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COURSE PAPER

ON THE THEME:

***“THE ETYMOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH  
VOCABULARY”***

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# **The Etymological structure of English vocabulary**

## **Plan**

**Introduction**

**1 Words of native origin**

**2 Borrowings**

**3 Interrelation between native and borrowed words**

**Conclusion**

**List of used literature**

## Introduction

The most characteristic feature of English is usually said to be its mixed character. Many linguists consider foreign influence, especially that of French, to be the most important factor in the history of English. This wide-spread viewpoint is supported only by the evidence of the English word-stock, as its grammar and phonetic system are very stable and not easily influenced by other languages. While it is altogether wrong to speak of the mixed character of the language as a whole, the composite nature of the English vocabulary cannot be denied.

To comprehend the nature of the English vocabulary and its historical development it is necessary to examine the etymology of its different layers, the historical causes of their appearance, their volume and role and the comparative importance of native and borrowed elements in replenishing the English vocabulary. Before embarking upon a description of the English word-stock from this point of view we must make special mention of some terms.

1. In linguistic literature the term *n a t i v e* is conventionally used to denote words of Anglo-Saxon origin brought to the British Isles from the continent in the 5th century by the Germanic tribes — the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. Practically, however, the term is often applied to words whose origin cannot be traced to any other language. Thus, the word **path** is classified as native just because its origin has not yet been established with any degree of certainty. It is possible to conjecture that further progress of linguistic science may throw some light upon its origin and it may prove to have been borrowed at some earlier period. It is for this reason that Professor A. I. Smirnitsky relying on the earliest manuscripts of the English language available suggested another interpretation of the term *n a t i v e* — as words which may be presumed to have existed in the English word-stock of the 7th century. This interpretation may have somewhat more reliable criteria behind it,

but it seems to have the same drawback — both viewpoints present the native element in English as static.

In this book we shall proceed from a different understanding of the term *n a t i v e* as comprising not only the ancient Anglo-Saxon core but also words coined later on their basis by means of various processes operative in English.

2. The term *b o r r o w i n g* is used in linguistics to denote the process of adopting words from other languages and also the result of this process, the language material itself. It has already been stated that not only words, but also word-building affixes were borrowed into English (as is the case with **-able**, **-ment**, **-ity**, etc.). It must be mentioned that some word-groups, too, were borrowed in their foreign form (e.g. **coup d'état**, **vis-à-vis**).

In its second meaning the term *b o r r o w i n g* is sometimes used in a wider sense. It is extended onto the so-called *t r a n s l a t i o n - l o a n s* (or *l o a n - t r a n s l a t i o n s*) and *s e m a n t i c* borrowing. *T r a n s l a t i o n - l o a n s* are words and expressions formed from the material available in the language after the patterns characteristic of the given language, but under the influence of some foreign words and expressions (e. g. **mother tongue** < *L. lingua materna*; **it goes without saying** < *Fr. cela va sans dire*; **wall newspaper** < *Uzb. devoriy gazeta*). **Semantic borrowing** is the appearance of a new meaning due to the influence of a related word in another language (e.g. the word **propaganda** and **reaction** acquired their political meanings under the influence of French, **deviation** and **bureau** entered political vocabulary, as in **right and left deviations**, **Political bureau**, under the influence of Russian).

Further on we shall use the term borrowing in its second meaning, as a borrowing proper or a word taken over in its material form.

Distinction should be made between true borrowings and words formed out of morphemes borrowed from Latin and Greek, e.g. **telephone, phonogram**. Such words were never part of Latin or Greek and they do not reflect any contacts with the peoples speaking those languages.

It is of importance to note that the term **b o r r o w i n g** belongs to diachronic description of the word-stock. Thus the words **wine, cheap, pound** introduced by the Romans into all Germanic dialects long before the Angles and the Saxons settled on the British Isles, and such late Latin loans as **alibi, memorandum, stratum** may all be referred to borrowings from the same language in describing their origin, though in modern English they constitute distinctly different groups of words.

3. There is also certain confusion between the terms **s o u r c e** of borrowings and **o r i g i n** of the word. This confusion may be seen in contradictory marking of one and the same word as, say, a French borrowing in one dictionary and Latin borrowing in another. It is suggested here that the term **s o u r c e** of borrowing should be applied to the language from which this or that particular word was taken into English. So when describing words as Latin, French or Scandinavian borrowings we point out their source but not their origin. The term **o r i g i n** of the word should be applied to the language the word may be traced to. Thus, the French borrowing **table** is Latin by origin (*L. tabula*), the Latin borrowing **school** came into Latin from the Greek language (*Gr. schole*), so **it** may be described as Greek by origin.

It should be remembered, however, that whereas the immediate source of borrowing is as a rule known and can be stated with some certainty, the actual origin of the word may be rather doubtful. For example, the word **ink** was borrowed from Old French, but it may be traced back to Latin and still further to Greek (cf. *Gr. kaio-*), and it is quite possible that it was borrowed into Greek from some other language.

