

## THE VOCABULARY OF ZOOLOGY: ROMANIAN TERMS OF ARABIC AND TURKISH ORIGIN

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**Abstract:** *The goal of the paper is to show the direct impact of the Turkish language on Romanian and the indirect impact of the Arabic language on Romanian in the field of zoology. The study is part of a vast research on languages in contact (Turkish and Romanian). The material (Romanian words of Arabic and Turkish origin) has been analysed with the methods specific to linguistics, with focus on history and distribution, lexical fields, routes of transmission, usage restrictions, re-use of linguistic materials, and semantic evolution. This is the first analysis of the Romanian zoological vocabulary of Arabic and Turkish origin. Results show that this vocabulary is rarely perceived as foreign as proven by the large number of derivatives, compound words, and words with shifted semanticism. The research is limited by the uncertainty regarding the etymology of some terms (several sources are indicated). The study contributes to the raising of cultural, multi-cultural and inter-cultural awareness of both students and teaching staff. The study is original in both approach and resources. The importance of the study lies in everything stated previously.*

**Keywords:** *zoology, Romanian, Arabic, Turkish*

### INTRODUCTION

One of the personal difficulties or obstacles that limit or prevent learners from taking part in transnational projects are **cultural differences**. Tertiary level students usually fall into this category because they face **linguistic adaptation** and **cultural inclusion** difficulties. If **linguistic adaptation** is an ongoing process due to the language courses undergraduates may or are compelled to attend, **cultural inclusion** remains an issue. One of the aims of the Erasmus+ Programme is to **improve the teaching and learning of languages** and **promote the EU's broad linguistic diversity and intercultural awareness**. The “Erasmus+ Programme Guide” emphasises, for each of these Key Actions, the following **needs related to the intercultural / European dimension** of the activities: **Key Action 1 (Learning Mobility of Individuals): Linguistic and intercultural preparation** of participants before departure and **Linguistic and intercultural support for the participants before departure**; **Key Action 2 (Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices): Linguistic and intercultural preparation** of participants before departure; **Equipping both educators and youth workers with all competences and skills needed to deliver high quality services and address increasingly diverse needs such as, for instance, the needs posed by multicultural societies** and **Promoting people-to-people contacts, intercultural awareness and understanding**. From this perspective, getting to know one's own culture (and, implicitly, one's own language) better can help raising **intercultural awareness and understanding**. The goal of the paper is to show the impact of the Arabic and Turkish languages on Romanian in the field of **zoology** in an attempt to raise students' **cultural and intercultural awareness**. The study is part of a vast research on languages in contact (Turkish and Romanian).

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material (18 Romanian words of Arabic and Turkish origin) has been analysed with the methods specific to **descriptive linguistics**, with focus on *lexical field, routes of transmission, usage restrictions, re-use of linguistic materials (word formation)*, and *semantic evolution*.

## RESULTS

Most peoples around the world have had diverse and long-lasting relationships with other languages than theirs due to social, political, economic, and cultural factors and this **language contact** has always brought about **language changes**, largely associated with **borrowing**: in most situations of **languages in contact, borrowing**, i.e. 'the taking over of a word from a foreign language' (CHALKER & WEINER, 1994), occurs most extensively on the part of *minority language speakers* from the *wider communication* into the minority language; there are rare cases of words that have become accepted within *majority language communities* – a process called **substratum influence** (THOMASON & KAUFMAN 1988, IN SANKOFF 2001). Romanian is no exception, and each period in the development of the **Romanian language** has had its **neologisms**, i.e. its **linguistic borrowings** or **loanwords**: *Slavicisms* (Slavic terms that entered the Romanian language through the translations of religious books, in the middle Ages); *Turcisms* and *Graecisms* (specific to the Phanariot Period, 1669-1821); *Hungarianisms* (during the Austro-Hungarian rule, 1867-1918); *French borrowings / loanwords* (in the modern era, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries); *Anglicisms* and *Americanisms* (at present). Romanian language has never been in direct contact with Arabic, but it has been in direct contact for centuries with Turkish and French. Below is an analysis of zoology-related Romanian borrowings Arabic and Turkish origin from several linguistic perspectives.

