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LEXICAL BORROWING THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

Throughout its development, English has undergone changes at all language levels. However, the most dramatic change in the history of English involves changes in vocabulary which have resulted from the contact with different languages or a great influx of loanwords, mainly from Latin, Scandinavian, and French. These loanwords have greatly increased the vocabulary of English, which is why the aim of the paper is to give their overview, as well as to reflect on less frequent loanwords from other languages. As the process of borrowing marked all the periods of the development of English, the author has organised the paper chronologically, describing them in the order in which they have been transferred into the English language.

Key words: *English, vocabulary change, loanwords, Latin, Scandinavian, French*

Introduction

Throughout its history, English has come into contact with different European languages. Close contact between English and these languages resulted in the process of lexical borrowing, or „the adoption of individual words or even of large sets of vocabulary items from another language or dialect“ (Hock 1986: 380).

There is a difference in the type of vocabulary borrowed from dialects in comparison to that of other languages. Basic vocabulary tends to resist changes successfully and it is as a rule borrowed only from the dialects of the same language/language family, while the specialized sets of vocabulary are transferred from foreign languages. That is how English basic vocabulary is comprised of Norse borrowings which were, therefore, transferred from another Germanic dialect: „Norse and English... were in effect nearly dialects of the same language“ (Hock 1986: 410), while the words referring to speciali-

zed sets of vocabulary were borrowed from languages like Latin and French, which belong to different language families.

The most important factor which determines the type of vocabulary to be borrowed is prestige or the social value of languages/dialects in contact (Hock 1986: 385–411). When languages of equal prestige come into contact, they are referred to as *adstrata*, and basic vocabulary is, as a rule, transferred. The example is the contact between English and Norse which resulted in a number of Scandinavian borrowings denoting general, everyday concepts (*husband, skin, get, give* etc.). On the other hand, vocabulary referring to special phenomena (such as medicine, literature, religion...) is borrowed when one language dominates the other. When this is the case, usually the language of lower prestige borrows words with prestigious connotations from the dominant language called *superstratum*. The example of this contact situation, where one language, referred to as *superstratum*, dominates the other less dominant language, is the contact between English and Norman French or French borrowings (*justice, royal, grand...*). When a *substratum* (language with a lower prestige) is the donor language, borrowings usually have derogatory connotations, as in the case of the contact between English and American Indian languages (*squaw, pow-pow*).

There are many loanwords that were transferred into English throughout its history, but Latin, Scandinavian and French loanwords are the most frequent. Apart from these, we will also present loanwords from other languages.

Celtic borrowings

The language which was spoken before the beginning of the development of English in Britain was a language of various Celtic tribes that inhabited this area 2000 years ago. Although there are no written records of this language, Celtic can be traced in the place-names such as *London, York, Dublin, Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow*, in the names of rivers – *Avon, Severn, Thames*, and regions – *Devon, Kent* etc. Place-names containing *bre* and *pen* („hill“) as their constituent parts are also said to be of Celtic origin (Culpeper 2005: 2). Apart from the place-names, a few other Celtic words were borrowed before the period of Middle-English: (OE *bratt*) *brat-cloak*; (OE *cumb*) with variations in spelling *combe, comb, comb-valley*, (OE *torr*) *tor* (*a high rock or peak*) (Pyles, Algeo 1993: 292). The number of Celtic loanwords from the Middle and Modern English period is also small, and the most representative examples include *bog, slogan, whiskey* from Scots Gaelic, *crag* from Welsh, and *leprechaun, shamrock, brogue, and galore* from Irish Gaelic (Jackson, Zé Amvela 2000: 32).

Latin loanwords

The first notable group of invaders that joined the Celtic speaking tribes were Romans who occupied the midlands and south in 43 AD and remained there until 410 AD. Although this was enough of time for one language to borrow from another, place-names are the only evidence of Latin words borrowed during this period (pre-Old English): *portus* (*port*) in *Portsmouth*, *castrum* (*camp*) in *Lancaster*; *via strata* (*paved street*) in *Stratford* etc. *Catterick* (*waterfall* from Latin *cataracta*), is the only example of the complete change of a place-name as Romans usually latinized Celtic words (e.g. *Londonium*), or added place-name elements (*castrum*, *portus*, *strata*) (Culpeper 2005: 3).

