

## **Borrowing and Lexicon**

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### **Abstract**

It is natural that the meaning of any word in a language changes , develops or disappears across time. So every language has to adopt certain criterion in order to expand its vocabulary. The most common source of adding new vocabulary to a language is called borrowing .The present paper sheds some light at the concept of borrowing and displays the major periods of borrowing in the history of English . In addition , it introduces with some examples the basic types of borrowing. Finally , some conclusions are pinpointed through explaining the concept under study.

### **الخلاصة**

إن معنى أي كلمة أو مفردة في اللغة قد تتغير ,تتطور أو قد تختفي طبيعياً" عبر السنين .لذلك فإن كل لغة قد تبنت معيار معين من أجل توسيع مفرداتها .إن المصدر الأكثر شيوعاً" في إضافة مفردات جديدة للغة هو الاستعارة. يسلط هذا البحث على مفهوم الاستعارة و يبين لنا الفترات الرئيسية التي مرت بها في التاريخ اللغة الإنجليزية ,بالإضافة إلى تقديم بعض الأمثلة للأنواع الرئيسية منها .و أخيراً" فإن بعض الاستنتاجات قد استدللت من خلال هذا البحث.

### **1.Introduction**

*Loan words* are words adopted by the speakers of one language from a different language, the source language (Haspelmath,2002:107).A loan word can also be called a *borrowing*. The abstract noun *borrowing* refers to the process of speakers adopting words from a source language into their native language. *loan* and *borrowing* are of course metaphors, because there is no literal lending process. There is no transfer from one language to another , and no *returning* words to the source language .They simply come to be used by a speech community that speaks a different language from the one they originated in . Borrowing occurs when one language takes a morpheme or a word from another language and adds it to its lexicon (Kemmer,2007:online)

Borrowing is a consequence of cultural contact between two language communities .Borrowing of words can go in both directions between the two languages in contact , but often there is no asymmetry ,such that more words go from one side to the other .In this case , the source language community has some advantage 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 adopted numerous loanwords from Latin as they adopted new products via trade with the Roman. Few Germanic words ,on the other hand ,passed into Latin .

The actual process of borrowing is complex and involves many usage events (i.e. instances of use of the new word ). Generally ,some speakers of the borrowing language know the source language too , or at least enough of it utilize the relevant words . They adopt them when they are 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 instance , English speakers adopted the word *garage* from French , at first with a pronunciation nearer to the French pronunciation than 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 (ibid.)

Those who first use the new word might use it at first only with speakers of the source language who know the word, but at some point they come to use the word with those to whom the word was not previously known. To those speakers the word may sound *foreign*. At this stage, when most speakers do not know the word and if they hear it think it is from another language. The word can be called a *foreign word*. However, in time more speakers can become familiar with a new foreign word. The community of users can grow to the point where even people who know little or nothing of the source language understand, and even use the new word themselves. The new word becomes conventionalized. At this point we call it a borrowing or loan word. However, not all foreign words do become loan words; if they fall out of use before they become wide spread, they don't reach the loanword stage (Lyons,1981:206).

Conventionalization is a gradual process in which a word progressively permeates a larger and larger speech community. As part of its becoming more familiar to more people, with conventionalization a newly borrowed word gradually adopts sound and other characteristics of the borrowing language. In time, people in the borrowing community do not perceive the word as a loan word at all. Generally, the longer a borrowed word has been in the language, and the more frequently it is used, the more it resembles the native words of the language.

