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Article

An Analysis of Root Words from Different Languages in the Holy Quran: A Linguistic Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines the presence and significance of root words derived from non-Arabic languages in the Holy Quran, with a focus on their Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Greek, Persian, and Ethiopic origins. At the same time, the Quran is traditionally regarded as a purely Arabic revelation, but linguistic and historical evidence reveal the integration of foreign lexical elements into its discourse. This research examines how these borrowed roots were phonologically adapted, morphologically assimilated, and semantically recontextualised through a comparative linguistic analysis, aligning with Quranic themes and theological narratives. The findings indicate that such lexical incorporations were not incidental but somewhat reflective of the multilingual and multicultural context of 7th-century Arabia. Furthermore, the study emphasises the Quran's dynamic linguistic environment, which enabled it to engage diverse audiences while maintaining its claim of ʿArabī mubīn (clear Arabic). By examining selected root words and their original meanings, this paper underscores the Quran's role as a unifying spiritual text and a linguistic artefact shaped by historical intertextuality. This analysis contributes to broader discussions in Quranic linguistics, comparative Semitic philology, and Islamic theological thought.

Keywords: The Holy Quran; root words; Hebrew; Aramaic; Syriac; Greek; Persian; Ethiopic

1. Introduction

The Holy Quran, revered by over a billion Muslims as the literal word of God, is often lauded for its spiritual depth and linguistic mastery. While the Quran is written in Classical Arabic, a closer inspection reveals that it is not exclusively composed of native Arabic vocabulary. Numerous scholars have identified words and expressions within the Quran that originate from or are influenced by other Semitic and non-Semitic languages, including Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Persian, Greek, and Ethiopic. This phenomenon raises important questions about the nature of the Quranic language, its historical and cultural milieu, and the implications of linguistic borrowing on sacred scripture.

Language in the Arabian Peninsula before and during the 7th century CE was dynamic and diverse. The region served as a cultural crossroads, connecting empires and communities through trade, migration, and religious exchange. It is within this vibrant environment that the Quran emerged. As such, the linguistic landscape of the Quran reflects a mosaic of influences, pointing to a process of historical linguistic integration rather than isolation (Jeffery, 1938; Bostani, 2015).

The process by which words from one language are borrowed into another is known as lexical borrowing. Lexical borrowing is a natural linguistic phenomenon that occurs when speakers of different languages come into contact with each other. The borrowed terms are often associated with new concepts, technologies, or religious practices, and can be fully assimilated into the grammar and phonology of the host language (Hock & Joseph, 2009). In the context of the Quran, borrowed terms

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frequently relate to religious concepts, social institutions, or legal practices. Examples include "Injīl" (gospel), "Ṣabr" (patience), "Zakāt" (almsgiving), and "Furāt" (Euphrates), each of which has a rich etymological history that connects it to broader Semitic or Near Eastern linguistic traditions (Issa, 2024; Haji, 2023).

Many of these borrowed terms are deeply embedded within the semantic structure of the Quran. They are used in a way that makes them indistinguishable from native Arabic words in terms of morphology and syntax. This integration indicates linguistic borrowing and a cultural assimilation of religious and philosophical ideas. For instance, the word "Torah" (Tawrāh in Arabic) is derived from the Hebrew "Tōrāh," which means "law" or "instruction." In the Quran, the term refers to the scripture given to Prophet Moses, and it is employed with the same reverence and doctrinal authority as Arabic terms (Jeffery, 1938).

Arthur Jeffery (1938) in his landmark work, The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an, was one of the first scholars to systematically catalogue foreign words in the Quran. His research demonstrated that many Quranic terms have origins traceable to Aramaic, Syriac, Hebrew, Persian, and other languages. Jeffery's work has since been debated, particularly among Muslim scholars, some of whom argue that labelling any Quranic word as "foreign" undermines the notion of the Quran as a uniquely Arabic revelation (El-Awa, 2006). Nonetheless, the consensus among many linguists is that these words were already part of the Arabic lexicon by the time the Quran was revealed, and their use does not negate the Quran's Arabic character.