The immediate source of borrowing is naturally of greater importance for language students because it reveals the extra-linguistic factors responsible for the act of borrowing, and also because the borrowed words bear, as a rule, the imprint of the sound and graphic form, the morphological and semantic structure characteristic of the language they were borrowed from.

## 1 Words of native origin

Words of native origin consist for the most part of very ancient elements—Indo-European, Germanic and West Germanic cognates. The bulk of the Old English word-stock has been preserved, although some words have passed out of existence. When speaking about the role of the native element in the English language linguists usually confine themselves to the small Anglo-Saxon stock of words, which is estimated to make 25—30% of the English vocabulary.

To assign the native element its true place it is not so important to count the number of Anglo-Saxon words that have survived up to our days, as to study their semantic and stylistic character, their word-building ability, frequency value, collocability.

Almost all words of Anglo-Saxon origin belong to very important semantic groups. They include most of the auxiliary and modal verbs (**shall, will, must, can, may**, etc.), pronouns (**I, you, he, my, his, who**, etc.), prepositions (**in, out, on, under**, etc.), numerals (**one, two, three, four**, etc.) and conjunctions (**and, but, till, as**, etc.). Notional words of Anglo-Saxon origin include such groups as words denoting parts of the body (**head, hand, arm, back**, etc.), members of the family and closest relatives (**father, mother, brother, son, wife**), natural phenomena and planets (**snow, rain, wind, sun, moon, star**, etc.), animals (**horse, cow, sheep, cat**), qualities and properties (**old, young, cold, hot, light, dark, long**), common actions (**do, make, go, come, see, hear, eat**, etc.), etc.

Most of the native words have undergone great changes in their semantic structure, and as a result are nowadays polysemantic, e.g. the word **finger** does not only denote a part of a hand as in Old English, but also 1) the part of a glove covering one of the fingers, 2) a finger-like part in various machines, 3) a hand of a clock, 4) an index, 5) a unit of measurement. Highly polysemantic are the words **man, head, hand, go**, etc.

Most native words possess a wide range of lexical and grammatical valency. Many of them enter a number of phraseological units, e.g. the word **heel** enters the following units: **heel over head** or **head over heels**— 'upside down'; **cool one's heel**—'be kept waiting'; **show a clean pair of heels, take to one's heels**—'run away', **turn on one's heels**— 'turn sharply round', etc.

The great stability and semantic peculiarities of Anglo-Saxon words account for their great derivational potential. Most words of native origin make up large clusters of derived and compound words in the present-day language, e.g. the word **wood** is the basis for the formation of the following words: **wooden, woody, wooded, woodcraft, woodcutter, woodwork** and many others. The formation of new words is greatly facilitated by the fact that most Anglo-Saxon words are root-words.

New words have been coined from Anglo-Saxon simple word-stems mainly by means of affixation, word-composition and conversion.

Some linguists contend that due to the large additions to its vocabulary from different languages, English lost much of its old faculty to form new words. The great number of compound and derived words in modern English, the diversity of their patterns, the stability and productivity of the patterns and the appearance of new ones testify to the contrary. Such affixes of native origin as **-ness, -ish, -ed, un-, mis-** make part of the patterns widely used to build numerous new words throughout the whole history of English, though some of them have changed their collocability or have become polysemantic, e.g. the agent-forming suffix **-er**, which was in Old English mostly added to noun-stems, is now most often combined with verb-stems, besides it has come to form also names of instruments, persons in a certain state or doing something at the moment.

Some native words were used as components of compounds so often that they have acquired the status of derivational affixes (e. g. **-dom, -**

**hood, -ly, over-, out-, under-),** others are now semi-affixational morphemes.<sup>1</sup>

It is noteworthy that to the native element in English we must also refer some new simple words based on words of Anglo-Saxon origin. Words with a new non-derived stem branch off from primary simple words as a result of simplification of some derivatives in a cluster of words and their semantic isolation, as in **king, kind *n*, kind *a*** and **kin *n*,** from which all of them were derived (cp. *OE. cyninȝ, cynd, cynde, cyn*), or **bless** and **bleed** derived from **blood** (cp. *OE. bledsian, blēdan, blōd*). Sometimes a word split into two or more words with different forms and meanings (i.e. etymological doublets) due to the difference in function and stress, as is the case with **off** and **of** (from *OE. of* which was stressed as an adverb and unstressed as a preposition). Dialectal forms of a word may develop into independent words, as in **one** and **an** (< *OE. an*), **whole** and **hale** (< *OE. hāl*). New root-words based on Anglo-Saxon words also came into being with the rise of homonyms owing to the split of polysemy.

The semantic characteristics, stability and wide collocability of native words account for their frequency in speech. However there are some words among them which are now archaic or poetic (e.g. **lore, methinks, quoth, whilom, ere, welkin,** etc.), or used only as historical terms (e.g. **thane, yeoman** denoting ranks, **stocks** — ‘an instrument of torture’, etc.).

