arabic. after that, the Arabic language entered the domain of science and innovation when the rural tongue was not able to cope with that new civilization that led scientists at that time to translate non-Arabic words to Arabic and make some changes on the Arabic language by giving new meanings to some words.

The Arabic language in the Abbasid age was the language of civilization, culture, science in different regions of Islamic world and the Arabic language was divided into standard Arabic for written forms and dialectal tongues for oral forms this is what we call medial Arabic.

1.3.5. Modern Arabic

After the colonial offensive on Islamic regions, the place of Arabs was declined, colonists found that it is a good way to decline the unity of Muslims by declining the unity of language. So, they started to put dialectal Arabic in the place of the standard form and write the Arabic language using Latin alphabet and make dialectal language for written forms what led to a terrible result. one of them, is that they took European language as a tool to study science and arts

in all universities. Arabic language now is the language of written forms, televisions, radio and cultural conferences. However, for the daily speech there are different dialects in different regions of the Arabic world.

First there is Gulf Arabic, spoken by the inhabitants of the Arabic gulf like Kuwait, Katter, Arabic united prncedom, in addition to some other regions like Oman and Saudi. Second, Egyptian Arabic which is spoken by 80 million speakers in Egypt, it is the most understood dialect in the Arabic world because of the large spread of its movies, songs and TV series. Another example of Arabic varieties are Syrian and Lebanese dialects, Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan dialects.

This table shows the varieties of Arabic language from one region to another, one sentence is pronounced differently in each region and even the change of words.

Table 1.3.5. Varieties of Arabic Language

Variety	I love reading a lot	When I went to the library	I wanted to read a book about the history of women in France
Literary Arabic in Arabic script (common spelling)	أحب القراءة كثيرا	عندما ذهبت إلى المكتبة	كنت أريد أن أقرأ كتابا عن تاريخ المرأة في فرنسا
Literary Arabic in Arabic script (common spelling)	أحبُّ القِراءةَ كثيرًا	عِنْدَمَا ذَهَبْتُ إِلَى الْمَكْتَبَةِ	كُنْتُ أريدُ أَنْ أَقرأَ كِتَابًا عَن تَارِيخِ الْمَرْأَةِ فِي فَرَنْسَا
Gulf	?a.nawa:yidaħibbagra:	lammanrihtil-	kintabi:

<u>Arabic (Kuwait)</u>		maktaba	agrakita:bʕantari:xil- hari:mibfaransa
<u>Egyptian</u>	anabahebbel- ʔera:jaʔawi	'lamma 'rohtel- mak'taba	'ana 'kont-e 'ʕawz- 'aʔrak'ta:bʕanta'ri:xel- set'ta:tfefa'ransa
<u>Algerian (Algiers?)</u>	e:nanhebbel- qra:jabezzeɣ	kiruħtl'il-maktaba	kuntha:bnaqrakte:bʕalatari:x l-mra fi fra:nsa

From these different examples of Arabic varieties, we can notice that the Arabic language is varied and spoken in different parts of the world and this is thanks to the Islamic expansions through the world as well as colonization while has had a great influence on the identity of the Arabic language.

1.4. Conclusion

In a nutshell, as foreign language learners we found that English is a language that has different periods of time and changed from one period to another, the same thing for the Arabic language. Each language has its own history that is still developing through time because language is not something stable, it is dynamic and it changes through time. The English and Arabic languages are also considered as changeable languages and this is for different reasons. This is what we shall discover in the following chapter.

2.1. Introduction

Each language is exposed to many changes in form, sound and meaning. Our focus in this chapter is on meaning or semantic shift which deals with changes in meaning. In other words, it is the shift from one concept to another. English and Arabic languages are also exposed to this phenomenon and are still changing through time, so what are the reasons behind this shift, the causes, why does shift occur for a particular item? And what are the different types of this shift?

2.2. Definition of Semantic Shift

“A lexical item in a given language may develop additional or different senses from the hitherto existing one it has. In other words, denotations of existing senses of lexical items may shift and give away for new senses become obsolete; or that new senses may develop as extensions of established ones, leading to polysemy as never older senses co-exist.”(Murphy&Koskela, 2010:147)

According to the Oxford dictionary Semantic change, also semantic shift. Change in the meaning of words, especially with the passage of time, the study of which is historical semantics. Semantic shift is the change of meaning from one sense to another. Sometimes total shift of meaning; shift to opposite or sometimes the old meaning of a particular word become less powerful or more negative and it can also one word denotes different concepts such as the word ‘mouse ‘in the past was the name of a small animal but now it is also the name of an instrument of a computer.

The sociolinguist Jennifer Coates, following William Labov, describes linguistic change as occurring in the context of linguistic heterogeneity. She explains that linguistic change can be

said to have taken place when a new linguistic form used by some sub-group within a speech community, is adopted by other members of that community and accepted as the norm.