The Quran itself addresses the issue of its language explicitly. Several verses assert that the revelation was delivered in a "clear Arabic tongue" (Quran 16:103; 26:195). At first glance, this might seem to contradict the presence of borrowed or non-native words. However, the concept of "Arabic" in this context should be understood within the linguistic reality of the time. Like all living languages, Arabic was not a static entity but a dynamic and evolving system. Borrowed terms that had become naturalised into the language were effectively part of the Arabic spoken and understood by the Prophet Muhammad and his contemporaries. Therefore, the assertion of the Quran's "Arabicness" can be interpreted as a reference to the comprehensibility and accessibility of the message to its immediate audience, rather than a claim of linguistic purity (Abdel Haleem, 2011).

Moreover, non-Arabic root words in the Quran underscore its universality. The Quran frequently addresses humanity as a whole, transcending ethnic and linguistic boundaries. By incorporating words of diverse linguistic origins, the Quran mirrors the interconnectedness of human experience and thought. This is especially significant given the multicultural composition of the Arabian Peninsula during the 7th century, which included Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and adherents of indigenous Arab religions. The Quran's lexical diversity can thus be seen as a reflection of this pluralistic environment (Haji, 2023; Bostani, 2015).

From a linguistic standpoint, analysing root words of foreign origin in the Quran allows scholars to trace semantic shifts, phonological adaptations, and morphological integration. For instance, the Syriac word "ṣabrā" (patience) entered Arabic as "ṣabr" and acquired theological connotations within the Quranic discourse. Similarly, the Greek term "euangelion" became "Injīl" in Arabic, adapted to Arabic phonology and integrated into the religious lexicon to denote the Gospel given to Jesus. These transformations reveal the borrowing process and how these words were recontextualised to align with Quranic theology and narrative (Issa, 2024).

Furthermore, studying borrowed root words in the Quran has implications for translation and interpretation. Translators must be sensitive to the original connotations of these terms in their source languages and their Quranic usage. Misinterpretation can occur when a term is understood solely within its Arabic context without referencing its broader Semitic heritage. This has prompted some scholars to advocate for a comparative Semitic approach to Quranic exegesis, which involves examining parallels between Arabic and its sister languages, such as Hebrew and Aramaic, to uncover deeper meanings (Wansbrough, 1977).

In addition to its theological implications, analysing non-Arabic root words in the Quran contributes to our understanding of the historical development of the Arabic language. It

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demonstrates how Arabic, before its codification as a liturgical language, was shaped by various external influences. These influences did not dilute the language but rather enriched its expressive capacity. The Quran was pivotal in stabilising and standardising Arabic, while also preserving traces of the language's prior openness and adaptability. This linguistic openness is one of the reasons Arabic served as the vehicle for Islamic civilisation across vast geographical and cultural expanses (Versteegh, 2001).

In summary, studying root words of foreign origin in the Quran is not merely an exercise in etymology or historical linguistics. It is an interdisciplinary endeavour that bridges the fields of philology, theology, cultural studies, and translation. It sheds light on the historical context of the Quran's revelation, enhances our understanding of its message, and affirms the interconnectedness of Semitic religious traditions. By appreciating the linguistic diversity embedded in the Quranic text, scholars and believers alike can gain a deeper understanding of its complexity and universality.

2. Literature Review

Exploring root words of non-Arabic origin in the Quran lies at the intersection of historical linguistics, philology, Islamic studies, and comparative Semitic linguistics. This literature review examines the significant scholarly contributions that have shaped our understanding of the Quran's lexical composition, particularly about loanwords and linguistic interaction between Arabic and other languages during the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods. The review also highlights critical debates and methodological approaches influencing contemporary research.

2.1. Historical Foundations: Arthur Jeffery and Early Orientalist Contributions

The foundational work in this field remains Arthur Jeffery's The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an (1938), which systematically catalogued over 300 words in the Quran as non-Arabic in origin. Jeffery's analysis is grounded in rigorous etymological and philological research, identifying linguistic borrowings primarily from Syriac, Aramaic, Hebrew, Persian, and Greek. His methodology combined comparative linguistics with textual analysis, allowing him to trace the historical pathways of many Quranic words.