## **2. Major Periods of Borrowing in the History of English**

English has gone through many periods in which large numbers of words from particular languages were borrowed (Kemmer,2007:online)

### **2.1 Germanic period:**

Borrowings in this period date from the time before Angles and Saxons left the continent for England. The source words are generally attested in Latin text, in the large body of Latin writings that were preserved through the ages. For example:

<i>Win</i>	=	<i>wine</i>
<i>Butere</i>	=	<i>butter</i>
<i>Cealc</i>	=	<i>chalk</i>
<i>Ceas</i>	=	<i>cheese</i>
<i>Cetel</i>	=	<i>kettle</i>
<i>Cycene</i>	=	<i>kitchen</i>
<i>Cirice</i>	=	<i>church</i>
<i>Disc</i>	=	<i>dish</i>
<i>Mil</i>	=	<i>mile</i>
<i>Piper</i>	=	<i>pepper</i>
<i>Pund</i>	=	<i>pound</i>
<i>Streat</i>	=	<i>street</i>
<i>Weall</i>	=	<i>wall</i>

### **2.2-Old English period [600-1100]**

a- Many borrowed words from different languages occur during this period. For instance, the following words from Latin (Kemmer,2007:online).

<i>Apostol</i>	=	<i>apostle</i>
<i>Casere</i>	=	<i>Caesar</i>
<i>Ceaster</i>	=	<i>city</i>
<i>Cest</i>	=	<i>chest</i>
<i>Circul</i>	=	<i>circle</i>
<i>Cometa</i>	=	<i>comet</i>

*Maegeste* = *master*  
*Martir* = *martyr*  
*Paper* = *paper*  
*Tigle* = *tile*

b-Few ordinary words ,but thousands of place and river names are borrowed from **Celtic** like :  
*London , Devon ,Dover ,Corn wall ,Avon .....etc.*

### **2.3-Middle English Period [1100-1500]**

Large number of borrowed words occur during this period and from different languages specially from French as it is shown bellow ([Farrokhpey,1999:129)

#### **1- Scandinavian :**

Most of these words first appeared in the written language in Middle English, but many were no doubt borrowed earlier (9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> centuries).For examples:

*Anger ,by-law , cake ,call ,clumsy ,doze ,egg ,fellow , get , give ,hit ,husband ,kill , kindle ,law ,low ,raise , root ,seat , skill , skin ,skirt , sky ,take , they ,them ,their , ugly , want , window ,wing .*

#### **2- French :**

a- Law and government :

Examples: *country , court , crime , defendant ,evidence , government ,jail , judge ,noble ,prison , state , tax .*

b - Church :

*chapter ,prayer ,preach ,priest ,religion ,saint .*

c -Nobility :

*baron-baroness , count-countess ,duke-duchess , prince-princess , noble-royal .*

d -Military :

*army ,battle ,captain ,company ,defense ,enemy ,marine , sergeant ,soldier ,volunteer .*

e - Cooking :

*beef ,boil ,butcher ,dine ,pork ,roast ,salmon ,stew ,veal .*

f - Culture and luxury goods :

*art ,dance ,diamond ,fashion ,fur ,jewel ,painting .*

g - Other :

*change ,charge ,chart ,courage ,devout ,dignity ,fruit ,letter literature ,magic ,male ,female ,mirror ,question ,special.*

### **2.4-Early Modern English period [1500-1650]**

It is noticed that this period and the one follows are specified by the adoption of many Arabic words as a result of the political situation at that time.[Mccarthy-et.al,2001:32]

#### **1-Arabic via Spanish :**

*algebra ,almanac ,alchemy , admiral.*

#### **2-Arabic via other Romance languages :**

*cipher ,orange ,saffron ,sugar.*

#### **3-Latin :**

*Agile ,abdomen ,anatomy ,area ,discus ,disc ,expensive , gradual ,habitual .*

#### **4-Greek.(many of these via Latin):**

*Anonymous ,atmosphere ,climax ,comedy ,critic ,data , history ,tonic ,tragedy .*

**2.5-Modern English (1650-present):**

**Arabic :**

*Alcohol, yashmak, Bedouin, emir, gazelle, giraffe, harem, hashish, minaret, mosque, salaam, sultan, bazaar, caravan.*

**French :**

French continues to be the largest single source of new words outside of very specialized vocabulary domains (scientific/technical vocabulary still dominated by classical borrowing). For example: [Aitchison, 1999:168]