(...) language change is a consequence of inherent characteristics of the human mind and human social interaction. – (Blank 1999:63) “semantic change refers to any change in the meaning(s) of a word over the course of time. Also, called semantic shift, lexical change, and semantic progression”

Language is always changing, evolving and adapting to the needs of its users. If language is stable and does not change we would not have words to refer to modems, fax machines, different instruments of the computer and so on because life is not stable human need to move, migrate, create new things, language also change because it is an important part from our daily life so all languages change over time . There are different reasons for this. Why English and Arabic languages have been changed over the decades?

2.3. Theories of Semantic Change

2.3.1. The Meillet Model

It is argued that Antoine Meillet was mainly interested in the reasons and causes of semantic change. He sees that it is impossible to determine the causes of semantic change in any language, he says “... ilestsouvent et peutetre meme le plus souvent impossible de determiner les causes d’un changement de sensparticulier...” (Meillet 1905-6:5)

Nevertheless, he made an isolation of general causes of sense shift and according to him there are three types of semantic change. First there are changes brought by primary linguists for example the current usage of the French words *pas*, *rien*, *personne*. These words have a negative

sense when used with the negative particle *ne*. In modern spoken French, the *ne* can be deleted and those words will maintain their negative sense. Thus, their semantic meaning has shifted as originally, they were positive when used without the *ne*. Second type is meaning variations which is related to the changes of a referent. These sense alterations can affect a large part of the vocabulary of a language but we only notice them when an unusual association of ideas is made (Meillet 1905). The third and the last cause of semantic change according to Meillet is social contact between different social strata for example the word *alcohol* is taken from Arabic word *الكحول* so Meillet in his third type he focused on the process of borrowing from different languages. He sees that language change semantically because of the borrowing; new foreign words put to the language cause the disappearance of some words and the loss of others.

From the typology of Meillet we can see that he neglected different points of meaning change such as the development of technology that changes the needs of language speakers and the economy that play a good role in this phenomenon and many other factors, he just makes his typology from a general point of view: the primary linguistic rules, the change in the referent word and social contact that lead to borrowing.

2.3.2. The Ullman Model

The second theory of semantic change (called the functional classification) is considered as much more comprehensive and clear than the Meillet one. Ullman classifies semantic change according to two types of linguistics: Semantic change due to linguistic conservatism which deals with the transfer of names through similarity between senses and through contiguity between the senses; it means all changes of meaning which are internal it depends on the speaker understanding, in other words it is semantic shift in which the scope of one word is paralleled by the reduction in the scope of other word for example in middle English the word *meat* was mostly

used rather than food but in modern English it is mostly used the word food and meat become a type of nourishment. Second semantic change due linguistic innovation which deals with the transfer of senses for example the use of the word town to mean inhabitants this is what some linguists called metonymy.

The functional scheme is much more clear than the previous one so that is why it is not criticized because he tries to deal with all sides that push to the change of a particular item, psychology, society, linguistics...etc.

2.3.3. The Stem Model

the system of Stem of semantic change is an empirical system. He drew a distinction between change and fluctuation. He was mainly concerned with the psychological processes in semantic change and he isolated seven types of meaning changes and organizes them into two types: external (class substitution), linguistic (verbal relation, class analogy-class shortening, referential relation, class nomination-class transfer, subjective relation, class permutation-class Adequation). He distinguishes the first class from the others by indicating that is due to non-linguistic factors.

According to these three theories that deal with semantic change there are similarities and differences between them each one sees the causes from his point of view and different angle . yet, there are still some points that are common between them such as the change in the referent language specially stem and Ullman models are very similar to each other and can work together they both consider psychological processes as central to sense change. Ullman argues that the two theories point to the possibility to be used in conjunction with each other.

2.4. Reasons of Semantic Change

2.4.1. External Forces

Since life changes and is still developing all the time, the needs of humans change, as long as the needs of language users continue to change. It is remarkable that one of the most important reasons for language change is the needs of language users change, new technology need new words to cope with the new concepts for example the word computer was taken from the word computation, was used to mean to count, to calculate but after the invention of the computer the meaning of the word change, so New experiences, new life, new discoveries and new inventions need new vocabulary.

Another reason of semantic shift is the Economy, Economic causes are obviously at work in the semantic development it is necessary for people to make their utterances as efficient as possible to reach their communicative goals, sometimes people need some specific words as a kind of jargon to refer to some things that are totally specific to their field of interest, new words that are comprehensible by all people of the same field or job even if they do not share a mutually intelligible language, for example English as lingua franca, economy is one reason of English being lingua franca and this may lead to some changes in the language and specially at the level of semantics to reach some economic purposes.

