

## BORROWING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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### Rezumat

*Creativitatea lexicală nu poate fi înțeleasă decât în cadrul teoriei generale a dinamicii limbii, dominată de ideea de schimbare.*

*Înnoirea lexicului se realizează prin intermediul celor două surse: împrumutul și crearea lexicului. Cu aceste precizări, se poate considera că împrumuturile lexicale sunt inovații de proveniență externă care constau din cuvinte și expresii luate de-a gata dintr-o limbă străină și adăugate fondului lexical existent. Împrumutul este o consecință a contactului cultural dintre două comunități de limbi.*

No language is entirely pure. The vocabulary of every language continually adopts from the language of other nations with whom they come into contact. Borrowing is a consequence of cultural contact between two languages communities. In this case the source language community has some advantages of power, prestige and/or wealth that makes the objects and ideas it brings desirable and useful to the borrowing language community. For example, the Germanic tribes in the first few centuries A.D. adopted numerous loanwords from Latin as they adopted new products via trade with the Romans. Few Germanic words, on the other hand, pass into Latin. Generally, some speakers of the borrowing language know the source language too, or at least enough of it to utilize the relevant words. They adopt them when speaking the borrowing language. If they are bilingual in the source language, which is often the case, they might pronounce the words the same or similar to the way they are pronounced in the source language. For example, English speakers adopted the word *garage* from French, at first with a pronunciation nearer to the French pronunciation that is now usually found. Presumably the very first speakers who used the word in English knew at least some French and heard the word used by French speakers [5, p. 55-56]. In time more speakers can become familiar with a new foreign word. The following list of loanwords came into English in different periods and from different languages:

**Old English.** The first Latin words in the language were borrowed before Angles and Saxons left the continent. The chief occupation of the German in the Roman Empire was war, and this is reflected in such words as: *battle, banner, wall, pit, street, mile, courtesan, port*, etc. More numerous are the words connected with trade. They are *bargain*, and „to trade”, with its derivatives *monger, trade, commerce, shop, pound, bushel, burden, loan, coin*. The wine-trade was one of the most important branches of Roman commerce with the Germans, hence such words in English as *wine, vinegar, bottle*. The Roman mode of life and habits are reflected in such loanwords as *kettle, table, bench, stool, carpet, curtain, necklace, kitchen, cup, dish, spoon, line, rope, gem, cheese, onion, plum, chalk, pipe*. The greatest influence of Latin upon Old English was due to that contact with the Roman nation which began with the conversion of the English to Christianity at the end of the sixth century and many ecclesiastic terms were introduced into English: *abbot, anthem, candle, cowl, disciple, mass, noon, nun, martyr, offer, priest, provost, shrine, provost*. Some names of articles of clothing, household use, food, names of trees, plants and herbs also penetrated into the language at this period. E.g. *sock, silk, chest, mat, beet, lentil, radish, pear, mussel, lobster, cook, pine, box-tree, aloes, balsam, lily, mallow, plant, savory, rue, myrrh*. Some important words of Latin origin connected with education which made their way into English must also be mentioned here: *school, master, grammatical, meter, the gloss, explain, scribe* [1, p.26].

**Middle English.** Part of words that entered English from Latin at this time can be assigned to specific conceptual sphere or specialized areas of human activities such as Church and Christian doctrine, education, and the administration of law or neighboring fields. These include borrowings such as the following : *congregation, monastery, scripture, catholic, evangelic, ceremonial, eternal, immortal, absolve, celebrate, consecrate, doctrine, cognition, alphabet, desk, abstract, extract, comment, educate, instruct, explain, describe, discuss, comprehend, translate, graduate, pedagogue, literate, literature, supplement, adversary, advocate, testament, forum, certificate, contract, tribute, legitimate, elect. Prosecute, interrogate, etc.*

A substantial part of the large number of Latin loans which have survived to the present day were , therefore, first introduced as particular terms in science or its various branches and have either remained purely technical terms or later become part of the vocabulary used by educated people in their day-to-day conversation.

**Low German.** Maritime relations: *boom, bow, cruise, dock, freight, keel, leak, pump, reef, scoop, sloop, smuggle, splice, tackle, yacht, freebooter, smack, cruise, yawl, reel, walrus, holster, furlough*, etc. Military terms: *beleaguer, raster, blunderbuss*. Cloth industry: *bale, fuller's earth, mart, nap, selvage, spool, stripe*. Art: *easel, landscape, sketch*. Food and drink: *booze, brandy, cookie, gin, hops, waffle, stockfish*. Other domains: *crap, curl, dollar, scum, split, uproar*.

**Scandinavian.** Most of these first appeared in the written language in Middle English; but many were no doubt borrowed earlier , during the period of the Danelaw ( 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> centuries). E.g. *anger, by-low, cake, call, clumsy, doze, egg, fellow, get, give, hit, husband, kick, kill, kindle, law, raise, root, score, scrub, seat, skin, skirt, sky, take, they, them, their, ugly, want, window, wing*, etc. Place name suffixes: -by, -thorpe, -gate.

**French.** Law and government: *chancellor, chattel, country, bailiff, court, crime, defendant, evidence, government, jail, judge, jury, noble, parliament, plea, prison, revenue, stat, tax, verdict*. Nobility: *baron, baroness, count, countess, duke, duchess, marquis, prince, princess, noble, royal*. Cooking: *beef, boil, butcher, dine, fry, pork, poultry, roast, salmon, veal, stew*. Culture and luxury goods: *art, bracelet, claret, clarinet, dance, diamond, fashion, fur, oboe, paintings, pendant, satin, ruby, sculpture*. Other: *adventure, change, chart, dignity, fruit, letter, magic, male, female, mirror, proud, question, regard, special* [3, p.46].

**Modern English: Borrowings from Contemporary language in New English.** Next to French, Latin and Scandinavian, English owes the greatest number of foreign words to **Italian**, though many of them , like Latin loanwords, entered the English language through French. The vast majority of words are related to art, music and literature. Examples of musical terms adopted in English are : *aria, bass, cello, concerto, duet, finale, piano, solo, sonata, violin*. The Italian loanwords *balcony, cameo, corridor, cupola, design, gallery, granite, studio* reveal the priority of the Italians in certain spheres of culture. Borrowings from Spanish came as a result of contacts with Spain in the military, commercial and political fields, due to the rivalry of England and Spain in foreign trade and colonial expansion. E.g. *banana, canoe, chocolate, cocoa, colibri, maize, mosquito, Negro, potato, ranch, tobacco, tomato*. **Dutch** made abundant contribution to English, particularly in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> c. when commercial relations between England and the Netherlands were at their peak. Dutch artisans came to England to practice their trade and sell their goods. E.g. *pack, scour, spool, stripe, hops, tub, scum*.

### Bibliography

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