*Rouge, roulette, salon, saloon, garage, jeans, shock*

**Spanish:**

*Guitar, armada, tornado.*

**Italian :**

*Arsenal, balcony, casino, macaroni, piano, motto, opera, stanza, studio, violin, pasta, pizza, spaghetti.*

**Dutch:**

*Leak, tackle, landscape, dollar, sketch.*

**Scandinavian:**

*Fjord, ski, maelstrom.*

**American Indian language:**

*Avocado, cacao, chocolate, chili, potato, tomato, tobacco*

**3. The Effect of Borrowing on the Lexicon of English**

English has vast debts. In any dictionary more than 80% of the entries are borrowed. The majority is likely to come from Latin, and of those more than half will come through French.

A considerable number will derive directly or indirectly from Greek. Scattered words will be from various sources around the globe. The vocabulary has grown from the 50,000 to 60,000 words in Old English to the tremendous number of entries -650,000 to 750,000- in an unabridged dictionary in 1988. (Sam Awa, 2007:online)

Borrowing divides the lexicon of English language into two parts :

1. Native words.

2. Non- native words ( loan words )

A native word is the word that its etymology can be traced back to the earliest known source of language. While non-native words means that a language may borrow a word directly or indirectly. A direct borrowing means that the borrowed item is a native word in the language from which it had been borrowed. For example:

<u>English</u>	<u>Latin</u>
Mile	mil

While indirect borrowing means that the word is borrowed via another language. For example:

<u>English</u>	<u>Spanish</u>	<u>Arabic</u>
Algebra	algebra	Algbra

*Algebra* has been indirectly borrowed from Arabic with Spanish as an intermediary. (Hock, 1986:112)

#### **4. Types of borrowing**

##### **4.1.Lexical borrowing**

This type means the adoption of element such as single words , phrases and idioms. For instance: (Aitchison,1999;165)*restaurant* from French / r st r /.

##### **4.2.Phonological borrowing**

It is rather difficult to recognize but it does occur .There are two mechanisms that make the phonology of one language effect the other. The first mechanism is that borrowed words may make changes in the distribution of sounds already found in the language rather than introducing entirely new ones(Lyons,1981:206)

For instance:

The word *rouge* will be pronounced with an English / r / in place of French uvular trill. The second mechanism is that the adoption of foreign sounds may become quite fixed.

The cluster ( sk ) is due to Scandinavian loan words like *sky* ,*skin* ,*skirt* .Now this sound is not only seen in these words but also in new formation like *scream* .

##### **4.3.Grammatical borrowing**

As for grammar , it is more resistant to the process of borrowing than lexicon and phonology.Sometimes , the loan word is subject to the same analogies as any similar native word . For example, *to rouge* or *.She is rouging her face* .

Some times by analogy ,some new formations are produced out of a borrowed word. For example, the word *due* is a loan from French , but *duteous* ,*dutiable* and *dutiful* do not exist in French. When an affix occurs repeatedly in many foreign words , it may be extended to new formation with native material. Thus the Latin – French suffix , – *able* , - *ible* as in *agreeable* , *variable* has been extended to like *eatable* , *bearable* and *drinkable* where the verb is native. Thus the expansion of English vocabulary is the result of the process of borrowing . English has borrowed loan words from a great number of other languages with which it has been into contact( Hock , 1986:112 ).

#### **5. Conclusion**

Some conclusions can be pinpointed throughout the study :

- 1- One of the most common sources of new words in any language is the process of borrowing .
- 2- Borrowing occurs when one language takes a morpheme or a word from another language and adds it to its lexicon .
- 3- The lexicon of a language consists of:
  - a- Native words .
  - b- Non-native words .
- 4- English has gone through many periods in which large numbers of words from a particular language were borrowed . This happened because of the cultural contact between English speakers and those speaking other language .

5-There are many words in English which have French origin . English has also borrowed words from other languages such as Arabic, Latin, Dutch...etc.

6- There are three types of borrowing :Lexical borrowing , Phonological borrowing and Grammatical borrowing .

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