### 1. Lexical Field

A **domain** or (**lexical / semantic**) **field** is defined as 'a range or system of referents that have some aspect of meaning in common' (CHALKER & WEINER 1994). The **lexical field** aimed at in this paper is **animal biology** or **zoology**, seen as the branch of biology that relates to the animal kingdom. We have identified 17 Romanian words of Arab and Turkish origin related to or designating exclusively vertebrates: **mammals** (10): *batal* 'castrated ram (*Ovis aries* L.)', *bezoar (ibex)* 'bezoar (*Capra aegagrus aegagrus* L.)', *bidibiu / bididiu / bidiviu* 'young, speedy, and beautiful horse (*Equus ferus caballus* L.)', *bursuc* '(common) badger (*Meles meles* L.)', *catâr* 'mule (*Equus mulus* L.)', *fenec* 'fennec (*Fennecus zerda* L.)', *gazelă* 'gazelle (*Gazella* spp.)', *gerbil* 'gerbil (*Gerbillus* spp.)', *girafă* 'giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis* L.)', *maimuță / maimucă / moimă* 'ape, monkey'. There is also a horse-related term, *herghelie* 'herd (of horses), stud farm'; **birds** (3): *albatros* 'albatross (*Diomedea exulans* L.)', *misirliu* 'breed of small pigeon (*Columba* spp.)', *papagal* 'popinjay (parrot) (*Psittacus* spp.)'; **fish** (3): *calcan* 'European plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa* L.); Black-sea turbot / calcan (*Scophthalmus maeoticus* Pallas)', *ciortan* 'common carp (*Cyprinus carpio* L.)', *ton* 'tuna (*Thunnus thynnus* L.)'; **reptiles** (1): *varan* 'monitor lizard (*Varanus varius* Shaw)'.

### 2. Routes of Transmission

These 18 words related to or designating animals have come into Romanian: directly from Turkish (5): *bidibiu / bididiu / bidiviu* 'young, speedy, and beautiful horse' < Tk *bedevi* '(Arab) horse', *bursuc* '(common) badger' < Tk *borsuk*, *calcan* 'European plaice; Black-sea turbot / calcan' < Tk *kalkan*, *ciortan* 'common carp' < Tk *çortan*, *herghelie* 'herd (of horses),

stud farm' < Tk *hergele*; indirectly from Arabic (14): through French (7): *albatros* 'albatross' < Fr *albatros* < Ar *al-ghattās*, *fenec* 'fennec' < Fr *fennec* < Ar *fenek*, *gazelă* 'gazelle' < Fr *gazelle* < Ar *ghazāl*, *gerbil* 'gerbil' < Fr *gerbille* < Ar *yarbū 'a*, *girafă* 'giraffe' < Fr *girafe* < Ar *zarāfa*, *ton* 'tuna' < Fr *thon* < Ar *al-tunn*, *varan* 'monitor lizard' < Fr *varan* < Ar *waral / waran*; through Turkish (2): *batal* 'castrated ram' < Tk *battal* 'worthless' < Ar *batal* 'to maim', *misirliu* 'breed of small pigeon' > Tk *misirli* > Ar *Mysr/Mysyr*; through English (1): *bezoar (ibex)* 'bezoar' < E *bezoar* < Ar *bāzahr*; through German (1): *bezoar (ibex)* 'bezoar' < Germ *Bezoar* < Ar *bāzahr*; through Modern Greek and Turkish (1): *măimuță / măimucă / moimă* 'ape, monkey' < Mod Gk *măimú*, Tk *maymun* < Ar *maimun*; through Modern Greek and Italian (1): *papagal* 'popinjay (parrot)' < Mod Gk *pap(p)aghál(l)os*, It *pappagallo* < Ar *babaghā / babbaghā*; indirectly from Latin, through Turkish and Arabic (1): *catâr* 'mule' < Tk *katir* < Ar < L *caterius*.