What has been said above shows that the native element, has been playing a significant role in the English language. To fully estimate the importance of the native element in English, it is essential to study the role of English derivational means and semantic development in the life of borrowings, which will be dwelt upon in the sections below.

1. The native element comprises not only the ancient Anglo-Saxon core but also words which appeared later as a result of word-formation, split of polysemy and other processes operative in English.

2. Though not numerous in Modern English, words of Anglo-Saxon origin must be considered very important due to their marked stability, specific semantic characteristics, wide collocability, great derivational potential, wide spheres of application and high frequency value.

## 2 Borrowings

In its 15 century long history recorded in written manuscripts the English language happened to come in long and close contact with several other languages, mainly Latin, French and Old Norse (or Scandinavian). The great influx of borrowings from these sources can be accounted for by a number of historical causes. Due to the great influence of the Roman civilisation Latin was for a long time used in England as the language of learning and religion. Old Norse was the language of the conquerors who were on the same level of social and cultural development and who merged rather easily with the local population in the 9th, 10th and the first half of the 11th century. French (to be more exact its Norman dialect) was the language of the other conquerors who brought with them a lot of new notions of a higher social system — developed feudalism, it was the language of upper classes, of official documents and school instruction from the middle of the 11th century to the end of the 14th century.

In the study of the borrowed element in English the main emphasis is as a rule placed on the Middle English period. Borrowings of later periods became the object of investigation only in recent years. These investigations have shown that the flow of borrowings has been steady and uninterrupted. The greatest number has come from French. They refer to various fields of social-political, scientific and cultural life. A large portion of borrowings (41%) is scientific and technical terms.

The number and character of borrowed words tell us of the relations between the peoples, the level of their culture, etc. It is for this reason that borrowings have often been called the milestones of history. Thus if we go through the lists of borrowings in English and arrange them in groups according to their meaning, we shall be able to obtain much valuable information with regard to England's contacts with many nations. Some borrowings, however, cannot be explained by the direct influence of certain historical conditions, they do not come along with

any new objects or ideas. Such were for instance the words **air, place, brave, gay** borrowed from French.

It must be pointed out that while the general historical causes of borrowing from different languages have been studied with a considerable degree of thoroughness the purely linguistic reasons for borrowing are still open to investigation.

The number and character of borrowings do not only depend on the historical conditions, on the nature and length of the contacts, but also on the degree of the genetic and structural proximity of languages concerned. The closer the languages, the deeper and more versatile is the influence. This largely accounts for the well-marked contrast between the French and the Scandinavian influence on the English language. Thus under the influence of the Scandinavian languages, which were closely related to Old English, some classes of words were borrowed that could not have been adopted from non-related or distantly related languages (the pronouns **they, their, them**, for instance); a number of Scandinavian borrowings were felt as derived from native words (they were of the same root and the connection between them was easily seen), e.g. **drop (AS.) — drip (Scand.), true (AS.)-tryst (Scand.)**; the Scandinavian influence even accelerated to a certain degree the development of the grammatical structure of English.

Borrowings enter the language in two ways: through oral speech (by immediate contact between the peoples) and through written speech (by indirect contact through books, etc.).

Oral borrowing took place chiefly in the early periods of history, whereas in recent times written borrowing gained importance. Words borrowed orally (e.g. *L.* **inch, mill, street**) are usually short and they undergo considerable changes in the act of adoption. Written borrowings (e.g. *Fr.* **communiqué, belles-lettres, naïveté**) preserve

their spelling and some peculiarities of their sound-form, their assimilation is a long and laborious process.

Though borrowed words undergo changes in the adopting language they preserve some of their former peculiarities for a comparatively long period. This makes it possible to work out some criteria for determining whether the word belongs to the borrowed element.

In some cases the pronunciation of the word (strange sounds, sound combinations, position of stress, etc.), its spelling and the correlation between sounds and letters are an indication of the foreign origin of the word. This is the case with **waltz** (G.), **psychology** (Gr.), **soufflé** (Fr.), etc. The initial position of the sounds [v], [dʒ], [ʒ] or of the letters x, j, z is a sure sign that the word has been borrowed, e.g. **volcano** (It.), **vase** (Fr.), **vaccine** (L.), **jungle** (Hindi), **gesture** (L.), **giant** (OFr.), **zeal** (L.), **zero** (Fr.), **zinc** (G.), etc.

The morphological structure of the word and its grammatical forms may also bear witness to the word being adopted from another language. Thus the suffixes in the words **neurosis** (Gr.) and **violoncello** (It.) betray the foreign origin of the words. The same is true of the irregular plural forms **papyra** (from *papyrus*, Gr.), **pastorali** (from *pastorale*, It.), **beaux** (from *beau*, Fr.), **bacteria**, (from *bacterium*, L.) and the like.