Brought by Christian missionaries in the 6th century, Latin came into contact with English also during the Old English period. The most prominent change that resulted from this contact was the change of the word forms as the Roman alphabet replaced the Old English alphabet in 597. Changes in vocabulary were mostly due to the semantic change and the process of word-formation, and loanwords were not very common. However, borrowing did take place because of the spread of religion and literacy. Indirect borrowing, which results in loan translations¹, was more common than the direct borrowing. *Spiritus Sanctus* > *the Holy Ghost*, *omnipotens* > *almighty*, *misericors* > *merciful*, *evangelium* > *good tidings or gospel* etc. are examples of the indirect borrowing (Berndt 1982: 50).

Direct borrowings from this period refer to the church and the new doctrine it propagated: *altar*, *angel*, *demon*, *cleric*, *psalm*, *bishop*, *monk*, *priest*, *candle*... (Culpeper 2005: 36). Apart from the concepts connected with religion and education, Roman Catholic monks also brought new plants, herbs, and agricultural technologies which is how words representing them were borrowed from Latin, too: *plant* (*L planta*), *mint* (*L menta*), *palm* (*L palma*), *wine* (*L vinum*), *kitchen* (*L coquina*), *cook* (*L coquus*), *cheese* (*L caseus*); *school* (*L schola*) and *maegister*, *paper*, *fers* (*L verse*) (Claiborne 1991: 81).

What is more interesting, however, is the contact between English and written Latin toward the end of the Middle English period and in the beginning of the Modern English period (Berndt 1982: 54). The contact with Latin toward the end of Middle English resulted in the borrowing of several thousand Latin words connected with religion, Christian doctrine and the administration of law: *congregation*, *ecclesiastical*, *scripture*, *requiem*, *rosary*,

¹ Loan translations are literal translations of the components of foreign words borrowed from one language into another.

eternal, immortal, excommunicate, doctrine, educate, instruct, explain, describe, apprehend, comprehend; graduate, literate; advocate, convict, contract, certificate, testament, contract, legitimate, prosecute, interrogate...

Latin loanwords that are difficult to classify into specific vocabulary groups include lots of verbs and adjectives that are in common use now: *abbreviate, assume, constitute, distribute, divide, duplicate, elevate, exclude, include, produce, promote, separate, subscribe, violate; acute, artificial, extinct, equal, fabulous, maternal, mature, mental, rare, senior, solitary, solar etc.*

However, the process of greater borrowing from Latin started during the Modern English period – with the Renaissance in the 16th century (Berndt 1982: 54–57). A great number of Latin words were borrowed in order to name the new concepts from the fields of science and art, but there was also the effort of educated people and the admirers of classical literature and philosophy to refine their language. Moreover, Latin was the dominant language in other European countries during the period – it was the language of philosophy, theology, and science. Apart from the transfer of a number of Latin words, many words of Greek origin entered English via Latin: *scientific, data, function, investigation, serum, stimulant, vertebra, spinal, nerve, abdomen, cerebellum, delirium, nebula, genus, species, larva, nucleus, radius, formula, minimum, maximum, empiric, transcendental, materialist, contemplate, notion, concept; Greek: phenomenon, coma, skeleton, larynx, pharynx, nausea, embryo, scheme, theory, dogma, diagram, prism...*

Latin loanwords referring to education, literature, law and administration were also borrowed massively during this period: *education, auditorium, appendix, matriculate, dissertation, appendix; critic (Gk), topic (Gk), drama (Gk) chorus (Gk), epic (Gk), idyll (Gk); agenda, veto, census, status, delinquent, confiscate etc.*