For example, Jeffery argued that "Injīl" (Quranic term for Gospel) originates from the Greek euangelion. At the same time, "Furqān" (criterion or separator) may be linked to the Aramaic purqānā, meaning deliverance or salvation. Similarly, "Tawrāh" is connected to the Hebrew Tōrāh, and "Zakāt" (almsgiving) is said to have roots in Semitic languages beyond Arabic. These examples demonstrate how the Quran draws upon a rich linguistic reservoir of the wider Near Eastern and Semitic traditions (Jeffery, 1938).

Jeffery's work, however, has not been without criticism. Many Muslim scholars and linguists argue that while such words may have cognates or parallels in other Semitic languages, this does not necessarily imply that they were foreign to Arabic at the time of the Quran's revelation. Instead, they argue that these terms had already been assimilated into the Arabic lexicon and were commonly used among the Arabs of the Hijaz (Abdel Haleem, 2011).

2.2. Classical Islamic Scholarship on Foreign Words in the Quran

Interestingly, the notion that the Quran contains foreign words was not foreign to early Muslim scholars. Classical Arabic philologists and exegetes, such as Al-Shāfiʿī, Al-Suyūṭī, and Al-Zarkashī, engaged with the concept of non-Arabic terms in the Quran. While many believed that the Quran is composed entirely of Arabic words, they did not dismiss the presence of words whose roots lie in other languages, especially if those words had been Arabized and incorporated into Arabic before the Quranic revelation.

In Al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān, Al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505 CE) dedicates a section to the discussion of "al-kalimāt al-aʿjamiyya" (foreign words) in the Quran. He cites numerous examples, including words of Abyssinian, Persian, and Hebrew origin, but asserts that such terms were already

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intelligible to Arab speakers, having been fully integrated into their vocabulary. This nuanced stance recognises both the sanctity of the Quran's language and the linguistic realities of 7th-century Arabia (Al-Suyūṭī, 2008).

On the other hand, al-Shāfiʿī (d. 820 CE) held a stricter position, maintaining that the Quran is purely Arabic and that any claim of foreignness must be reassessed in light of Arabic's semantic adaptability and richness. Nevertheless, the debate reflects an early awareness of the multilingual context in which the Quran was revealed and an acknowledgement of the complexity of linguistic categorisation (Abdul-Raof, 2013).

2.3. Comparative Semitic Linguistics and Quranic Vocabulary

More recent scholarship has revisited the roots of Quranic vocabulary through the lens of comparative Semitic linguistics. Scholars such as Sidney Griffith, John Wansbrough, and Kees Versteegh have emphasised the importance of Syriac and Aramaic influence on early Islamic texts, particularly in their liturgical and religious vocabulary.

Griffith (2008) highlights the shared religious terminology among Semitic languages, noting that concepts such as prophecy, revelation, judgment, and monotheism were part of a broader discourse in the Near East. This shared conceptual framework made it natural for Arabic to incorporate terms from neighbouring languages, mainly through contact with Jewish and Christian communities in the Arabian Peninsula. For instance, the Quran's term "Sabt" (Sabbath) borrows from Hebrew and reflects the intertextuality of religious traditions.

John Wansbrough's Quranic Studies (1977) proposes that the Quran emerged within a milieu of interreligious polemics and theological debates, often borrowing and adapting terms to craft a distinct Islamic discourse. Though Wansbrough's theories are controversial, particularly his suggestion of a much later redaction of the Quranic text, his emphasis on linguistic interdependence has pushed scholars to examine the Quran in relation to broader Semitic texts and traditions.

Kees Versteegh (2001) explores the evolution of Arabic and its interaction with other languages in The Arabic Language, highlighting how Arabic absorbed and adapted foreign words. He argues that lexical borrowing is not a sign of linguistic deficiency, but rather a sign of cultural and intellectual openness. According to Versteegh, the Quran's use of such terms indicates a dynamic linguistic environment and reflects the Prophet Muhammad's role in addressing a linguistically diverse audience.