Furthermore, notice that society has a big influence on language, for each society has its own identity, behavior, attitudes, traditions that are the most important element of any culture, we all know that each culture can be exposed to some changes through time due to many reasons, for instance new fashion, new generation, new conditions that obligate any culture to change. Since language is one element of any social identity, it needs to change in order to cover some new

concepts, also sometimes change causes the disappearance of some words because they do not par with the new fashion of the society. For example, wimple a medieval head covering is not used anymore because there is no need for it, the development of social conditions make some words unnecessary. On the other hand, a shift of attitudes may render some words socially unacceptable (e.g. Frog, jap, girlie.), while others become highly fashionable or socially relevant (e.g. cool-ecology.) social media also become an important part of our daily life and it has a big influence on The rise in popularity of internet slang for example has seen phrases such as “LOL” (Laugh Out Loud), “YOLO” (You Only Live Once) and “bae” (an abbreviated form of babe or baby) become firmly embedded in the English language over the past ten years. So, social cultural causes are determined by the social nature of the language: they are observed in changes of meaning resulting from the development of the notion expressed and the thing named and by the appearance of new notions and things. In other words, social reasons of semantic change are connected with the development of the human mind as it moulds reality to conform with its needs.

Thanks to the movement of people across countries and continents, for example migration and, in previous centuries, colonization. Speakers of one language coming into contact with those who speak a different one. No two individuals speak identically: people from different geographical places clearly speak differently and even within the same community there are variations according to a speaker’s age, gender, ethnicity and social and educational background. For example, the word “courting” has become “dating”.

External forces of semantic change are changes in the life of the speech community i.e. changes in economic and social structures, changes in scientific concepts. They have no relation with the linguistic aspects of the language, so what about the internal causes or the linguistic ones?

2.4.2. Internal Forces

The Internal causes of semantic change are called the *linguistic causes*. These are factors acting within the language system. They deal with changes due to the constant interdependence of vocabulary units in language and speech, such as differentiation between synonyms, changes taking place in connection with ellipsis, and with fixed contexts, changes resulting from the ambiguity in certain contexts and some other cases.

2.4.2.1. Ellipsis

As a linguistic cause of semantic change, it is the phenomenon of when the meaning of one word is transferred to another because they habitually occur together in speech. In a phrase made up of two words one of them is omitted and its meaning is transferred to its partner. For example, the verb **to starve** (in *OE steorfan*) had the meaning ‘to die’ and was habitually used in collocation with the word **hunger** (*ME sterven of hunger*). In the 16th century the verb itself acquired the meaning ‘to die of hunger’. In other words, *Ellipsis*. Though frequent usage of one word in a word-group, this word is omitted and the meaning of the whole is taken up by the remaining word. Examples: *sale* (cut-price sale), *to propose* (to propose marriage), *to starve* (to starve of hunger). Ellipsis is a change based on a contiguity of names.

2.4.2.2. Synonyms

Semantic change due to the differentiation of synonyms is a gradual change observed in the course of language sehistory. Discrimination of synonyms as a linguistic cause of semantic change. Let us take, for example, the word **land**. In *OE land* meant both ‘solid part of earth’s surface’ and ‘the territory of a nation’. When in the *ME* period the word **country** was borrowed

from *Old French* (**contree**) as its synonym, the meaning of the word **land** was altered and ‘the territory of a nation’ came to be denoted mainly by borrowed word **country**.

2.4.2.3. Linguistic Analogy

As a cause of semantic change, if one of the members of a synonymic set acquires a new meaning, other members of this set change their meanings and by analogy acquire the same meaning, too. All words have a meaning, but since English first appeared from its base language of Anglo-Saxon, the meanings of words have undergone changes. These changes include a broadening of meaning, a narrowing of meaning or a complete shift in meaning altogether. Another semantic change in English would be a change in connotations, referred to as either elevation or deterioration. For Example: *to oversee* (to fail, to notice, to neglect)

2.4.2.4. The Semantic Motivation

This implies a direct connection between the central and marginal meanings of the word. For example, the compound noun *eyewash* has two meanings: 1) a lotion for the eye); 2) something said or done to deceive a person so that he thinks what he sees is good though in fact it is not. The first meaning is based on the literal meanings of the components, i.e. the meanings of the morphemes *eye-* and *-wash*. Thus, motivation of the noun *eyewash* in its first meaning is morphological. The second meaning of the word *eyewash* is metaphoric or figurative. In this case the motivation is semantic. Semantic motivation is based on the coexistence of direct and figurative meanings within the semantic structure of the word.