Some other Latin loans from this period cannot be easily classified and are mainly used in the formal language today as they belong to the specialized language: *depopulate, opponent, dilemma, frustration, apparatus, emphasis (Gk), sporadic (Gk), complacent, susceptible, indignant, audible, implicate, annihilate, eradicate, infringe, excavate, culminate, consolidate, preclude, etc.*

Scandinavian loanwords

Brought in the 9th century by Scandinavian invaders who rapidly mixed with the English speaking community, Old Norse came into close contact with Old English. The process of borrowing was facilitated because both languages shared the same Germanic origin and were therefore of a similar or equal prestige. Apart from equal prestige and the same origin, massive borrowing from

Old Norse was also caused by the influence of French even before the Norman Conquest. Subdued by a completely different language and culture under the first Normans, the English and the Scandinavians were forced to interact even more closely than before. Therefore, a great number of Scandinavian words were borrowed not just during the Old English period, but in the beginning of Middle English, too. As a matter of fact, the majority of Scandinavian words occurs only in the records from the Middle English due to the total absence of documents from the earlier period. Words borrowed from Old Norse belong to the basic vocabulary representing everyday life: *husband, fellow, sky, skull, wing, heaven, gate, root, skill, week, low, loose, odd, ugly, ill, happy...* (Jespersen 1905: 75)

Old English borrowed from Scandinavian languages closed-class words, too, such as pronouns *they, their, them*, and the prepositions *both, same and fro* (*fro* was actually *from* and still survives in the expression *to and fro*). This is an important fact as it does not comply with the general trends in borrowing. Words borrowed from one language to another usually belong to the class of content items within which nouns have the primary place as they are used to name new concepts, or unknown objects brought by the change of culture and the environment. English, however, also borrowed Scandinavian function words, the major reason for which lies in the fact represented by Weinreich (1953: 25), according to whom grammatical borrowing is possible „only to the extent that the donor and the recipient languages are structurally compatible“. As Scandinavian and English both descended from the same origin, and were, moreover, of equal social prestige, it is clear why grammatical borrowing² took place in spite of the general trends of borrowing toward the open-class words.

Scandinavian words were also adopted during the Modern English period: *muggy, rug, scud, ski*. Others like *geyser, rune, saga* were borrowed from Icelandic, while *ombudsman* came from Swedish (Pyles, Algeo 1993: 294).

Scandinavian influence on English is present in the large number of place-names, too. The most frequent Scandinavian place-names end in *by* (meaning *village, town*), *thorpe* (*village*), and *thwate* (*piece of land*), as in the examples: *Derby, Rugby, Whitby, Althorp, Linthorp, Braithwaite*. Personal names ending in *-son*, as in *Johnson, Wilkinson, Erickson, Robinson* also indicate Scandinavian influence (Crystal 2001: 25–6).

Unlike Latin loanwords from the same period which came about through the need for words to name new religious concepts, Scandinavian lo-

² Grammatical borrowing is an umbrella term for the adoption of function words and derivational and inflexional affixes.

anwords do not have special connotations, but represent everyday life. As already mentioned above, the reason for this lies in the fact that words belonging to basic vocabulary are transferred when the closely related languages come into contact. This is why „an Englishmen cannot thrive or be ill or die without Scandinavian words; they are to the language what bread and eggs are to the daily fare“ (Jespersen 1905: 80).

French loanwords

French came into contact with English with the Norman Conquest in 1066. Even though the influence of French started almost half a century before the Conquest (in 1002 when King Aethelred moved to Normandy), the great influx of French loanwords started with the Norman Conquest in 1066 which marked the beginning of the Middle English period. French became the official language, the language of law and administration, literature and education. It was during this period that English adopted the record number of even 10 000 words, causing thus the most striking change in vocabulary, and all other language levels, too. French loanwords were motivated by both need and prestige. New words were necessary to name the concepts from a completely different culture. On the other hand, French was the language of higher social prestige than English, which also facilitated the borrowing process and made French the official language of England for about two centuries. Although English triumphed in 1362 when Parliament brought the decision that all legal documents should be written in English, the influence of French remained strong, especially in terms vocabulary (Berndt 1982: 57–65), which can all be illustrated by the following examples.