2.4. Morphological and Semantic Integration of Loanwords

A key area of investigation in contemporary research is the morphological and semantic integration of foreign-origin root words into the Quranic text. For example, Haji (2023) conducts a comparative analysis of Semitic roots in the Quran, illustrating how certain Syriac and Hebrew words were modified to fit Arabic morphological patterns. The root Ṣ-B-R, which appears in Arabic as ṣabr (patience), is paralleled in Syriac and Hebrew. However, the Quran acquires a layered theological meaning that transcends its earlier usages.

Issa (2024) examines the phenomenon of semantic shifts, wherein borrowed words are adapted to fit new religious and moral frameworks. His study of "agnosia" or "jahal" (ignorance) in the Quran reveals how a term common in pre-Islamic Arabic and other Semitic languages was redefined within a Quranic epistemology that associates ignorance not merely with a lack of knowledge, but with spiritual blindness and moral failure.

Such studies highlight the Quran's ability to recontextualise linguistic material for rhetorical and theological purposes. The process of borrowing, therefore, is not passive but involves active reinterpretation and integration within the Quranic worldview.

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2.5. Quranic Corpus and Digital Linguistic Tools

The advent of digital corpora and computational linguistics has opened new avenues for analysing the linguistic composition of the Quran. The Quranic Arabic Corpus, developed by Kais Dukes and colleagues at the University of Leeds, provides detailed morphological and syntactic analyses of every word in the Quran. This tool has been instrumental in allowing scholars to trace root patterns, affixes, and lexical frequency.

Using such tools, researchers like Hadi (2023) have conducted corpus-based studies to examine the distribution of foreign root words across the Quranic text. His findings suggest that many of these words are concentrated in passages related to theology, law, and narrative storytelling—domains where linguistic borrowing often occurs due to the transmission of shared cultural and religious concepts.

2.6. Debates on Linguistic Purity and Revelation

One of the central debates in the literature concerns the implications of lexical borrowing for the Quran's claim to linguistic and divine purity. Critics argue that admitting the presence of non-Arabic words challenges the doctrine of the Quran's miraculous eloquence (iʿjāz al-Qurʾān). Defenders of the traditional view respond by emphasising the process of Arabization, arguing that once a foreign word becomes naturalised, it is no longer foreign in linguistic terms.

Abdel Haleem (2011) suggests that such debates often conflate linguistic and theological categories. He argues that the Quran's linguistic miracle lies not in lexical purity but in its rhetorical power, structural coherence, and transformative impact. Thus, the presence of borrowed terms enhances rather than undermines the Quran's expressiveness.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative linguistic methodology to identify, classify, and analyse the Holy Quran's root words originating from non-Arabic languages. Rooted in historical-comparative linguistics and Quranic philology, the research design integrates etymological investigation, corpus-based analysis, and comparative Semitic linguistic techniques. The primary aim is to assess the extent and nature of lexical borrowing in the Quran and to understand how these borrowed roots are assimilated into Quranic Arabic in terms of morphology, semantics, and context.

3.1. Research Design and Rationale

The research employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical design, which is suitable for studies focusing on language origins, etymology, and semantics. Given the historical and religious nature of the Quranic text, a purely statistical or quantitative approach would be insufficient to capture the depth of linguistic transformation and adaptation. Therefore, this study relies on textual analysis, linguistic comparison, and interpretive methods to trace etymologies and contextual uses of root words within the Quran.

The rationale for this methodological approach lies in the interdisciplinary nature of the research problem. Language in sacred texts is both a historical artefact and a theological construct. Therefore, understanding foreign roots in the Quran requires tools from linguistics, philology, theology, and cultural history (Versteegh, 2001; Jeffery, 1938).

3.2. Data Sources

3.2.1. Primary Text

The Holy Quran in its original Arabic form constitutes the primary text for analysis. The Uthmani script, based on the Madinah Mushaf (King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran), was used for consistency and academic rigour. Additionally, multiple authoritative English

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translations, such as those by Abdel Haleem (2011) and Pickthall, were consulted to provide context and assist in semantic analysis.