2.5. Types of semantic change

2.5.1. Semantic Extension

There are some words that increase their range of meanings over time. In other words, a range of meanings of a word increases to that the word can be used in more contexts than were appropriate before the change. For example, in middle English *bride* was a term for small bird. Later the term *bird* came to be used in general sense. It is also called widening that is the rise of quantity, it is also called broadening, Broadening is the change in the meaning of a word by expansion, so that the word is applicable in more contexts than it previously was and means more than it previously did. An example of broadening is the word "business", which originally meant "a state of being busy, careworn or anxious", but has now broadened to include all kinds of work occupations. Broadening occurs when over time the meaning of a word has grown to be applicable in contexts that it previously wasn't, and to mean things it previously didn't - its meaning has simply expanded. Meaning expansion or brooding is an expansion in the use of a particular word it is related to the quality but the meaning does not change completely it keeps relation to the original meaning.

2.5.2. Semantic Restriction

This is the opposite of semantic expansion, the decrease in the use of a word, the word becomes used in less contexts than before. For example, the word **meat** which derives from middle English *mete* with the general meaning of food and now restricted to processed animal flesh. It is also called Narrowing, i.e. range of meaning is decreased so that a word can be used appropriately only in fewer contexts than before the change, narrowing refers to the opposite of broadening, and is defined as a reduction in the contexts in which a word can appear. In simple

terms, the meaning of the word has gotten more specific. The Narrowing of meaning is when a word with a global meaning is applied to something much more specific. The word *litter*, for example, meant originally (before 1300) 'a bed,' then gradually narrowed down to 'bedding,' then to 'animals on a bedding of straw,' and finally to things scattered about, odds and ends. Other examples of specialization are *deer*, which originally had the general meaning 'animal,' *girl*, which meant originally 'a young person,' and *meat*, whose original meaning was 'food.' (Sol Steinmetz, 2008)

2.5.3. Metaphor

It involves relationship of perceived similarity or a transfer of the name from one object to another based on similarity between the two objects. The similarity may be in appearance shape, function, position, movement. The cunning person, for example, is referred to as a *fox*. A woman may be called a *lemon*, a *cat*, a *goose*. Change based on similarity of thing. For example; broadcast originally meant to cast out with the advent of radio and television the word was extended to indicate the transmission of audio and video signals. Metaphor is a change based on similarity between concepts. Metaphor in semantic change involves enlargements in the meaning of a word that suggest a semantic similarity or connection between the actual sense and the original one. Metaphor is considered as an important factor of semantic change. The semantic change of *grasp* 'seize' to 'understand,' thus can be seen as such a leap across semantic domains, from the physical domain ('seizing') to the mental domain ('comprehension'). (Lyle Campbell, 2004)

2.5.4. Metonymy

If the transfer is based upon the association of contiguity it is called *metonymy*. It is a shift of names between things that are known to be in some way or other connected in reality. The

transfer may be conditioned by spatial, temporal, causal, symbolic, instrumental, functional and other relations. It is change based on nearness in space or time, in other words it is based on contiguity between concepts for example horn, animal horn and musical instrument.

2.5.5 The Semantically Bleaching Words

Like *horrible* or *terrible* used to mean 'inducing awe' or 'full of wonder.' But humans naturally exaggerate, and so over time people used these words in cases where there wasn't actually terror or true wonder. The process by which the literal meaning of a word or phrase evanesces is called **semantic bleaching** and was first elucidated in an influential book by the German linguist Georg von der Gabelentz in 1891.

2.5.6 Elevation

This refers to a change in the connotations of a word, occurring in one of two ways. A word that loses its negative connotations is an example of elevation, but elevation can also occur when, rather than losing bad connotations, a word gains positive ones. One example of elevation through loss of negative associations is intensifying expressions like 'terribly' and 'awfully'. These words have lost their negative stigmas and now mean little more than 'very', this is evident in that we can now use expressions such as 'terribly good.' An example of a word gaining positive connotations would be "sick". It has obvious negative connotations of illness that are still connected to the word today, but it has also become a popular slang term for something cool. For example, "that's sick!"

2.5.7. Deterioration

It occurs when a word gains association with a negative stimulus, to hold then negative connotations. For example, the word "accident". Once simply meaning "a chance event" the word

now has associations with misfortune and injury, so we assume that when someone has "had an accident" it was not a positive experience.

2.5.7 Shift

A shift in meaning differs completely from broadening and narrowing in that the word now retains none of its original definition and has come to mean something else entirely. A good example of a semantic shift is the word 'gay'. Originally meaning "lighthearted", "joyous" or "happy", the word has undergone a complete shift in meaning to currently refer to a homosexual person.

2.6. Conclusion

Semantic change which is caused by many reasons over time had the role of the birth of new words, the change in the meaning of others, the disappearance of some words and sometimes the expansion in the range of meanings of some words from one period to another in all languages. We as foreign learners have noticed this phenomenon in the English languages. In the next chapter, we will shed light on this phenomenon in English and Arabic languages through the analysis of a good number of examples from both languages to better illustrate the phenomenon of semantic change.

