

# Impact of Arabic and Persian Language on the Kannada Language

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## Abstract

This paper deals with the impact of Arabic and Persian languages on Kannada language. This paper describes the influence of Arabic and Persian languages on Kannada language. The paper describes the reasons for the influence of Arabic and Persian language on Kannada language.

**Keywords:** Arabic and Persian language, dominant language in the Deccan, impact on Kannada language

## Borrowed Words in Languages

Otto Jespersen writes:

“No language is entirely free from borrowed words, because no nation has even been completely isolated. Contact with other nations inevitably leads to borrowings though their number may vary considerably.”<sup>1</sup>

And the Kannada language is no exception to this rule. Parts of Karnataka were under Muslim rule for a period during which Arabic and Persian influenced Kannada which led to the incorporation of some literary expressions or words of these languages into Kannada vocabulary. The Bahmani rulers in South India were great patrons of Arabic and Persian.

Substantiating this fact A. Shankar Kedilaya explains:

“The presence of a large number of Arabic/Persian words in Kannada language is the cumulative effect of a long period of Muslim rule over

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India in general and Karnataka territories in particular. The entry of Arabic/Persian words into Kannada writings and everyday speech was so spontaneous that it went almost unnoticed and we do not find any protest or hostile reaction towards the use of these foreign words in the language. ”<sup>2</sup>

The list of words borrowed from Arabic and Persian into Kannada<sup>3</sup> are given below:

### Arabic Words Commonly Used

ARABIC	KANNADA	MEANING
A'ql	akalu, akhalu	wisdom
Ākhir	akeri, akairu	end
I'tr,at	attar, attaru	perfume
Adnā	adanā	ordinary
Adab	adabu, ādaba	respect
A'dāvat	adavatu, adavati	enmity
Afyūm	aphini, appu, aphimu	opium
A'mal	amalu	action
Amānat	amānatu	trust
Amāni	Amāni	irregular work
Amin	amīna, amina	trustworthy
Asaraph	aşraf	a noble man
A'in/ a,'sl	ainu, ayinu/ asal, asalu	original
A'ib	auibu	defeat
E vaz	ayivaju	reward
A'rab	araba	An Arabian
A'lahida	alayida	separate
Alqab	alkabu	title
Avval	aval	best, first
Alival	ahavalu	conditions
Asami	āsāmi	a person
As'ar	āsāra	emblem
Inkar	inkār	denying
Iza	ija	trouble
Izzat	ijjatu	honour
Itebar	itabāri	confidence
Izafa	ijaphe	addition
It't'ila	ittilla	information or report
Inām	inamu	reward

Ināyat	ināyatu	favour
Imarat	imarati	building
Irsal	irasālu	sending
Irādā	irāda, irāde	purpose
Ilaqa	ilakhe	territory
Ilaj	ilaju	remedy
Isārā	isāre, hisāre	sign
Istiqbar	istakabāhe	welcome, receiving a visitor
Istihār	istihar	announcement, proclamation
Ūd	ūdu	frankincense, substance from Arabia which produces a sweet smell on burning
Qatb	kattala	slaughter
Khat	kattu	letter
Qadim	kadim	old
Khadim	kadima	crafty servant
Khandaq	kandaka	a ditch round the walls of a fort
Qandil	kandi	a lantern
Qabr	kabara	grave
Qubūl	kubūl	acceptance
Qalam	kalamu	pen
Kasab	kasabu	profession
Kasrat	kasarat	gymnastics
Kasar	kasaru	deficiency
Qassab	kasāba	a butch
Kasi	kasāle	disorder of the body
Khasi	kasi	castrated
Kāgaz	kagada	paper
Qaim	kāyamu	permanent
Qaida	kaide	rule
Kahila	kayile	sick
Qism	kisamu	division, kind
Kisah	kise	pocket
Qaum	komu	tribe
Qaul	kaulu	agreement
Khāli	khāli	empty
Khyāl	khayālu	thought
Gharaz	garaju	need
Gharīb	garība	poor
Ghaliz	galiju	dirty
Zarra	jara	little
Javab	javabu	reply
Javāhir	javāhiru	precious stone
Zimma	jimme	to charge