### 3. Usage Restrictions

As in any other language, there are **established and customary ways of using language**. Questions of usage are complicated by the fact that accepted usage may vary **from one speech community to another**, according to different regional or social varieties, and such factors as **who** is writing or speaking **to whom about what**. Many dictionaries employ **usage labels** to indicate whether particular senses, words, or phrases are formal or informal, British or American, dialectal, dated, slang, offensive, euphemistic, etc. As far as **Romanian words of Arabic and Turkish origin** are concerned, **usage restrictions** concern the *field*, the *range*, the *register*, the *style* and the *currency*.

#### 3.1. Field

A **domain** or **field**, in semantics, is defined as 'a range or system of referents that have some aspect of meaning in common' (Chalker & Weiner 1994). Arabic and Turkish borrowings into Romanian are circumscribed to a single **domain / field – history**. Is considered **Historical**, because used in the past and no longer in use nowadays, the Turkish borrowing *moimă* 'ape, monkey'.

#### 3.2. Range

As far as the **range** of Arabic and Turkish borrowings is concerned, Romanian language dictionaries mention only those terms that have a **regional use limitation**. Are considered **Regional**, i.e. characteristic of a form of Romanian that is distributed in identifiable geographic areas (and that differs in pronunciation or vocabulary from standard Romanian), the following borrowings and derivatives: *măimucă / moimă* 'ape, monkey', *momițarie / monițarie* 'ridiculous mimicry', *a momiți / monițări* 'to imitate', and *misirliu* 'breed of small pigeon'.

#### 3.3. Register

From the point of view of the **register** (i.e. of the variety of language used in a specific social setting), Turkish borrowings can be ranged among **colloquial**, **jargon** and **slang**. Are **slang** (i.e. a kind of language occurring chiefly in casual and playful speech, made up typically of short-lived coinages and figures of speech that are deliberately used in place of standard terms for added raciness, humour, irreverence, or other effect) the following borrowings, derivatives and idioms: *bidibiu / bididiu / bidiviu* 'lad, youth', *bididie* 'lover, mistress', *girafă* 'a tall, slim person', *măimuță* 'bag, baggage', *măimuțar* 'thief (stealing from bags/baggage)', and *salt la măimuță!* 'go steal from that bag/baggage!'. Are **colloquial** (characteristic / appropriate to the spoken language or to writing that seeks the effect of speech; informal; conversational): *herghelie* 'bad woman' and *papagal* 'mouth'. Is **jargon**, i.e. 'the

specialized or technical language of a trade, profession, or similar group' the compound', the phrase *coadă de maimuță* '@'.

### 3.4. Style

**Style** (i.e. the way in which something is said or expressed) is the best represented of all Arabic and Turkish borrowings usage restrictions. They can be grouped as: **Standard** (i.e. 'conforming to established educated usage in speech or writing') (17): *albatros* 'albatross (*Diomedea exulans* L.)', *batal* 'castrated ram (*Ovis aries* L.)', *bezoar (ibex)* 'bezoar (*Capra aegagrus aegagrus* L.)', *bidiviu* 'young, speedy, and beautiful horse (*Equus ferus caballus* L.)', *bursuc* '(common) badger (*Meles meles* L.)', *calcan* 'European plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa* L.); Black-sea turbot / calcan (*Scophthalmus maeoticus* Pallas)', *catâr* 'mule (*Equus mulus* L.)', *ciortan* 'common carp (*Cyprinus carpio* L.) (below 2 kg)', *fenec* 'fennec (*Fennecus zerda* L.)', *gazelă* 'gazelle (*Gazella* spp.)', *gerbil* 'gerbil (*Gerbillus* spp.)', *girafă* 'giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis* L.)', *herghelie* 'herd (of horses), stud farm', *maimuță* 'ape, monkey', *papagal* 'popinjay (parrot) (*Psittacus* spp.)', *ton* 'tuna (*Thunnus thynnus* L.)', and *varan* 'monitor lizard (*Varanus varius* Shaw)'; **Figurative** (i.e. containing many figures of speech, ornate) (3): *bursuc* 'dumpy / stumpy fellow; growler, grumper', *catâr* 'mule, stubborn man, pig-headed man', *papagal* 'parrot'; **Ironical** (i.e. characterised by or constituting irony) (1): *bidiviu* 'trotter (about horses), impetuous (about men)'; **Pejorative** (i.e. disparaging) (1): *papagal* 'mouth'.