3.1. Introduction

All languages are exposed to many changes over time, phonetic change, grammatical change, semantic change, etc. In this chapter, we will deal with English and Arabic languages as two examples of semantic change through the analysis of some words from both languages, in order to go deeper and notice how a particular item was to mean something and changes to mean another thing through time, to better illustrate the phenomenon of semantic shift in the field of linguistics.

Both English and Arabic languages are sources of words' meaning change, and both of them have undergone different types of semantic change. Now, I will try to exemplify some words which have gained new meaning in English and Arabic.

3.2. Part one English words

3.2.1. Nice

“Nice” is an English word. Its origins date back to middle English from Anglo French “silly”, from Latin nescius which means they do not know. According to Meriam Webster learner’s dictionary, nice is giving pleasure or joy: good and enjoyable: attractive or good quality: kind, polite, and friendly. According to Oxford dictionaries it is giving pleasure or satisfaction; pleasant or attractive. ‘we had a very nice time’. What is meant by the word nice in Shakespeare’s time? It meant fussy, delicate, quibbling. It was not a complimentary word: it suggested artificial and trivial distinctions or considerations, often meant to avoid unpleasantness.

The first use of the word was in 14th century, its meaning was foolish, stupid, silly, simple, ignorant. For example, ‘Anna is a nice girl’ before the 18th century this sentence meant Anna is a foolish girl. Through time, the word shifts away to have new different meaning, in the 18

centuries the word nice shifts from a negative sense to a positive one, so nice is an example of amelioration because the meaning of the word has been changed from a pejorative sense which is absurd, stupid etc. to a positive sense which is good.

Amelioration is the upgrading or elevation of word's meaning, a word with negative sense develops a sophisticated one, so nice is an example that illustrate this type of semantic shift, the word nice actually mean good, enjoyable, attractive, kind, polite.

3.2.2. Pretty

“Pretty “is another example of amelioration in the English language. It is an English word traced back to Old English *prættig*, tricky. According to Meriam Webster learner's dictionary “pretty” is attractive to look at usually in a simple or delicate way: pleasant to look at or listen to: large or impressive. According to Oxford dictionaries it is of a person, especially a woman or child attractive in a delicate way without being truly beautiful. ‘a pretty little girl with an engaging grin of a thing pleasing to the eye or the ear. ‘A Petty summer dress’

Pretty in the Cambridge English dictionary in British English has the meaning of quite but not extremely:

- The house has four bedrooms, so it's pretty big.
- I'm pretty sure it was her.
- I've got a pretty good idea of how to get there.
- pretty much/well
- almost: I've pretty much finished here.
- She knows pretty well everything there is to know on the subject

American English pleasant to look at, or (esp. of girls or women or things connected with them) attractive or charming in a delicate way: a pretty view My older sister is prettier than I am.

The first use of the word was before 12 century, its original meaning was artfully or skillfully made, reasonably, "fairly," or "very. She was pretty angry, it means she was very angry,

The car was pretty made, it means the car was skillfully made. With the passage of time the word gets new meaning which is actually used as beautiful, pleasant or attractive.

3.2.3. Knight

“Knight” Is an English Word from middle English it was taken from the Old English cniht man-at-arms, its first use was before 12 century with the meaning of “boy, youth, servant, attendant. Etc.”. About 1100, “knight” expanded to mean “military follower of a king or other superior.” During the Hundred Years War, it began to be used in a specific military sense and by the sixteenth century it became a rank in the nobility.

According to Meriam Webster dictionary knight is a soldier in the past who had a high social rank and who fought while riding a horse and usually wearing armor. So, the meaning of the word shifts from another meaning which is completely different.

3.2.4. Notorious

“Notorious” is an English word. Its origin dates back to Medieval Latin, from late Latin notorium which means publicly known. According to Meriam Webster learner’s dictionary “Notorious “it is well known of famous especially for something bad, it is generally known and talked of especially: widely and unfavorably known. According to Oxford dictionaries it means Famous or well known, typically for some bad quality or deed. ‘Los Angeles is notorious for its smog’.

The first use of the word was in the late 16th century in 1534 in the sense generally known, famous, well-known, etc. During the seventeenth century, it began to acquire a negative connotation from its frequent association with derogatory nouns. So, through time the word shift away from a positive sense to a negative one. This phenomenon is called pejoration it is a type of semantic change that happens when a word's meaning becomes more negative.

3.2.5. Hussy

“Hussy” is an English word. Its origin dates back to the alteration of Middle English huswif (house wife) from hus house. According to Meriam Webster learner's dictionary, it is a lewd or brazen women”, a saucy or mischievous girl. According to Oxford dictionaries, it is “An impudent or immoral girl or woman. The first use of the word was in 1505 with its original meaning which is house wife, “mistress of a household, over time, the meaning broadened to mean “any woman or girl” and by 1650 it was being used in a more negative manner to refer to any woman or girl who showed casual or improper behavior. By the late eighteenth century the word had a general derogatory sense.