Zulm	julum, julime	to force
Takāvi	taqsir	advance of money given to the ryots
Tafsil	tapasilu	details
Tafriq	taphariku	substraction, bifurcation, of groups
Tafavut	taphāvati	difference
T'abl	tabala	drum
T'avila	tabēlē	stable
Tabdil	tabdil	exchange
Tamam	tamamu	completion
T'arah	taraha	like
Taslim	tasali	to salute
T'aqat	takttu	strength
Tabē	tāpe, tābe	dependent
Tariff	tāriphu	praise
Tufan	tupanu	storm
Dava	davā	medicine
Naq'l	nakalu	copy, transcript
Nasīb	nasību	luck, fortune
Fikr	pikaru	anxiety
Furs'at	prasattu	leisure
Faisalāh	phaisala	settlement
Faut	pāvuti	death
Pehrist	pheristu	list
Barkat	barakattu	success
Baqi	baki	remainder
Bāb	bābatu	with regard to
Mazbut	majabūtu	strong
Mazaq	majaku, maja	making fun of
Manzur	manjuru	accepted
Marammat	marahammat, maramat	repair
Marzi	marji	wish
Malfūf	malapūpu	covered
Maslan	masala	for instance
Masāl	masālu	a torch
Māzi	māji	past
Motabar	matubari	trusted
Malika	mālika	owner
Māl	mālu	goods
Malum	malum	known
Miras	mirasi, mirasu	inheritance
Mulaqat	milakattu	meeting
Mudam	muddamu	permanent
Muskil	muskilu	difficult
Musāfir	musāphara	traveler
Musta'id	mustaide	prepared
Meh'nat	mehnatu	labour
Maqarrar	mokararu	settled

Mukhatār	moktiyar, moktiyāra	absolute, free
Mauquf	movakuppu	abolishment
Raqam	rakamu	article
Radd	raddu	to cancel
Razi	rāji	to agree
Rivaj r	ivāju	custom
Riyāyat	riyāyati	concession
Lifaafah	liphāphi	an envelope
Vazan	vajani	weight
Vaza	vaja	substract
Vatan	vatana	a hereditary estate
Waraq	varaku, arakuk	a leaf
Vadah	vayidu	promise
Vada	vidāya	farewell
Sāmil	sāmil	comprehending
Seikh	seka, sekhu	a caste name
Surū	suru	beginning
Sauq	śouk	voluptuousness
Sanduuq	sanduka	box
Sabab	sabūbu	excuse
Salāh	salla	peace
Salām	salāmu	salute
Sahūlat	savalattu	facilities
Savāl	savālu	challenge
Sāni	Sāni	second, another
Sāf	sāpa, Sāphu	clan
Haqq	hakku	truth
Havā	hava, have	air
Havālah	ahavālu	charge
Hazir	hājari	present
Hissah	hisse	part, share
Hairan	hairānu	restlessness

### Administrative Terms

Qaid	kaidu	prison
Zila	jilla	district
Nayāb	nāyaba	deputy
Muktār-namah	moktiyar-nama	power of attorney
Mohallah	mohala	a part of the town
Vakalat	vakalattu	the duties or office of a vakil
Hukm	hukum	order
Havālat	havālate, havalte	transfer
Hammal	hamāla	bearer
Sikkah	sikke	the royal seal

## Economic Terms:

A'lab-hisab	allal hisabu	according to the account
Ijarā	ijara	a contract
Qimat	kimmatu	price
Qist	kist	installment
Jumla	jumala	total
Daulat	daulattu	property
Nafa	naphe	profit
Mahsul	mahasūlu	public revenue
Mublagh	mobalagu	sum, account
Muktarafa	mohatarpa	tax imposed on traders
Muhasil	mohasale	one who collects something
Maqsam	lukasamu	loss
Vasūl	vasulu	collections and the things collected as revenue rent etc.
Sarraf	sarāpha	cashier
Hasil	hasalu, hasilu	revenue, tax