3.2.2. Lexical and Etymological References

The study utilises a combination of classical and modern linguistic sources to trace the origins of root words. These include:

- Arthur Jeffery's (1938) The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān is a foundational catalogue of non-Arabic words in the Quran.
- Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon, which includes detailed etymologies and semantic fields.
- Al-Suyūṭī's (2008) Al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān, which provides insights into early Islamic scholarly views on foreign vocabulary.
- The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicons of the Old Testament, used for comparative Semitic analysis.
- Digital tools like the Quranic Arabic Corpus (Dukes, 2009) offer morphological and syntactic annotations.

3.2.3. Secondary Sources

Scholarly works on comparative Semitic linguistics, historical Arabic, Quranic studies, and linguistic borrowing were also consulted. These include works by Versteegh (2001), Griffith (2008), Haji (2023), Issa (2024), and others. They provided theoretical frameworks and contemporary perspectives on linguistic integration in sacred texts.

3.3. Data Collection

The data collection process followed a three-phase approach:

3.3.1. Identification of Root Words

First, a list of potentially foreign root words was compiled using Jeffery's catalog and cross-referenced with modern scholarly articles (e.g., Haji, 2023; Issa, 2024). Each root was traced to its source language, Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Greek, Persian, or Ethiopic. Words were only included if substantial philological evidence supported their non-Arabic origin.

Examples of identified roots include:

- T-W-R (تورا‌ة, Tawrah) – from Hebrew Tōrāh
- N-J-L (إنجيل, Injīl) – from Greek euangelion
- F-R-Q (فرقان, Furqān) – from Syriac purqānā
- S-B-T (سبت, Sabbath) – from Hebrew shabbāt
- Z-K-W (زكاة, Zakāt) – possibly shared Semitic root

3.3.2. Concordance and Corpus Frequency Analysis

Each identified root was then searched across the Quran using the Quranic Arabic Corpus to extract all verses in which it appears. This facilitated a concordance-based analysis, allowing the study to evaluate frequency, syntactic patterns, and contextual meanings.

Additionally, the corpus was used to examine morphological adaptations. For example, did the foreign root retain its original structure, or was it assimilated into standard Arabic triliteral patterns? This helped assess the level of integration into the Arabic morphological system.

3.3.3. Semantic and Theological Contextualization

The third phase involved closely reading Quranic verses containing the identified root words. Classical commentaries (tafsīr) such as those by Ibn Kathīr, Al-Ṭabarī, and Al-Rāzī were consulted to understand the traditional interpretations. This step helped determine how the Quran contextualised foreign roots within its theological and rhetorical framework.

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Semantic shifts were documented by comparing the word's meaning in its source language and its usage in the Quran. For instance, the Greek euangelion (meaning "good news") in the Christian context becomes Injīl in the Quran, denoting a divine scripture revealed to the Prophet Jesus, thereby reflecting a theological reinterpretation.

3.4. Analytical Framework

The data were analysed using an interdisciplinary framework comprising the following dimensions:

3.4.1. Etymological Analysis

This step involved tracing the historical origin of each word using comparative Semitic linguistics. It included analysing cognates in sister languages and identifying phonological, morphological, and semantic parallels (Hock & Joseph, 2009). For example, the Hebrew shabbāt and Arabic Sabt (both meaning "Saturday") exhibit phonetic similarity and identical semantic fields, justifying their classification as a borrowed root.

3.4.2. Morphological Analysis

Using the Quranic Arabic Corpus, the study examined how the borrowed root fit within Arabic triliteral or quadriliteral root systems. Foreign words often undergo Arabization, where their consonantal patterns and suffixes are adapted to conform to Arabic norms. For instance, Injīl fits the Arabic iCāCīl pattern, typical for nouns.

3.4.3. Semantic Field Analysis

The semantic field of each word was analysed to observe if and how the meaning evolved in the Quranic context. Borrowed words were examined in their Quranic setting to assess how they contribute to Quranic themes such as monotheism, law, morality, or eschatology.

3.4.4. Theological and Rhetorical Integration

Finally, the analysis considered how these words are deployed within Quranic rhetoric and theology. This included assessing whether the words are part of legal injunctions, historical narratives, or doctrinal affirmations. The goal was to understand the linguistic presence of foreign roots and their functional significance in conveying the Quranic message.

