

**An assessment of English Words Borrowed from Other Languages:
The Sources and Meaning**

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ABSTRACT

English is a West Germanic language first spoken in early medieval England which eventually became the leading language of international discourse in today's world. The earliest forms of English, brought to Great Britain by Anglo-Saxon settlers in the 5th century, are collectively called Old English. Middle English began in the late 11th century with the Norman conquest of England while Early Modern English began in the late 15th century with the introduction of the printing press to London, the printing of the King James Bible and the start of the Great Vowel Shift and spread around the world in the 17th century. It has developed over the course of more than 1,400 years. The English language has a great number of words. In course of its history, the majority of words borrowed into English have French and Latin roots. English language has been influenced by a numerous tongues or dialects. Words were borrowed into English from different periods and for different purposes. Most of these borrowed words form the main bulk of the words for science, medicine, art, technology, etc. The periods of borrowing words have undergone several changes that were common for English language itself during the centuries. Although many words from French, Greek and Latin have been incorporated into English language, its wide usage, openness, flexibility, tolerance, as well as creativity make it possible to be the main body of international language in the merging of vocabularies and still expand its means of borrowing from other languages. It is on this ground that this research was carried out to assess the English Words Borrowed from Other Languages including their sources and individual meanings.

KEYWORDS: English Words, Other Languages, Sources, Meaning, Borrowing

Introduction

It is obvious that English has influenced the way people communicate around the world. As a foreign or second language for many people, English is foreseeable to replace the use of other languages in many instances. People, who can speak English, have the awareness of using English to communicate with English speaking people, to pursue better career. Consequently, English language is becoming more firmly established in all walks of life (Sadtono, 2004). Language is the main tool in communication with peer of human which have specific purpose so that their messages can be delivered well. A communication will

develop self-actualization and can bridge the relationship with other people. In the process of communication, the language is as a symbol of verbal communication with is often used. Many new words will appear in communication. Therefore, the language always develops all the time (Ilmina, 2016).

According to Ilmina, (2016), in communication, word is important. Word is the unit of a single distinct meaningful element of speech or writing, used with others to form a sentence. Many complex words in a sentence which created should be known and understood. Moreover, many words are borrowed from other language. Especially, the English words which are borrowed from other language, such as Latin, Greek, French, Japanese, Italian and some other languages. Yule (2006) posit that borrowing is taking over of words from other languages. For example, the word *croissant* is adopted from French word crescent, *electric* is taken from the Latin word Electrum and antagonist from the Greek word *antāgonistēs*. It is also called a *loanword* or *loan word*. He stated that it is the process of taking words from origin languages and also using it into native words.

Concept of English Languages

English is a West Germanic language first spoken in early medieval England which eventually became the leading language of international discourse in today's world (Wardhaugh, 2010). English has developed over the course of more than 1,400 years. The earliest forms of English, a group of West Germanic (Ingvaeonic) dialects brought to Great Britain by Anglo-Saxon settlers in the 5th century, are collectively called Old English. Middle English began in the late 11th century with the Norman conquest of England; this was a period in which English was influenced by Old French, in particular through its Old Norman dialect (Ian, 2007). Early Modern English began in the late 15th century with the introduction of the printing press to London, the printing of the King James Bible and the start of the Great Vowel Shift (Crystal, 2003b).

Modern English has been spreading around the world since the 17th century by the worldwide influence of the British Empire and the United States. Through all types of printed and electronic media of these countries, English has become the leading language of international discourse and the lingua franca in many regions and professional contexts such as science, navigation and law (Gordin, 2015). Modern English grammar is the result of a gradual change from a typical Indo-European dependent marking pattern, with a rich inflectional morphology and relatively free word order, to a mostly analytic pattern with little inflection, a fairly fixed subject–verb–object word order and a complex syntax (König, 1994). Modern English relies more on auxiliary verbs and word order for the expression of complex tenses, aspect and mood, as well as passive constructions, interrogatives and some negation.