Last but not least is the lexical meaning of the word. Thus the concept denoted by the words **ricksha(w)**, **pagoda** (Chin.) make us suppose that we deal with borrowings.

These criteria are not always helpful. Some early borrowings have become so thoroughly assimilated that they are unrecognisable without a historical analysis, e.g. **chalk**, **mile** (L.), **ill**, **ugly** (Scand.), **enemy**, **car** (Fr.), etc. It must also be taken into consideration that the closer the relation between the languages, the more difficult it is to distinguish borrowings.

Sometimes the form of the word and its meaning in Modern English enable us to tell the immediate source of borrowing. Thus if the digraph **ch** is sounded as [ʃ], the word is a late French borrowing (as in *echelon, chauffeur, chef*); if it stands for [k], it came through Greek (*archaic, architect, chronology*); if it is pronounced as [tʃ], it is either an early-borrowing (*chase, OFr.; cherry, L., OFr.; chime, L.*), or a word of Anglo-Saxon origin (*choose, child, chin*).

It is now essential to analyse the changes that borrowings have undergone in the English language and how they have adapted themselves to its peculiarities.

All the changes that borrowed elements undergo may be divided into two large groups.

On the one hand there are changes specific of borrowed words only. These changes aim at adapting words of foreign origin to the norms of the borrowing language, e.g. the consonant combinations [pn], [ps], [pt] in the words *pneumatics, psychology, Ptolemy* of Greek origin were simplified into [n], [s], [t], since the consonant combinations [ps], [pt], [pn], very frequent at the end of English words (as in **sleeps, stopped**, etc.), were never used in the initial position. For the same reason the initial [ks] was changed into [z] (as in *Gr. xylophone*).

The suffixes **-ar, -or, -ator** in early Latin borrowings were replaced by the highly productive Old English suffix **-ere**, as in *L. Caesar*>OE. **Casere**, *L. sutor*>OE. *sūtere*.

By analogy with the great majority of nouns that form their plural in **-s**, borrowings, even very recent ones, have assumed this inflection instead of their original plural endings. The forms *Soviets, bolsheviks, kolkhozes, sputniks* illustrate the process.

On the other hand we observe changes that are characteristic of both borrowed and native words. These changes are due to the development of the word according to the laws of the given language. When the

highly inflected Old English system of declension changed into the simpler system of Middle English, early borrowings conformed with the general rule. Under the influence of the so-called inflexional levelling borrowings like **lazu**, (*MnE.* law), *fēōlaza* (*MnE.* fellow), *stræt* (*MnE.* street), *disc* (*MnE.* dish) that had a number of grammatical forms in Old English acquired only three forms in Middle English: common case and possessive case singular and plural (fellow, fellowes, fellowes).

It is very important to discriminate between the two processes — the adaptation of borrowed material to the norms of the language and the development of these words according to the laws of the language.

This differentiation is not always easily discernible. In most cases we must resort to historical analysis before we can draw any definite conclusions. There is nothing in the form of the words **procession** and, **progression** to show that the former was already used in England in the 11th century, the latter not till the 15th century. The history of these words reveals that the word **procession** has undergone a number of changes alongside with other English words (change in declension, accentuation, structure, sounds), whereas the word **progression** underwent some changes by analogy with the word **procession** and other similar words already at the time of its appearance in the language.

Since the process of assimilation of borrowings includes changes in sound-form, morphological structure, grammar characteristics, meaning and usage Soviet linguists distinguish phonetic, grammatical and lexical assimilation of borrowings.

**Phonetic assimilation** comprising changes in sound-form and stress is perhaps the most conspicuous.

Sounds that were alien to the English language were fitted into its scheme of sounds. For instance, the long [e] and [ɛ] in recent French

borrowings, alien to English speech, are rendered with the help of [ei] (as in the words **communiqué, chaussée, café**).

Familiar sounds or sound combinations the position of which was strange to the English language, were replaced by other sounds or sound combinations to make the words conform to the norms of the language, e.g. German **spitz** [ʃpits] was turned into English [spits]. Substitution of native sounds for foreign ones usually takes place in the very act of borrowing. But some words retain their foreign pronunciation for a long time before the unfamiliar sounds are replaced by similar native sounds.

Even when a borrowed word seems at first sight to be identical in form with its immediate etymon as *OE. skill* < *Scand. skil*; *OE. scinn* < < *Scand. skinn*; *OE. ran* < *Scand. ran* the phonetic structure of the word undergoes some changes, since every language as well as every period in the history of a language is characterised by its own peculiarities in the articulation of sounds.

In words that were added to English from foreign sources, especially from French or Latin, the accent was gradually transferred to the first syllable. Thus words like **honour, reason** were accented on the same principle as the native **father, mother**.

