

Spanish and Arabic: Languages in Contact

This investigation examines the influence of the Arabic language on Spanish, specifically as it relates to the social and historical changes that occurred in Spain over the course of several centuries. Beginning in the year 711, following the conquest of the Umayyad Caliphate over the Iberian Peninsula for over 700 years, the Arab civilization held control of Spain. This led to great influences on the language, architecture and culture of Spain. From the 11th century to the 15th century, civil conflicts escalated, and people began to rebel against the Arab throne in an attempt to reconquer the peninsula through various wars and crusades. However, in 1492, the Spanish monarchy, Queen Isabella I and King Ferdinand II, proclaimed the Alhambra Decree, ending the Arab presence in the new Spanish reign in 1609. Despite this, the 781 years of Arab rule left a strong impression on both the culture of Spain and the Spanish language. This study explores the social, historical and linguistic changes that took place over eight centuries, and examines how the language of the Mozarabs helped to preserve the linguistic gap between ancient and modern Spanish. Specifically, based on data obtained from the Royal Spanish Academy database, this study traces the history of five words that have a connection with Latin, Arabic, and Modern Spanish, in order to describe the linguistic changes that have occurred along with the aforementioned social and historical changes.