English language is the largest language by number of speakers, and the third most-spoken native language in the world, after Standard Chinese and Spanish (Ethnologue 2010). It is the most widely learned second language and is either the official language or one of the official languages. There are more people who have learned it as a second language than there are native speakers. As of 2005, it was estimated that there were over 2 billion speakers of English (Crystal, 2008). English language is the majority native language in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland, and it is widely spoken in some areas of the Caribbean, Africa and South Asia (Crystal, 2003b). It is a co-official language of the United Nations, the European Union and many other world and regional international organisations. It is the most widely spoken Germanic language, accounting for at least 70% of speakers of this Indo-European branch. English speakers are

called "*Anglophones*". Variability among the accents and dialects of English used in different countries and regions—in terms of phonetics and phonology, and sometimes also vocabulary, idioms, grammar, and spelling—does not typically prevent understanding by speakers of other dialects, although mutual unintelligibility can occur at extreme ends of the dialect continuum.

According to Araromi (2005), English Language is an important spoken language that promotes people learning at the formal and informal settings. He also noted that English language is one of the most used language in communication. According to Tannenbaum and Berkovich (2005), English language is important to all manners of transmission of knowledge, values and socialization processes. According to Ejie's (2004) viewpoint, English language is an indispensable tool in the education life of any individual. English language is central to learning which develops the ability of reading, writing and communication.

The Words Borrowed into English Languages

Borrowing according to Ilmina (2016) is the process of taking new term from other languages and adapting it in native language. Borrowing is also called as loanword or loan-word. It is considered as the most common process of the emergence of new word in English. The practice of borrowing words into English has continued even in the last several decades from other tongues. In course of its history, the majority of words borrowed into English have French and Latin roots. English language has been influenced by a numerous tongues or dialects of which French plays a major role (V. Chandra Sekhar Rao 2018). English has many borrowing words. In 1973, a computer survey about 80,000 words in the old Shorter Oxford Dictionary was published in *Ordered Profusion* by Thomas Finkenstaedt and Dieter Wolff. The flexibility of English's syllable structure, while possibly a contributing factor is certainly not essential. The syllable structure does mean that words do not usually need to be heavily modified in borrowing. The English pronunciation of borrowing words often different from the original pronunciations to such a degree that a native speaker of the language it was borrowed from is not able to recognize it. English has often borrowed words from the other languages and cultures of the British Colonies. English also gets borrowing words in which foreign sounds are part of foreign pronunciations (Ilmina, 2016).

English Words Borrowed from Latin Vocabulary

The main characteristic of English language is the dense vocabulary. It is about 80 percent word in English language originated from other languages. It could be the modern English language really complex. Therefore, English language is not easy to be posted. The English language which many borrowed words from other languages, especially in Latin vocabulary about 29 percent. The adoption of this foreign language appeared for centuries ago. Since the user of English language begin to communicate with the people from other cultures. It is not always easy to tell at what point a word entered English, or in what form. Some words have come into English from Latin more than once, through French or another Romance language at one time and directly from Latin at another. Thus, there are pairs like fragile/frail, army/armada, corona/crown, ratio/reason, and rotund/round. The first word in each pair came directly from Latin, while the second entered English from French (or Spanish, in the case of armada). Multiple borrowings explain other word pairs and groups with similar roots but different meanings and/or pronunciations: *canal/channel, poor/pauper, coy/quiet, disc/disk/dish/desk/dais/discus* (Wikipedia, 2018).

English Words Borrowed from French Vocabulary

A great number of words of French origin have entered the English language to the extent that many Latin words have come to the English language. According to different sources, 45% of all English words have a French origin. This fact suggests that 80,000 words should appear in English; however, only includes words imported directly from French, such as both joy and joyous, and does not include derivatives formed in English of words borrowed from French, including joyful, joyfulness, partisanship, and parenthood. It also excludes both combinations of words of French origin with words whose origin is a language other than French — e.g., *ice cream, sunray, jellyfish, killjoy, lifeguard, and passageway*— and English-made combinations of words of French origin — e.g., *grapefruit* (grape + fruit), *layperson* (lay + person), *mailorder, magpie, marketplace, surrender, petticoat, and straitjacket*. This list also excludes words that come from French but were introduced into the English language via a language other than French, which include *commodore, domineer, filibuster, ketone, loggia, lotto, mariachi, monsignor, oboe, paella, panzer, picayune, ranch, vendue, and veneer* (Wikipedia, 2020). Although French is derived mainly from Latin (which accounts for about 60% of English vocabulary either directly or via a Romance language), it also includes words from Gaulish and Germanic languages (especially Old Frankish). Since English is of Germanic origin, words that have entered English from the Germanic elements in French might not strike the eye as distinctively from French (Wikipedia, 2020). Conversely, as Latin gave many derivatives to both the English and the French languages, ascertaining that a given Latinate derivative did not come to the English language via French can be difficult in a few cases.