Many English affixes, primarily prefixes, ceased to be used during the Middle English period, while, on the other hand, a considerable number of French affixes were adopted: (prefixes) *counter-*, *inter-*, *mal-*, *re-*, *de-*, *in-...*; (suffixes) *-er*; *-tion*, *-ment*, *-ee*, *-able* etc. These affixes combined with words of all origins and were, therefore, productive in terms of the process of derivation or creation of new words.

As French was the actual language of law, administration, education, literature, art, cuisine, etc., English adopted words representing different types of vocabulary. It borrowed the vocabulary relevant to the description of a conquered country: *country*, *coast*, *river*, *valley*, *mountain*, *lake*, *frontier*, *border*, *village* etc.

Although some native titles such as *king*, *queen*, *earl*, *lord lady* and *knight* remained, many other titles and words referring to the social hierarchy were borrowed from French: *emperor*, *empress*, *duke/duchess*, *prince*, *baron*,

baroness, count/countess, squire; the estates, baronage, nobility, people, peasants etc.

As the French were the new rulers of the country, many French loanwords were connected to the ruling: *sovereign, crown, ruler, treasury, chancellor, counselor, guardian, mayor, governor, deputy, ambassador, treaty, reign, empire, alliance, etc.*

Similarly, legal and administrative vocabulary was also borrowed: *judge, jury, justice, court, crime, coroner, client, fraud, defendant, execute, appeal, divorce, heritage, prison, exile, plaintiff, notary, jail, arrest, release, accusation etc.*

Conquerors established military system too, which is why there is a number of words representing the military system: *peace, war, army, navy, fortress, archer, soldier, captain, admiral, expedition, banner, battle, garrison, battle, resistance, etc.*

Vocabulary connected to the church, church services and Christian doctrine or ethics has French origin, too: *clergy, abbess, friar, preacher, saint, fraternity, chapel, abbey, sermon, parish, baptize; charity, virginity, innocence, devotion, contemplation, conscience, virtue, vice, temptation, damnation, salvation, grace, miracle, charitable etc.*

Also, words denoting emotions and mental states were borrowed in the Middle English period: *ease, disease, grief, , despair, courage, folly, passion, jealousy, ambition, arrogance, disdain, malice, avarice, enjoy, desire, despise, envy, desire etc.*

The large number of trading terms was also borrowed from French: *barber, butcher, draper, carpenter, grocer, mercer, merchant, painter, tailor, surgeon, apprentice, physician, merchandize, bargain, cost, value, gallon, measure, payment, barrel, bottle, vessel etc.*

French influence is also present and especially interesting in the names of food and dishes. The words for animals in the field preserved their English origin, but the words for the food served and decorated for French noblemen were adopted from French: *boil, fry, roast, dine, flour, grease, vinegar, bacon, sausage, pork, beef, mutton, sauce, gravy, jelly, salad, juice, cabbage, cream, biscuit, cider, cucumber, onion etc.*

Due to the association of France with fashion, style, and elegance, vocabulary referring to ornaments, clothing and furniture was also borrowed from French: *cloak, coat, garment, fur, frock, brooch, jewel, pearl, ornament, button, mirror, towel, carpet, curtain, blanket, couch, chair, cushion, fashion...*

Many other French loanwords can be incorporated into the common English vocabulary due to their general character which makes them similar to Scandinavian borrowings: (nouns) *age, affaire, baggage, beauty, company,*

action, couple, damage, danger, demand, cable, damage, difficult, error, example, force, honor, question...; (adjectives) able, brief, clear, familiar, general, poor, safe, easy, fine, certain, cruel, sure...; (verbs) achieve, arrive, approve, approach, assemble, attend, advertise, blame, catch, cancel, deserve, depart, carry, finish, encourage, excuse, escape, examine, refuse, suffer, save, touch, travel, etc.