### 3.5. Currency

**Currency** (i.e. the state of being current; up-to-datedness) is limited to **old** and **rare** Arabic and Turkish borrowings: **Obsolescent** (i.e. being in the process of passing out of use or usefulness): *moimă* 'ape, monkey; **Rare** (i.e. infrequently occurring, uncommon): *misirliu* 'breed of small pigeon (*Columba* spp.)'.

## 4. Re-use of Linguistic Materials: Word Formation

The processes of word formation below resulted in about 37 Romanian words of Arabic and Turkish origin.

### 4.1. Composition

**Composition** or **compounding** is 'the process of forming compound words by joining at least two independent bases together' (Chalker & Weiner 1994), as in the examples below, where the Arabic or Turkish word is in the first or second position (7): *calcan* > *calcan-mic* 'a fish (*Rhombus laevis* L.)', *ciortan* > *ciortocrap* 'carp below 4 kg', *papagal* > *papagal-țigănesc* 'jackdaw (*Corvus monedula spermologus* L.)', *papagal* > *papagal-de-brazi* 'a bird (*Loxia curvirostra* L.)'; *gazelă* > *ochi de gazelă* 'very beautiful black eyes', *maimuță* > *om-maimuță* 'Tarzan', *maimuță* > *coadă de maimuță* '@'.

### 4.2. Conversion

**Conversion** or **functional shift** or **reclassification** is 'the process by which a word belonging to one word class gets used as part of another word class without the addition of an affix' (Chalker & Weiner 1994), as in *batal* 'castrated ram (*Ovis aries* L.)' > *a sta batal pe capul cuiva* 'to stick to somebody'.

### 4.3. Derivation

The productivity of Romanian words of Arabic and Turkish origin is proven by the large number of *noun*, *adjectival*, *verbal*, and *adverbial derivatives* based on *nominal* and *adjectival roots*: **nominal derivatives based on nominal roots** (14): *bursuc* > *bursoacă* (a plant, *Setaria glauca* L.), *bursuc* > *bursucă* (a plant, *Bartsia alpina* L.), *catâr* > *catârcă* 'female mule', *ciortan* > *ciortănaș* 'small carp', *ciortan* > *ciortănică* 'carp below 1 kg', *herghelie* > *hergheliegiu* 'horse caretaker', *maimuță* > *maimuțar* 'person performing tricks

with a monkey in fairs; funny person', *maimuță* > *maimuțică* 'small monkey', *maimuță* > *maimuțareală* / *maimuțărie* / *maimuțărit* 'ridiculous mimicry', *moniță* > *monițărie* > 'ridiculous mimicry', *moniță* > *monițărie* 'ridiculous mimicry', *papagal* > *papagalism* 'psittacism'; **adjectival derivatives based on nominal roots** (3): *bursuc* > *bursucos* 'grumpy', *maimuță* > *maimuțăresc* 'monkey-like', *papagal* > *papagalic* 'parrot-like'; **verbal derivatives based on nominal roots** (9): *bursuc* > *a se bursuca* 'to pout', *bursuc* > *a se bursuci* 'to pucker; to get angry', *bursuc* > *a se îmbursuca* 'to pucker', *maimuță* > *a maimuțări* / *maimuți* / *măimui* 'to imitate', *moniță* > *a moniți* 'to imitate', *moniță* > *a monițări* 'to imitate', *papagal* > *a papagaliza* 'to learn mechanically'; and **adverbial derivatives based on adjectival roots** (1): *papagalicesc* > *papagalicește* 'mechanically'.