English Words Borrowed from Greek Vocabulary

Since the living Greek and English languages were not in direct contact until modern times, borrowings were necessarily indirect, coming either through Latin (through texts or various vernaculars), or from Ancient Greek texts, not the living spoken language (Ayers, 2006). Some Greek words were borrowed into Latin and its descendants, the Romance languages. English often received these words from French. Some have remained very close to the Greek original, e.g. *lamp* (Latin: *lampas*; Greek: *λαμπάς*). In others, the phonetic and orthographic form has changed considerably. For instance, *place* was borrowed both by Old English and by French from Latin *platea*, itself borrowed from Greek *πλατεία* (*ῥόδός*), 'broad (street)'; the Italian *piazza* and Spanish *plaza* have the same origin and have been borrowed into English in parallel. The word *olive* comes through the Romance from the Latin *olīva*, which in turn comes from the Greek *elaíwā* (*ἐλαίφῶ*) (Walker & John, 2000). A later Greek word, *boútŷron* (*βούτυρον*), becomes Latin *butyrum* and eventually English *butter* (Buck, 2002). Most of the borrowed words from Greek are special and science terms. For example, *gyro, ultrasaurus, television, bouzouki, olive*, etc. One popular word needs mentioning is *Mega*. It was used as a morpheme from the 80s of 20th century meaning extra-large and become productive, for example, *mega house, mega superstar, megavitamin, megawatt, megavolt, megaton, megastore, mega technology* (Qreshat, 2019).

Other Words Borrowed from Other Language into English and their Significance

Although English has so many borrowed words from other origin, however, it is noted on the table below some interesting English words from other roots of languages.

English Words of French Origin

Bouquet	Bunch of flowers. A bouquet typically means a pretty, artful arrangement of fresh flowers rather than a handful of daisies hastily grabbed from your garden.
Fiance/fiancé	Person engaged to be wed.
Queue	Line. While Americans don't use the term as readily as Brits, everyone hates waiting in a queue.
RSVP	Please reply. RSVP is an abbreviation for the French phrase "répondez s'il vous plaît," which means "respond if you please."
Menu	A list of dishes.
Picnic	An outdoor meal.

English Words of Latin Origin

et cetera	and others, commonly abbreviated "etc"
Extra	in addition
Sinister	wrong or evil
bona fide	genuine

English Words of Italian Origin

Alarm	to arms
Ballot	small pebble or ball, used by people who would vote by casting a pebble into a box
Cantaloupe	the name of a town in Italy where the melon was grown

English Words of Spanish Origin

Mosquito	a little biting insect
Patio	a place for sitting outside
Aficionado	someone who is a fan of something

Conclusion

English language still continues to expand its vocabulary by means of loanwords from other languages. English has gone through many periods in which large numbers of words from a particular language were borrowed. The more contacts, the more loan words the language will acquire. Presently modern English has developed a set of scientific and technological terms common to and used by all languages as is true with politics, media, and finance.

Considering its status and importance, it is to understand that English is the language of primary source for the development of the society and the progress of science and technology, politics, culture, education, economics. Although many words from French, German, Russian, Spanish, Japanese, and Arabic have been incorporated into English language, its wide usage, openness, flexibility, tolerance, as well as creativity make it possible to be the main body of international language in the merging of vocabularies and still expand its means of borrowing from other languages.

Recommendation

1. Federal government of Nigeria, including other English-speaking countries, should collaborate with other governments in discovering new words into English to give broader and better perspective in the lexicography development of English language.
2. Lecturers/teachers should explain to students the practical needs of borrowing words and the development of borrowed words in relation to linguistics, particularly the use of borrowed words, such as definitions of borrowed words, patterns of borrowing and reasons for borrowing.

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