## Judicial Terms

A'dalat	adalatu	justice, court
Qazi	kaji	judge
Qanum	kānūmu	law
Zabti	japti	confiscate
Mudda'I	muddai	complaint
Munasib	munāsabu	munsiff
Sabad	sanadu, sannadu	a warrant

## Food

Araq	arka	juice
Mauz	mabuju	a plantain
Murabbah	murabba	jam
Halwa	haleva, halva	a kind of sweet

## Military Terms

Haşam	aşaşam	group of military people
Fauj	pavaju	battalion
Ris alah	risālu, sisale	a troop of horses

## Architectural Terms

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Burj	buruju	tower, bastion
Minārah	mināra	minaret

### Religious Terms

Allāh	allā	God
Khutbah	kutubi	sermon
Pīr	pira	religious teacher

### PERSIAN

#### Words Commonly Used

PERSIAN	KANNADA	MEANING
Azmāyisi	ajamāyisi	to examine or measure roughly
Azār	ajāri	disease
Anjir	anjūra	fig tree
Andāza	andāju	estimation
Abrue	abru, abaru	honour
Amāri	ambari	howdah on an elephant
Āyīnah	āyīnā, ainā	mirror
Avāz	avāju	voice
Ārām/aram	arama/ārāma	rest
Ārāma-kurci	ārām kursi	easy chair
Āsamāni	āsamāni	sky blue
Ism-vār	ismuvāra	according to names
Istihār-nāmah	istihāru-nāme	written proclamation
Ummēdu	umēdu	hope
Ummēda-vār	umeda-vāra	a candidate
Ek-sāl	ekasālu	one year
Qadimi	kadimi	long standing
Kam	kam	less
Kamān	kamanu	a bow, an arch
Kami	kammi	deficiency
Kalābat	kalābattu	embroidery
Qali'I	kalāya, kalāyi	coating of the vessel
Khalāsi	kalāsi	a seaman
Kāristani	kārasthāna	cleverness
Khāsadar	kāsadāra	a groom
Khavind	kāvanda	master

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Khāsgī	kāsāgi	private
Klijah	kalija	liver
Kinnarah	kināra, kināre	river bed
Kirāyah	kirāya	rent
Kumak	kumuku	help
kuṣi	kuṣi, khusi	joy, pleasure
khuski	kuski	dry land
kusti	kusti	wrestling
kūc	kūcu	march
qaid-khanah	kaidu-khūne	a prison
qaum-var	komu-vūru	caste-wise
khānah-ṣumari	khānēsumāri	counting of the houses
khanah	khāne, kāne	house
khud	khuddu	own
khūni	khūni	murder
khūb	khūbu	handsomely
gaz	gaja	yard
Ghalati	galati, gallatu	mistake
Gasti	gasti, gastu	going round
Gārah	gāre	plaster
Giraftari	girabdari	to be involved in difficulty
Gilah	gilla	complaint
Gulāb	gulābi	rose
Ghulam	gulāma	a slave
Ghul	gullu	noise (din)
Cabuk	cabaku, cabuku	whip
Cambār	cammara	cobbler
Carbi	carabi, cerbi	fat
Cākar	cākara	servant
Cakhu	cāku	a pen knife
Cap-khanah	capa-khāne	a printing house

### **Economic Terms**

Āmad	āmadu	income
Qist-bandi	kistubandi	paying in installment
Kharīdi	kharīdi, khadridu	purchasing
Kharc	kharcu	expenditure
Galah	gallā, galle	a box used for money after sales
Naqdi	naqadu	ready cash

### **Judicial Terms**

Arzi	arji	petition
Arzdāst	arjadastu	a written petition
Arz-dar	arji-dara	a petitioner

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Rubarkāri	rūbakāri	the written record of case
ṣāhidi	ṣāidi	a witness at law