“Hussy” is an example of semantic change pejoration because the meaning of the word has been changed from its positive meaning which is house wife to a negative pejorative sense which refers to any women or girls that shows bad behavior.

3.2.6. Wench

“Wench” is an English word from Middle English “wenche”, Short for wenchel child, from Old English wencel, akin to old High German wankon to toller. According to Meriam Webster dictionary, it is a young woman: girl or a female servant, a lewd woman. The oxford

dictionaries define wench, humorous A girl or young woman. 'in the new film about Columbus, she plays the token buxom wench'.

The first use of the word was in the 14th century, meaning "girl or young woman. then came to refer to servant, particularly servant girls. and by the mid-fourteenth century is was being used in the sense of a woman of loose morals, mistress."

3.2.7. Mistress

"Mistress" is an English word from Middle English maistresse from Anglo French mestresse, feminine of mestre master-more at master. According to Meriam Webster dictionary, Mistress is a woman who has power, authority, or ownership as the female head of a household, a woman who employs or supervises servants, a woman who is in charge of a school or other establishment. A woman of the Scottish nobility having a status comparable to that of a master, a chiefly British: a female teacher or tutor, a woman who has achieved mastery in some field.

The first use of the word was in 14th century. It is a French word came to English and referred to a woman who was in charge of a household or a child. By the early fifteenth century, it was being used to refer to the "kept woman of a married man.". Through time, the meaning of the time expanded to different meanings, powerful women, strong women. etc.

3.2.8. Facetious

The word "facetious" is French word from facetieux came into English in 1599 with the meaning of "witty, elegant" a person who has good intellectual capacity (intelligent), and its meaning has shifted to something which implies a desire to be amusing, often intrusive or ill-timed, characterized by out-of-place efforts of jocularly. The value of this word having

altered from approbation to disapproval. So, what is it meant by the word facetious in the present day? According to different new dictionaries -of English, it is a word used to describe speech that is meant to be funny but that is usually regarded as annoying, silly, or not proper. Also, treating serious issues with deliberately inappropriate humor; flippant for example, 'a facetious remark'

Actually, the word is used to mean something negative than its original meaning which is elegant, this is what linguists called pejoration. When the word loses its positive meaning and takes a negative one, the word facetious is the best example of semantic shift because it has been completely changed because the original meaning is totally different from the actual one.

3.2.9. Gay

The word seems to have its origins around the 12th century in England, derived from the Old French word 'gai', which in turn was probably derived from a Germanic word, though that isn't completely known. The word's original meaning meant something like "joyful", "carefree", "full of mirth", or "bright and showy". According to some new dictionaries, gay means a sexually attracted man to someone who is of the same sex, or it is of relating to, or used by homosexuals. It is also defined as a "homosexual, especially a man". So, how did the word gay come to mean HOMOSEXUAL?

The first use of the word was in the 14th century with the meaning of "cheerful, happy", Etc. Around the early parts of the 17th century, the word began to be associated with immorality. By the mid-17th century, the meaning of the word had changed to mean "addicted to pleasures and dissipations. Often euphemistically: "Of loose and immoral life". This is an extension of one of the original meanings of "carefree", meaning more or less uninhibited.

Fast-forward to the 19th century and the word gay referred to a woman who was a prostitute and a gay man was someone who slept with a lot of women (value judgement), often prostitutes. Also, at this time, the phrase “gay it” meant to have sex. With these new definitions, the original meanings of “carefree”, “joyful”, and “bright and showy” were still around; so, the word was not exclusively used to refer to prostitutes or a promiscuous man. Those were just accepted definitions, along with the other meanings of the word.

Around the 1920s and 1930s, however, the word started to have a new meaning. In terms of the sexual meaning of the word, a “gay man” just meant a man who had sex with a lot of women, but now started to refer to men who had sex with other men.

3.2.10. Allergy

“Allergy” is a new English word from German *allergie*. It was firstly used in 1910, it is a medical condition that causes someone to become sick after eating, touching, or breathing that is harmless to most people. Allergy was first introduced as a medical term. If a person became ill because of eating or coming in contact with something which did not cause any illness in others, he was said to be allergic to that material. During the last few years the meaning of this word has been extended in its scope and now it refers to a strong dislike for something. For example, if you do not like someone you say I am allergic about her. So, the meaning of the word allergic has changed through time and expanded from a very limited scope to a large one, the word become largely used by all language users. This is what is called *semantic extension*, it is the phenomenon when the meaning of a word in a particular language is enlarged in its scope. In such cases the denotation of the word becomes wider and the new meaning of the word refers to a much wider range of people, objects or activities than before. It is also called widening.