**Grammatical Assimilation.** Usually as soon as words from other languages were introduced into English they lost their former grammatical categories and paradigms and acquired new grammatical categories and paradigms by analogy with other English words, as in

<i>им.</i> спутник	<i>Com. sing.</i> <b>Sputnik</b>
<i>род.</i> спутника	<i>Poss. sing.</i> <b>Sputnik's</b>
<i>дат.</i> спутнику	<i>Com. pl.</i> <b>Sputniks</b>
<i>вин.</i> спутник	<i>Poss. pl.</i>
<b>Sputniks'</b>	

## **вин. СПУТНИКОМ**

### *предл. о спутнике*

However, there are some words in Modern English that have for centuries retained their foreign inflexions. Thus a considerable group of borrowed nouns, all of them terms or literary words adopted in the 16th century or later, have preserved their original plural inflexion to this day, e.g. **phenomenon** (*L.*) — **phenomena**; **addendum** (*L.*) — **addenda**; **parenthesis** (*Gr.*) — **parentheses**. Other borrowings of the same period have two plural forms — the native and the foreign, e.g. **vacuum** (*L.*) — **vacua, vacuums, virtuoso** (*It.*) — **virtuosi, virtuosos**.

All borrowings that were composite in structure in their native language appeared in English as indivisible simple words, unless there were already words with the same morphemes in it, e.g. in the word **saunter** the French infinitive inflexion **-er** is retained (cf. *OFr. s'aunter*), but it has changed its quality, it is preserved in all the other grammatical forms of the word (cf. **saunters, sauntered, sauntering**), which means that it has become part of the stem in English. The French reflexive pronoun **s-** has become fixed as an inseparable element of the word. The former Italian diminishing suffixes **-etto, -otta, -ello(a), -cello** in the words **ballot, stiletto, umbrella** cannot be distinguished without special historical analysis, unless one knows the Italian language. The composite nature of the word **portfolio** is not seen either (cf. *It. portafogli* < **porta** — imperative of 'carry' + **fogli** — 'sheets of paper'). This loss of morphological seams in borrowings may be termed simplification by analogy with a similar process in native words.

It must be borne in mind that when there appears in a language a group of borrowed words built on the same pattern or containing the same morphemes, the morphological structure of the words becomes apparent and in the course of time their word-building elements can be employed to form new words.

ometimes in borrowed words foreign affixes are replaced by those available in the English language, e.g. the inflexion **-us** in Latin adjectives was replaced in English with the suffixes **-ous** or **-al**: *L. barbarus* > > *E. barbarous*; *L. botanicus* > *E. botanical*; *L. balneus* > *E. balneal*.

**Lexical Assimilation.** When a word is taken over into another language, its semantic structure as a rule undergoes great changes.

Polysemantic words are usually adopted only in one or two of their meanings. Thus the word **timbre** that had a number of meanings in French was borrowed into English as a musical term only. The words **cargo** and **cask**, highly polysemantic in Spanish, were adopted only in one of their meanings — ‘the goods carried in a ship’, ‘a barrel for holding liquids’ respectively.

- In some cases we can observe specialisation of meaning, as in the word **hangar**, denoting a building in which aeroplanes are kept (in French it meant simply ‘shed’) and **revue**, which had the meaning of ‘review’ in French and came to denote a kind of theatrical entertainment in English.

In the process of its historical development a borrowing sometimes acquired new meanings that were not to be found in its former semantic structure. For instance, the verb **move** in Modern English has developed the meanings of ‘propose’, ‘change one’s flat’, ‘mix with people’ and others that the French **mouvoir** does not possess. The word **scope**, which originally had the meaning of ‘aim, purpose’, now means ‘ability to understand’, ‘the field within which an activity takes place, sphere’, ‘opportunity, freedom of action’. As a rule the development of new meanings takes place 50 — 100 years after the word is borrowed.

The semantic structure of borrowings changes in other ways as well. Some meanings become more general, others more specialised, etc. For instance, the word **terrorist**, that was taken over from French in the meaning of ‘Jacobin’, widened its meaning to ‘one who governs, or

opposes a government by violent means'. The word **umbrella**, borrowed in the meaning of a 'sunshade' or 'parasol' (from *It.* **ombrella** <**ombra** — 'shade'<sup>1</sup>) came to denote similar protection from the rain as well.

Usually the primary meaning of a borrowed word is retained throughout its history, but sometimes it becomes a secondary meaning. Thus the Scandinavian borrowings **wing**, **root**, **take** and many others have retained their primary meanings to the present day, whereas in the *OE.* **fēolaze** (*MnE.* **fellow**) which was borrowed from the same source in the meaning of 'comrade, companion', the primary meaning has receded to the background and was replaced by the meaning that appeared in New English 'a man or a boy'.