### Food

Angūr	angūra	grape
Anāj	anaju	grains
Karbūju	karabuja, karubuja	the muskmelon
Khurāk	khurāku	nutritive diet, food
Garam	garamā, garamī	hot
Garam-masālah	garam-masāle	hot spice
Capāti	capāti	wheat cake
Jilebi	jilebi	a kind of sweet
Namak	namaku	salt
Panīr	panīru	cheese
Pudina	pudina	mint leaves
Maida	maida	wheat flour
Rasad	rastu	grain stored up for an army
Sirah	sirā	a kind of sweet
Barfi	barphi	a kind of sweet
Bāhusai	bādushai	a kind of sweet

### Military Terms

laškar	laskaru, lascar	an army, a cantonment
sipahi	sipāyi	a soldier
jama-dar	jamādāra	a commander of a body of troops
thānah	thānaya	camp
tōpha	tōpu	cannon
pyadah	pēdā, pede	infantry man, one who walks on his foot
baktar	bakatara	armour
bahadur	bahādar, bahadur	a warrior or courageous person
bār-sipahi	bārsipayi	a foot soldier
risāl-dar	risāl-dara	captain of a troop of horses

### Architectural Terms

Gumbad	gumaṭa, gumuri	a dome
Gor	gari	grave or a tomb
Car-khanah	kar-khāne	a square house
Diwar	divāl	a wall

## Religious Terms

Namāz	namāju	prayer
Nēk	nēka	purity of heart
bāṣand	baphiyyatu, basanda	may you live in peace
rozah	roja	fast(Noun)
sēb	sēbu	pīr
sēr	seru	seer

## Dress

Kulah	kulāyi, kulāvi	cap
Taftah	tāptā	a kind of silk cloth
Tauliyah	tuvāl	a towel
ardah	padade, parade	veil
Lungi	lungi	a kind of cloth
ṣal	śālu	shawl

All these lists, though selected at random, reveal the extensive deep and lasting influence of the foreign languages of the rulers on Kannada. The vocabulary shows that even in personal matters of dress and food, manner and etiquette, there was interaction often in the form of borrowing or adaptation with slight change. In matters, administrative and military, judicial and construction technology, the amount of influence is very extensive and the words are still retained in use.

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## References

1. Otto Jespersen, Language, Its Nature, Development and Origin, London (1923), P. 208.
2. A. Shankar Kedilaya, Foreign Loan Words in Kannada (Arabic and Persian), University of Madras, Madras (1970), P. 3.
3. V. Swarajya Lakshmi, Influence of Urdu on Telugu, Hyderabad (1984). PP. 14-15.
4. Some words have been borrowed as they are, and some have been borrowed with slight modifications. These words have been found in the sources like:

- a) Ā ndhra Bhāshārnavam
  - b) Aniruddha caritram
  - c) Āmukta Malyada
  - d) Ādhyātma Sankīrtanalu
  - e) Bahuliaswa Caritra
  - f) Bhadragiri Satakamu
  - g) Bhimeswara Puranam
  - h) Bulletin of Telugu Akademi
  - i) Daśāvātāra Caritramu
  - j) Dhanurvidya Vilāsamu
  - k) Hansa Vimsati
  - l) Kavi Caudappa Sisamulu
  - m) Kāsi Khandamu
  - n) Krushna Raya Vijayam
  - o) Lankā Vijayam
  - p) Lankshmi Vilasamu
  - q) Manu Caritra
  - r) Mrutyunjaya Vilāsamu
  - s) Mackenzie volumes
  - t) Nelluru Sāsanamulu
  - u) Palnāti Vīra Caritra
  - v) Rāmdāsu Caritra
  - w) Rādhā Mādhava Samvadham
  - x) Raya Vacakam
  - y) Sourth India Inscription; and
  - z) Yayāti Caritra
- V. Swarajya Lakshmi, OP. Cit.

5. Most of these words have been taken from, A. Shankar Kedilaya, Op. Cit. PP. 165-300.

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