3.2.11. Girl

“Girl “is an English word, actually used to refer to a child female. As it is defined in Meriam Webster Dictionary: a female child or young woman, a usually young woman from a specified kind of place. In oxford dictionaries “girl” is:

- A female child.

‘girls go through puberty earlier than boys’

- A young or relatively young woman.

‘I haven't got the time to meet girls’

- with modifier A young woman of a specified kind or having a specified job.

‘A career girl’

- girlsinformal Women who mix socially.

‘I look forward to having a night with the girls’

- A person's girlfriend.

‘I had to look my best for my girl’

- dated A female servant.

These definitions are all that is meant by the item girl now, but was its prior meaning?

The first use of the word was in Middle English in the 14th century for young persons of either sex, child young person. We can notice that the meaning of the word changed over time. In other words, it has been restricted from its large meaning which is all young persons to a young female.

This is what we call semantic narrowing, is a type of semantic change by which the meaning of a word becomes less general or inclusive than its earlier meaning.

3.2.12. Carnation

It is an English word derived from the Latin word caro, which means "flesh", The carnation is so called because it has the colour of flesh. This is called semantic change metaphor; the new meaning of the word is a metaphorical extension of its old meaning. From the analysis of different English words, we could notice the phenomenon of semantic shift, or semantic change, we still try to analyze different words from different types of semantic change that illustrate all the types that we have mentioned in the previous chapter. The Arabic language is also a source of words' meaning change. Now, I will try to exemplify some words which have gained new meaning in the Arabic language to better illustrate the phenomenon.

3.3. Part two Arabic Words

3.3.1. الصلاة (Prayer)

El salat is an Arabic word that refers to the specific words and actions opened by magnification (El takbir) and concluded by submission (El taslim). It is also defined in the Arabic dictionary of meanings El jami3 and the Arabic dictionary El wassit as the prayer of men to God: the specific worship shown in the limits of its time in Islamic law as in the verse فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ 2:108) «وَأَنذِرُ» (pray to your Lord and slay). The student translation

Prayer in religions is the link between Man and his Lord, as a person addresses or guides his Lord through it. Prayer has been known since the dawn of history, with the first mention of prayer in manuscripts older than 5000 years. The first use of the word was in Judaism and Christianity It meant "exhaustion" or "self-torture and submission". After that the meaning of the

word changed in the age of ignorance, the prayer of the people of ignorance, the infidels of Quraysh, and those who were with them at the house of Makkah and Tawfiyyah, the mocking machine, and the cheeky response. It was their custom to clap their hands and whistle.

« ۝ وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءً وَتَصْدِيَةً فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ (And what was their prayer at the house, except for Makkah and fowl And you shall taste the torment, as you have disbelieved). The student translation.

With the coming of Islam, the meaning of the word has changed to mean what it currently means, the specific words and actions done by Man to God, so the meaning of the word changed from forgiveness and pray for asking god for something to something different. This is what is called in English semantic narrowing.

3.3.2. العقيقة (Aqeeqah)

Aqeeqah is a word in the Arabic language that refers to the lamb that is slaughtered for the newborn, the origin of the aqeeqah is the hair that is on top of the boy when he is born. So that sheep that are sacrificed in that case called aqeeqah because it shaves that hair when slaughtering. The first use of the term refers to the hair that comes out on the head of the newborn in the mother's womb. Over time, and especially in the Islamic period, the meaning of the word changed to mean all kinds of sheep that are slaughter for the newborn .

Table 3.3.2.Examples of Semantic Restriction or Narrowing in the Arabic Language

The word in Arabic	Translation in English	The original meaning	The current meaning(after the shift)
بهم	Black	Pure color between white or black	Black color
السبت	Saturday	Period of time	One of weekdays
الحج	Pilgrimage	the desire to do something intentionally	A corner of Islam means going to the house of God
الحريم	Women	Everything that is forbidden to touch	Women

The word "بهم" was passed on to the pure color, which is not associated with any other color. Their black and white are said to be black, but with frequent use, they are called black. And the word "Saturday" in the language means the age, the use of one of the days of the week, the word "pilgrimage" origin of the purpose of the thing and then singled out with the intention of the House of God. The word "harem", which was used to refer to every haraam, does not harm or is allowed to approach him It has become specialized and is only given to women.

3.3.3. الورطة (the Dilemma)

“El warta“is an Arabic word used to refer to a situation in which you have to make a difficult choice, Arabs used to use this term to refer to the mud is where the sheep cannot get rid of. Through time and after the coming of Islam and the development of Arab word from rural life to a new modern life, the word shifts from its specific sense to a general one, death or all severity. In linguistics, this phenomenon is called semantic expansion as we have seen with English words.