Sometimes change of meaning is the result of associating borrowed words with familiar words which somewhat resemble them in sound but which are not at all related. This process, which is termed folk etymology, often changes the form of the word in whole or in part, so as to bring it nearer to the word or words with which it is thought to be connected, e.g. the French verb **sur(o)under** had the meaning of 'overflow'. In English **-r(o)under** was associated by mistake with **round** — *круглый* and the verb was interpreted as meaning 'enclose on all sides, encircle' (*MnE.* **surround**). Old French **estandard** (*L.* **estendere** — 'to spread') had the meaning of 'a flag, banner'. In English the first part was wrongly associated with the verb **stand** and the word **standard** also acquired the meaning of 'something stable, officially accepted'.

Folk-etymologisation is a slow process; people first attempt to give the foreign borrowing its foreign pronunciation, but gradually popular use evolves a new pronunciation and spelling.

Another phenomenon which must also receive special attention is the formation of derivatives from borrowed word-stems. New derivatives are usually formed with the help of productive affixes, often of Anglo-Saxon origin. For instance: **faintness**, **closeness**, **easily**, **nobly**, etc. As a rule derivatives begin to appear rather soon after the

borrowing of the word. Thus almost immediately after the borrowing of the word **sputnik** the words **pre-sputnik, sputnikist, sputniked, to out-sputnik** were coined in English. Many derivatives were formed by means of conversion, as in **to manifesto** (1748) < **manifesto** (*It.*, 1644); **to encore** (1748) < **encore** (*Fr.*, 1712); **to coach** (1612) < **coach** (*Fr.*, 1556).

Similarly hybrid compounds were formed, e. g. **faint-hearted, ill-tempered, painstaking.**

Even a superficial examination of borrowed words in the English word-stock shows that there are words among them that are easily recognised as foreign (such as **decolleté, façade, Zeitgeist, voile**) and there are others that have become so firmly rooted in the language, so thoroughly assimilated that it is sometimes" extremely difficult to distinguish them from words of Anglo-Saxon origin (these are words like **pupil, master, city, river,** etc.).

Unassimilated words differ from assimilated ones in their pronunciation, spelling, semantic structure, frequency and sphere of application. However, there is no distinct border-line between the two groups. There are also words assimilated in some respects and unassimilated in others, they may be called partially assimilated. Such are **communiqué, détente** not yet assimilated phonetically, **phenomenon (pl. phenomena), graffito (pl. graffiti)** unassimilated grammatically, etc. So far no linguist has been able to suggest more or less comprehensive criteria for determining the degree of assimilation of borrowings.

The degree of assimilation depends in the first place upon the time of borrowing. The general principle is: the older the borrowing, the more thoroughly it tends to follow normal English habits of accentuation, pronunciation, etc. It is natural that the bulk of early borrowings have acquired full English citizenship and that most English speaking people are astonished on first hearing, that such everyday words as **window,**

**chair, dish, box** have not always belonged to their language. Late borrowings often retain their foreign peculiarities.

However mere age is not the sole factor. Not only borrowings long in use, but also those of recent date may be completely made over to conform to English patterns if they are widely and popularly employed. Words that are rarely used in everyday speech, that are known to a small group of people retain their foreign -peculiarities. Thus many 19th century French borrowings have been completely assimilated (e.g. **turbine, clinic, exploitation, diplomat**), whereas the words adopted much earlier **noblesse** [no'bles] (*ME.*), **ennui** [ã:'nwi:] (1667), **eclat** [eit'kla:] (1674) have not been assimilated even in point of pronunciation.

Another factor determining the process of assimilation is the way in which the borrowing was taken over into the language. Words borrowed orally are assimilated more readily, they undergo greater changes, whereas with words adopted through writing the process of assimilation is longer and more laborious.

### **3. Interrelation between native and borrowed words**

The number of borrowings in Old English was meagre. In the Middle English period there was an influx of loans. It is often contended that since the Norman conquest borrowing has been the chief factor in the enrichment of the English vocabulary and as a result there was a sharp decline in the productivity of word-formation. Historical evidence, however, testifies to the fact that throughout its entire history, even in the periods of the mightiest influxes of borrowings, other processes, no less intense, were in operation — word-formation and semantic development, which involved both native and borrowed elements.

If the estimation of the role of borrowings is based on the study of words recorded in the dictionary, it is easy to overestimate the effect of the loan words, as the number of native words is extremely small compared with the number of borrowings recorded. The only true way to estimate the relation of the native to the borrowed element is to consider the two as actually used in speech. If one counts every word used, including repetitions, in some reading matter, the proportion of native to borrowed words will be quite different. On such a count, every writer-uses considerably more native words than borrowings. Shakespeare, for example, has 90%, Milton 81 %, Tennyson 88%. This shows how important is the comparatively small nucleus of native words.

Different borrowings are marked by different frequency value. Those well established in the vocabulary may be as frequent in speech as native words, whereas others occur very rarely.

The great number of borrowings in English left some imprint upon the language. The first effect of foreign influence is observed in the volume of its vocabulary. Due to its history the English language, more than any other modern language, has absorbed foreign elements in its vocabulary. But the adoption of foreign words must not be understood as mere quantitative change. Any importation into the lexical system brings about semantic and stylistic changes in the words of this language and changes in its synonymic groups.