3.5. Limitations and Delimitations

This study is subject to several limitations:

Etymological Uncertainty: In some cases, the exact origin of a word is contested. Words may have multiple plausible sources in Semitic or Indo-Iranian languages.

Arabization: Many foreign-origin words were fully assimilated into Arabic before the Quran's revelation, making it difficult to assess their original "foreignness."

Theological Sensitivities: Discussions about non-Arabic words in the Quran can be controversial in religious discourse. This study approaches the issue with academic neutrality and respect for faith perspectives.

Delimitations include

- Focus is limited to lexical roots (not complete phrases or idioms).
- Only words with clear non-Arabic etymological documentation are included.

The study does not explore Quranic translations or tafsir beyond what is necessary for linguistic context.

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3.6. Validity and Reliability

Multiple sources were triangulated for each root word to ensure the validity of the findings. For example, a word's identification as a loanword had to be supported by at least two independent scholarly sources (e.g., Jeffery and Haji). The use of established lexicons and digital corpora also contributed to reliability.

Additionally, transparency in method, such as documenting exact verses and morphological tags, allows for replication or reevaluation by future researchers.

4.1. Analysis and Discussion

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of selected root words in the Holy Quran that are believed to have non-Arabic origins. The discussion is structured thematically by source language, focusing on phonological adaptation, morphological integration, semantic shifts, and theological implications. The analysis demonstrates that the Quran's linguistic composition is not merely a product of classical Arabic but also reflects a broader interlinguistic and intercultural tapestry.

4.1. Hebrew Origins and Jewish Lexical Influence

4.1.1. Case Study: S-B-T (سبت)

The term *Sabt* (Saturday), used in Quranic verses such as **Surah Al-Baqarah (2:65)** and **Surah An-Nahl (16:124)**, is a direct borrowing from the Hebrew *Shabbat* (שבת), meaning rest or cessation. In the Quran, it refers to the day of rest prescribed to the Children of Israel and is often associated with divine tests and disobedience:

"And indeed you knew those among you who transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath…" *(Quran 2:65)*

The semantic alignment between *Sabt* and *Shabbat* is evident; however, the Quranic usage situates the term within a narrative of moral and theological instruction. Its retention in Arabic as a proper noun reflects a minimal phonological adaptation, indicating strong cultural and religious continuity (Jeffery, 1938).

4.1.2. Semantic and Cultural Integration

The Quran does not merely retain the term for referential purposes but embeds it in a broader critique of legalism and ritualism. This suggests a layered integration where a borrowed root is used to develop indigenous theological discourse.

4.2. Aramaic and Syriac Contributions

Aramaic and Syriac, as liturgical and scholarly languages in the Near East during the formative Islamic era, contribute several terms to the Quranic lexicon.

4.2.1. Case Study: F-R-Q (فرقان)

The term *Furqān*—commonly translated as criterion or distinction—appears in verses like **Surah Al-Furqan (25:1)** and **Surah Al-Baqarah (2:53)**. Scholars trace it to the Syriac word *purqānā*, meaning salvation or deliverance.

"Blessed is He who sent down the criterion upon His Servant..." *(Quran 25:1)*

While *purqānā* denotes deliverance, its adaptation in the Quran as *Furqān* aligns with the Arabic root *F-R-Q*, meaning to separate or distinguish. This semantic convergence reinforces the Quranic principle that divine revelation serves as a criterion for distinguishing between truth and falsehood (Griffith, 2008). It exemplifies a case of **resemanticization**, where a foreign word is reinterpreted within the native morphological framework.

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4.2.2. Morphological Arabization

Inserting the root into a recognisable Arabic pattern (fuʿʿān) demonstrates morphological assimilation. Such adaptation allows foreign terms to blend seamlessly into Quranic rhetoric while preserving theological gravity.

4.3. Greek Influence

Greek terms in the Quran are relatively rare but are notable in religious terminology, reflecting the influence of Christian theological discourse.