Modern English continued to borrow from French, too, and those loanwords reflect the relations with France during the 18th and 19th century. France and England were related through politics, trade and industry during this period, which is why French loanwords reflect these concepts: *republic, regime, aristocrat, democrat, cabinet, diplomacy, ideology, socialism, communism... Baroque, renaissance, Rococo, ballet, burlesque, chanson, memoir, essay, brochure etc.* are the loanwords reflecting artistic and cultural relations with France in the 18th and 19th century. For the English, France remained the synonym for fashion, style and elegance: *cuisine, restaurant, champagne, menu, blouse, tricot etc.* French influence can be also traced in English place-names although this was not common as with the languages that came into contact with English before French. The French usually added their personal names to place-names, as in the examples: *Melton Mowbray (Roger de Mowbray), Stanstead Mountfichet (the Montifiquet family)*, or changed the pronunciation of the place-names which were difficult to pronounce, as in the case of *Nottingham* which used to be *Snotingaham* (OE *Snoting* „people of Snot“ + OE *ham* „dwelling, estate, house“), with the /sn/ consonant cluster, unusual and difficult for French speakers (Culpeper 2005:8).

Loanwords from other languages

Due to the close trading relations between Britain and the North German countries, English had contact with Flemish, Dutch and Low German, too. Vocabulary borrowed from these languages during the Middle and Modern English period mostly refers to trading, shipping and nautical terms (Berndt 1982: 66): *freight, deck, lighter, bowsprit, buoy etc.* (14/15 c.) and *dock, yacht, cruise, brandy, dollar* (16/ 17 c.).

When it comes to Italian loanwords, they mostly cover English musical terminology (Pyles, Algeo 1993: 301): *duo, madrigal, violin (16c.); allegro, opera, piano, solo, sonata (17c.); adagio, andante, aria, concerto, duet, finale, libretto, soprano, trio, trombone, viola, violoncello (18c.);* and *alto, cadenza, diva, piccolo, prima donna, vibrato (19c).* *Cupola, carnival, gondola, umbrella, casino, bravo, ciao, volcano, incognito, paparazzo; macaroni, spaghetti, lasagna, pizza and scampi* refer to other aspects of Italian culture.

Spanish loanwords started entering English after the 16th century, and they are more common in American English as many of them come from the New World: *avocado, cargo, cigar, cockroach, corral, embargo, flotilla, guitar, mosquito, sherry, sombrero, tango, chocolate, tortilla, vanilla. Adobe, canyon, hacienda, poncho, pueblo, ranch...* date from the 19th century, while *margarita, sangria, macho, machismo* etc. were borrowed in the 20th century (Pyles, Algeo 1993: 301).

Other loanwords adopted in the Modern English period include Portuguese *albino, flamingo, lambada, pagoda*, High German *quartz, paraffin, iceberg, waltz, rucksack*, Russian *samovar, czar, vodka, soviet*; Indian *jungle, pyjamas, khaki, bungalow, verandah, dinghy, yoga*; North American *skunk, moccasin, squaw, wigwam, toboggan* etc. and many others (Berndt 1982: 67–68).

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**LEKSIČNE PROMJENE KROZ
ISTORIJU ENGLESKOG**

Engleski jezik je tokom svog razvoja prošao kroz velike promjene na svim jezičkim nivoima, ali su one bile najizraženije na planu vokabulara. Razlog za to su kontakti sa raznim jezicima i intenzivno pozajmljivanje, pri čemu se kao najbrojnije izdvajaju latinske, skandinavske i francuske pozajmljenice. Budući da se njima duguje bogatstvo engleskog vokabulara danas, rad je pisan sa ciljem da pruži njihov kratak pregled, kao i pregled manje brojnih pozajmljenica iz drugih jezika. Proces pozajmljivanja je obilježio sve faze u razvoju engleskog jezika, pa smo ga predstavili hronološki, opisujujući pozajmljenice ponaosob redom kojim su ulazile u ovaj jezik.

Ključne riječi: *engleski, promjena u vokabularu, pozajmljenice, latinske, skandinavske, francuske pozajmljenice*