It has been mentioned that when borrowed words were identical in meaning with those already in English the adopted word very often displaced the native word. In most cases, however, the borrowed words

and synonymous native words (or words borrowed earlier) remained in the language, becoming more or less differentiated in meaning and use. Cf., e.g., the sphere of application and meaning of **feed** and **nourish, try** and **endeavour, meet** and **encounter**.

As a result the number of synonymic groups in English greatly increased. The synonymic groups became voluminous and acquired many words rarely used. This brought about a rise in the percentage of stylistic synonyms.

**Influence of Borrowings on the Semantic Structure of Words.** As a result of the differentiation in meaning between synonymous words many native words or words borrowed earlier narrowed their meaning or sphere of application. Thus the word **stool** of Anglo-Saxon origin, which in Old English denoted any article of furniture designed for sitting on, under the influence of the French borrowing **chair** came to be used as the name for only one kind of furniture.

Due to borrowings some words passed out of the literary national language and have become dialectal, as **ea** *suv oqimi* (OE. **ēa** — *suv oqmi, daryo*), **heal, hele** — *yashirmoq, qamrab olmoq* (OE. **helan**), etc.

Another instance of foreign influence upon the semantic structure of some English words is **semantic borrowing**, i.e. the borrowing of meaning from a word in a foreign language. This often takes place in English words having common roots with some words in another language (international words today reflect this process best), e.g. the

words **pioneer** and **cadres** which are international words have acquired new meanings under the influence of the Russian *pioner* and *qadirlar*. Sometimes English words acquire additional meanings under the influence of related words having quite different roots, e.g. the political meanings of **shock** and **deviation** have come from the Russian *zarbali* and *yon bosh*.

**Influence of Borrowings on the Lexical Territorial Divergence.** Abundant borrowing intensified the difference between the word-stock of the literary national language and dialects. On the one hand, a number of words were borrowed into the literary national language which are not to be found in the dialects (such as literary words, scientific and political terminology, etc.). In a number of cases the dialects have preserved some Anglo-Saxon words which were replaced by borrowings in the literary language. Thus the Scotch dialect has preserved such words as **ken** — *bilmoq* (OE. **cennan**); **eke** — *qoshish* (OE. **ēaca**); **eath** — *silliq, yengil* (OE. **ēaðe**); **fleme** — *qaytarmoq, haydamoq* (OE. *flyman*).

On the other hand, a number of words were borrowed into dialects and are used throughout the country. Thus, the Scottish and Irish dialects have suffered much greater Celtic influence than the literary national language or the Southern dialect, as the Celtic languages were longer spoken in Scotland and Ireland — some sections of the population use them even now. The Irish dialect, for example, has the following words of Celtic origin: **shamrock** — *uch bargli*, **dun** — *adr*, **colleen** — *qiz bola*, **shillelagh** — *tayoq*, etc. In the Northern, Scottish and Eastern dialects there are many more Scandinavian borrowings than in the national literary language as most Scandinavian settlements were found in the north of the country, e.g. **busk** — ‘get ready’; **fell** — ‘hill’; **mun** — ‘mouth’; **wapentake** — ‘division of shire’.

Some Scandinavian borrowings ousted native words in dialects. Since many of these words were of the same root a great number of etymological doublets appeared, e.g. **dag** — **dew**, **kirk** — **church**, **benk** — **bench**, **kist** — **chest**, **garth** — **yard**, **loup** — **leap**, etc.

**Influence of Borrowings on the Word-Structure, Word-Clusters and the System of Word-Building.** The great number of borrowings could not but leave a definite imprint on the morphological structure of words in English. A number of new structural types appeared in the language.

This took place when the morphological structure of borrowings, obscured at the time of adoption, became transparent in the course of time and served as a pattern for new formations.

Among the affixes which can be considered borrowed by English some are highly-productive and can combine with native and borrowed items (e.g. **re-**, **inter-**, **-able**, **-er**, **-ism**, etc.), others are not so productive.

Some lists of foreign affixes include 200 — 500 items, although the actual number is much smaller. In these lists no distinction is made between living affixes and those found only in borrowed words which are indivisible in English morphemically and derivationally, such as L. **ab-**, **ad-**, **amb-**; Gr. **ana-**, **apo-**, **cata-** in words like **abstract**, **admire**, **ambition**, **anatomy**, etc, and combine only with Romanic stems (**co-**, **de-**, **trans-**, **-al**, **-cy**, **-ic**, **-ical**, etc.), still others are often met with in borrowed words, but do not form any new words in English (**-ous**, **-ive**, **-ent**, etc.).

Some borrowed affixes have even ousted those of native origin, e.g. in Modern English the prefix **pre-** expressing priority of action has replaced the native prefix **fore-**, which was highly productive in Middle English and early New English, especially in the 16-17th centuries.