4.3.1. Case Study: N-J-L (إنجيل)

The word *Injīl* (Gospel) appears in verses such as **Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:46)** and **Surah Al-Hadid (57:27)**. It derives from the Greek *euangelion* (εὐαγγέλιον), meaning good news. In the Quran, *Injīl* refers to the revelation given to Prophet Jesus:

"And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming that which came before him in the Torah; and We gave him the Gospel..." *(Quran 5:46)*

4.3.2. Phonological Simplification

The transformation from *euangelion* to *Injīl* involves phonological simplification consistent with Arabic phonotactics. The Quran avoids Greek endings and consonant clusters, instead rendering the term in a more fluid Arabicized form.

4.3.3. Doctrinal Context

Despite the lexical borrowing, the Quran redefines the term's theological scope. The *Injīl* is not the New Testament per se, but a specific divine book given to Jesus. This reflects **semantic recontextualisation**—a process whereby borrowed terms acquire new, faith-specific meanings (Issa, 2024).

4.4. Persian and Indo-Iranian Influences

Although less prevalent than Semitic influences, a few Persian-rooted words are found in the Quran.

4.4.1. Case Study: Istanbul Hypothesis (Contested Root)

Some scholars suggest that words like *Firdaus* (فردوس), translated as "Paradise" (e.g., Surah Al-Kahf 18:107), are of Persian origin, related to *the word pardis, meaning "garden"*. While debated, the hypothesis finds phonological and semantic support.

4.4.2. Lexical Elevation

Using *Firdaus* over native Arabic terms for garden (e.g., *jannah*) indicates a deliberate lexical elevation, likely for rhetorical embellishment. Its limited usage gives it a specialised, exalted status in eschatological passages.

4.5. Ethiopic and South Semitic Echoes

Some Quranic terms suggest connections with Ge'ez and South Arabian languages, particularly in words related to religion and liturgy.

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4.5.1. Case Study: H-W-R (حواريون)

The term *ḥawāriyyūn* (disciples of Jesus) is believed to derive from the Ethiopic ḥawāryā, meaning 'apostle'. Appearing in **Surah Al-Saff (61:14)** and **Surah Al-Imran (3:52)**, the word denotes close followers of Prophet Isa.

This term is both phonologically and morphologically compatible with Arabic yet suggests an interreligious transmission of vocabulary. Its Qur'anic usage implies the sanctification of the early Christian community, which was aligned with monotheism.

5.6. Thematic Insights

5.6.1. Quranic Lexical Pluralism

Root words from various languages illustrate the Quran's **lexical pluralism**. Far from undermining its linguistic integrity, this plurality reflects its historical and geographical embeddedness. The Quran communicates in clear Arabic (ʿArabī mubīn) while invoking universal religious themes through shared lexicons.

5.6.2. Arabization and Identity Formation

The Arabization of foreign roots is not merely linguistic but also ideological. The Quran creates a distinctively Islamic semantic field by integrating and redefining borrowed terms. This process mirrors the early Muslim community's formation of identity, drawing from pre-Islamic traditions while constructing a new theological paradigm (Versteegh, 2001).

5.6.3. Intertextual Resonance

Foreign root words often appear in verses with **intertextual resonance**—echoes of Biblical and Judaeo-Christian narratives. For instance, *Tawrah* and *Injīl* are invoked not to replicate earlier scriptures, but to establish a Qur'anic genealogy of revelation. This reflects a strategy of **linguistic continuity amid doctrinal distinction**.

Comparative Table of Selected Root Words

Root	Word (Arabic)	Source Language	Original Term	Meaning in Source	Meaning in the Quran	Quranic Verses
S-B-T	Sabt (سبت)	Hebrew	Shabbat	Sabbath/rest	Sabbath (test/law)	2:65, 16:124
N-J-L	Injīl (إنجيل)	Greek	Euangelion	Good news	Book of Jesus	5:46, 57:27
F-R-Q	Furqān (فرقان)	Syriac	Purqānā	Salvation	Criterion	25:1, 2:53
T-W-R	Tawrah (توراة)	Hebrew	Torah	Instruction/Law	Scripture to Moses	3:3, 5:44
H-W-R	Ḥawāriyyūn	Ethiopic	Ḥawaryā	Disciple	Followers of Jesus	3:52, 61:14
F-R-D	Firdaus (فردوس)	Persian	Pardis	Garden	Highest Paradise	18:107, 23:11

5.7. Scholarly Perspectives and Debates

While classical scholars, such as Al-Suyūṭī (2008), acknowledged the presence of foreign words in the Quran, many later theologians argued for their full Arabization, asserting that the Quran's exclusive Arabness was a miracle (iʿjāz). However, modern linguistic research, including that of Jeffery (1938) and Versteegh (2001), affirms the integration of foreign lexical roots as a natural consequence of Arabic's contact with neighbouring languages.