3.3.4. الباس (Poverty)

Another example of semantic shift expansion in Arabic language, it refers to the state of being poor, a lack of something, the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions. So, what is the former meaning of this word? It meant the suffering in the war, over time the meaning of the word follows the time to be more general by referring to every hard situation.

3.3.5. لسان (Tongue)

This is an Arabic word meaning the soft, movable part in the mouth that is used for tasting and eating food and in human beings for speaking, actually the word obtains other metaphorical meaning which is language, Arabs say “lissan” to refer to language. The use of the word "tongue" to mean the language is called the transfer of the word machine and meant the whole thing.

3.3.6. الرسول (Prophet)

When we hear the word rassol in the Arabic language, the first idea that comes to our minds is the prophet Mohamed. however, before the Islamic age the term was used to refer to any

sender at that time. So, the meaning of the word has been ameliorated from a simple meaning to a sophisticated one, this is called amelioration.

3.3.7. الجارية (Girls or Women that Are Owned by a Man)

This word is an example of semantic pejoration. The first meaning of the word is a young female of a girls was called jariya. over time, the word has become to refer to every woman who was robbed and looted in wars or by bandits or born to a nation and a slave Mamluk.

3.4. Comparison between English and Arabic languages

Table 3.4. Semantic Shift Types in English and Arabic Languages

Type	English	Arabic
Amelioration	Nice	الرسول(prophet)
Expansion	Allergy	الورطة(poverty)
Metaphor	Carnation	لسان(tongue)
Pejoration	Gay	الجارية

From the table above we can understand that both English and Arabic languages share the same semantic shift types. Hence semantic shift is a linguistic phenomenon that exists in all languages, this is what we have proved by analyzing some words from Arabic and English languages.

3.5. Recommendations

Since the list of words, ended no matter how many, and that the meanings are not limited, the development of the meanings of words or change and transmission showed what is in the

evolution of the language system at all levels. This is not to say that evolution in the form of words is not a reality, but it remains much less than the evolution of the semantic side, which is a common phenomenon in all languages, because the social factors and life changes that are accompanied by languages impose that.

As users of language, native speakers or foreign language learners, we need to study the etymology of words. It is really necessary to have a good knowledge about the development of language through the study of semantic shift of words, as it helps in knowing more about the original meanings of each word in a particular language to avoid misunderstanding, for example, it is impossible to read poems or books from Middle English without any studies about the meaning of words at that time.

This work is an attempt to explain the phenomenon of semantic shift and better illustrate it in the English and Arabic languages, especially for students of English language at the department of English language in Mostaganem to make them aware of the existence of this phenomenon in the field of Linguistics to better understand ancient writings.

3.6. Conclusion

Semantic shift is a phenomenon that exists in all languages this is what we have proven through the analysis of some words from English and Arabic languages. This chapter is an attempt to better illustrate semantic change in Arabic and English language, comparing some words from both languages we found that English and Arabic share the same types of semantic shift. This is what really proves the phenomenon and shows that it is not something random done by ordinary people. However, it is something systematic done by professional etymologists.

General Conclusion

The present study has dealt with the semantic shift in English and Arabic languages. Its main concern was to investigate a good number of English and Arabic words that better illustrate the phenomenon in both languages. We devoted the first part of the first chapter to speak about the background of the English language, where did it come from? How? And what periods of time have passed? This is in one way or another related to the second part that is the background of Arabic language and its development over time. So, we have found that English and Arabic have different periods of time and changed from one period to another and the change included grammar, pronunciation and semantics. This is what we dealt with in the second chapter, semantic shift change which is caused by many reasons over time had the role for giving the birth to new words, the change in the meaning of others, the disappearance of some words and sometimes the expansion in the range of meanings of some words from one period to another in all languages. We as foreign learners, have noticed this phenomenon in the English languages and we have chosen the Arabic language to compare it with English to see whether they share the same types of change or not through the analysis of different words.

Semantic shift is a phenomenon that exists in all languages this is what we try to prove through the analysis of some words from English and Arabic languages, we attempt to better illustrate semantic change in Arabic and English language. When comparing between some words from both languages, we found that English and Arabic share the same types of semantic shift. This is what really proves the phenomenon and shows that it is not something random done by ordinary people. However, it is something systematic done by professional etymologists.

As a final point, the present dissertation has shed some light on the importance of the study of semantic shift for foreign language learners. It is really necessary to have a good knowledge

about the development of language through the study of semantic shift of words, It is equally important to know the original meanings of each word in a particular language to avoid misunderstanding .This work was an attempt to explain the phenomenon of semantic shift and better illustrate it in the English and Arabic languages specially for students of the English language at the department of English to facilitate the understanding of the current and past meanings of the English words.In trying to make the link between different reasons of semantic change I find out that English and Arabic languages share the same reasons and even the same types of semantic shift.

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