Another imprint of borrowings on “the structural types of words in English is the appearance of a great number of words with bound morphemes, such as **tolerate**, **tolerable**, **tolerance**, **toleration**, etc. Clusters of words in English also underwent some changes — both quantitative and qualitative — due to the influx of borrowings. On the one hand, many clusters of words were enlarged. Not only were new derivatives formed with the help of borrowed affixes, but some borrowings entered the clusters of words already existing in English. Mention has already been made of Scandinavian borrowings like **drip**, **tryst**. Some Latin and French borrowings entered the clusters of words borrowed from Romanic languages before, e.g. when the French borrowings **exploitation**, **mobilisation**, **militarism**, **employee**, **personnel**, **millionaire** were taken over into English in the 19th century, they occupied the position of derivatives of the words **exploit**, **mobilise**, etc. borrowed much earlier.

On the other hand, the influx of borrowings in English has changed the very nature of word-clusters which now unite not only words of the

same root-morpheme, but also of different synonymous root-morphemes, as in **spring** — **vernal**, **two** — **second**, **dual**, **sea** — **maritime**, etc.

**Influence of Borrowings on the Phonetic Structure of Words and the Sound System.** As a result of intense borrowing there appeared in the English language a number of words of new phonetic structure with strange sounds and sound combinations, or familiar sounds in unusual positions. Such are the words with the initial [ps], [pn], [pt] (as in *Gr. psilanthropism*) which are used in English alongside with the forms without the initial sound [p].

If there were many borrowed words containing a certain phonetic peculiarity, they influenced to some extent the sound system of the language.

Thus abundant borrowing from French in the Middle English period accounts for the appearance of a new diphthong in English — [oi], which, according to Prof. B. A. Ilyish, could not have developed from any Old English sound or sound combination, but came into English together with such French words as **point**, **joint**, **poise**. The initial [sk], which reappeared in English together with Scandinavian and other borrowings, is nowadays a common beginning for a great number of words.

Abundant borrowing also brought about some changes in the distribution of English sounds, e.g. the Old English variant phonemes [f] and [v] developed into different phonemes, that is [v] came to be used initially (as in **vain**, **valley**, **vulgar**) and [f] in the intervocal position (as **in effect**, **affect**, **affair**) which was impossible in Old English. The affricate [dʒ], which developed at the beginning of the Middle English period and was found at the end or in the middle of words (as in **bridge** — *OE. bricz*; **singe** — *OE. senczean*), under the influence of numerous borrowings came to be used in the initial position (as in **jungle**, **journey**, **gesture**).

## Conclusion

Due to “the specific historical development of English, it has adopted many words from other languages, especially from Latin, French and Old Scandinavian, though the number and importance of these borrowings are usually overestimated.

The number and character of borrowings in Modern English from various languages depend on the historical conditions and also on the degree of the genetic and structural proximity of the languages in question.

Borrowings enter the language through oral speech (mainly in early periods of history) and through written speech (mostly in recent times).

In the English language borrowings may be discovered through some peculiarities in pronunciation, spelling, morphological and semantic structures. Sometimes these peculiarities enable us even to discover the immediate source of borrowing.

All borrowed words undergo the process of assimilation, i.e. they adjust themselves to the phonetic and lexico-grammatical norms of the language. Phonetic assimilation comprises substitution of native sounds and sound combinations for strange ones and for familiar sounds used in a position strange to the English language, as well as shift of stress. Grammatical assimilation finds expression in the change of grammatical categories and paradigms of borrowed words, change of their morphological structure. Lexical assimilation includes changes in semantic structure and the formation of derivatives,

Substitution of sounds, formation of new grammatical categories and paradigms, morphological simplification and narrowing of meaning take place in the very act of borrowing. Some words however retain foreign sounds and inflexions for a long time. Shift of stress is a long and gradual process; the same is true of the development of new meanings in a borrowed word, while the formation of derivatives may occur soon after the adoption of the word.

The degree of assimilation depends on the time of borrowing, the extent to which the word is used in the language and the way of borrowing.

In spite of the numerous outside linguistic influences and the etymological heterogeneity of its vocabulary the English language is still, in essential characteristics, a Germanic language. It has retained a

groundwork of Germanic words and grammar. Borrowing has never been the chief means of replenishing the English vocabulary. Word-formation and semantic development were throughout the entire history of the language much more productive. Besides most native words are marked by a higher frequency value.

The great number of borrowings brought with them new phonomorphological types, new phonetic, morphological and semantic features. On the other hand, under the influence of the borrowed element words already existing in English changed to some extent their semantic structure, collocability, frequency and derivational ability. Borrowing also considerably enlarged the English vocabulary and brought about some changes in English synonymic groups, in the distribution of the English vocabulary through spheres of application and in the lexical divergence between the variants of the literary language and its dialects.

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