Such contact does not contradict divine revelation but **enriches the Quranic message**, situating it within the linguistic and cultural universe of Late Antiquity. It also underscores the Quran's accessibility to a multilingual audience in the 7th-century Hijaz.

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5.8. Conclusion of Analysis

This analysis reveals that the Quran's vocabulary encompasses numerous root words from Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, Greek, and other languages. These roots were not arbitrarily inserted but carefully adapted—morphologically, semantically, and theologically—to serve the Quran's rhetorical and doctrinal aims.

The linguistic adaptability of Quranic Arabic, seen in its ability to absorb, recontextualise, and elevate foreign terms, reflects its role as a spiritual and linguistic authority in a multicultural milieu. Using these roots enhances the Quran's ability to resonate across cultural boundaries while affirming its unique revelatory status.

6. Conclusions

The present study aims to analyse root words in the Holy Quran that originate from languages other than Arabic. The investigation identified and examined terms derived from Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, Greek, Persian, and Ethiopic, revealing that the Quran incorporates a significant yet purposeful number of foreign lexical items. These terms are not merely remnants of linguistic borrowing, but are critical to the Quran's rhetorical, semantic, and theological construction.

One of the most notable findings of this research is the Quran's method of adapting non-native words to Arabic through phonological, morphological, and semantic adjustments. For example, terms such as Injīl (derived from Greek euangelion) and Furqān (from Syriac purqānā) undergo a process of reconfiguration that renders them fully intelligible within the Arabic linguistic system while preserving their original connotations. This dual fidelity—both to Arabic linguistic norms and to the original meanings of the foreign terms—illustrates the Quran's sophisticated use of language to convey universal messages in a localised form.

Another significant insight is the Quran's selective appropriation of terms with theological weight. Words like Tawrah, Injīl, and Sabt do not simply describe foreign religious concepts; they are reframed within an Islamic worldview. The Quran refers to these terms to validate the continuity of divine revelation while simultaneously asserting its position as the final and most complete guidance. This represents a deliberate theological strategy that includes and transcends previous religious traditions.

The study also challenges the view that the Quran must be composed solely of "pure" Arabic to maintain its divine status. Classical scholars have debated this point, with many agreeing that including foreign words does not compromise the Quran's miraculous nature. On the contrary, the Quran's ability to incorporate and elevate non-Arabic terms into a cohesive, eloquent, and theologically profound message enhances its status as a linguistic and spiritual miracle. Including foreign vocabulary illustrates the Quran's role as a universal message, reflecting the linguistic and cultural plurality of the society in which it was revealed.

Furthermore, this research underscores the importance of situating Quranic Arabic within the context of Late Antique intertextuality. By recognising the multilingual environment of the 7th-century Arabian Peninsula, we gain a deeper appreciation of how the Quran communicates with audiences familiar with Judeo-Christian and Near Eastern traditions. The borrowed root words serve as linguistic tools and bridges between religious communities, reinforcing the Quran's interreligious relevance.

In conclusion, analysing root words from different languages in the Quran reveals a rich tapestry of linguistic and theological interaction. These lexical borrowings do not dilute the Quran's Arabic identity but reinforce its adaptability and universality. The Quran emerges as a dynamic text, grounded in the linguistic realities of its time, yet capable of transcending them through divine articulation. Future studies may expand this exploration by examining additional lexical fields or investigating how these borrowings influenced early tafsir (exegesis) and Arabic grammar traditions. Understanding these linguistic dimensions ultimately enhances our comprehension of the Quran's unique eloquence, depth, and enduring appeal across cultures and centuries.

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