### 5. Semantic Evolution

**Semantic change** or **semantic shift** consists in 'a change in the meaning of a word taking place over time' (Chalker & Weiner 1994). This is a general tendency in words that has also affected our Romanian words of Arabic and Turkish origin: *bidiviu* 'young, speedy, and beautiful horse (*Equus ferus caballus* L.)' > *bidiviu* '(Slang) lad, young man', *bidiviu* '(Ironically) trotter; impetuous man'; *bursuc* '(common) badger (*Meles meles* L.) > *bursuc* '(Figuratively) dumpy / stumpy fellow; growler, grumper; sleepy'; *girafă* 'giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis* L.)' > *girafă* 'a device used to support microphones while shooting a movie or airing a show; a crane'; *maimuță* 'ape, monkey' > *maimuță* '(Slang) bag, baggage'; *papagal* 'popinjay (parrot) (*Psittacus* spp.) > *papagal* '(Figuratively) parrot', *papagal* '(Technique) an indented pair of tongs', and *papagal* '(Colloquial, Pejorative) mouth'.

The change in meaning has also produced **idioms**, 'forms of speech peculiar to a nation or to a limited area' (Chalker & Weiner, 1994), 'groups of (more or less) fixed words having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words' (idem): *batal* 'castrated ram (*Ovis aries* L.)' > *a sta batal pe capul cuiva* 'a se ține de cineva' and *papagal* 'popinjay (parrot) (*Psittacus* spp.) > *a avea papagal* 'to have the gift of the gab'.

### DISCUSSION

Our **inventory** contains 17 Romanian words of Arabic and Turkish origin designating animals and one animal-related term. As for the **route of transmission**, only 5 words of Turkish origin have penetrated into the Romanian language directly. The rest of the words of Arabic origin have come into our language indirectly, mainly through French, Turkish, English, German, Modern Greek, Italian and Latin. In the case of *bezoar*, language dictionaries advance two possible vectors: English and German. **Usage restrictions** concern one word of Turkish origin that belongs to the field **Historical**; 7 are considered **Regional**; 2 are **Colloquial**, one is **Jargon**, and 8 are **Slang**; 17 are **Standard**, 3 are **Figurative**, one is **Ironical**, and one is **Pejorative**; one is **Obsolescent** and one is **Rare**. The **re-use of linguistic material** has produced 37 new Romanian words of Arabic and Turkish origin, i.e. twice as much as Arabic and Turkish borrowings. It is worth noting that *herghelegiu* was derived from *herghelie* with a Turkish suffix, **-giu**. **Semantic shift** has produced 8 additional meanings and 2 idioms.

### CONCLUSIONS

**Zoology-related Arabic and Turkish borrowings / loanwords** have attained **different degrees of assimilation** into the **Romanian language** (Chalker & Weiner 1994). Thus, there are:

- **borrowings** that have been *totally assimilated to the native word-stock* and are *phonetically* and *orthographically* integrated: *albatros, bidiviu, bursuc, catâr, gazelă, girafă, herghelie, maimuță, papagal, ton, and varan*;
- **borrowings** that are fully part of the Romanian vocabulary, but retain traces of their language of origin in their *pronunciation (misirliu)*, for instance;
- **borrowings** that may be well assimilated in their form, but remain *semantically tied* to its initial context, for instance, Dobrudja (*batal, calcan, and ciortan*);
- **borrowings** that have not achieved general currency but occur in very limited contexts (e.g., encyclopaedias): *bezoar (ibex), fenec, and gerbil*.

The nickname **VARANUL** recently given to Dan Voiculescu, Romanian academic and businessman, is one more proof that Romanian borrowings from Arabic and Turkish have been fully assimilated.

If we compare **botany-related** and **zoology-related Arabic and Turkish borrowings**, the comparison is clearly in favour of the former ones: 44 vs. 18 borrowings, 46 vs. 7 compound words, 32 vs. 27 derivatives, 20 vs. 8 additional meanings, 5 vs. 1 idioms, etc.

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