

THE INFLUENCE OF BORROWINGS ON THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY

Cristina POSTOLACHI, *student, Faculty of Philology,
Alecu Russo Bălți State University*
Scientific adviser: **Angela CĂLĂRAȘ**, *university assistant*

Rezumat: *Datorită procesului de globalizare, multe limbi preiau abilitatea de a-și îmbogăți propriul vocabular cu diverse unități lingvistice din alte limbi străine. Aceste transformări aduc schimbări atât în viața socială, cât și în cea culturală. Termenii noi apăruti într-o limbă au rolul major de a defini noi realități întâlnite în viața umană, atribuind limbii un aspect internațional. Din aceste considerente procesul de preluare a unor cuvinte noi din alte culturi este foarte important deoarece contribuie la îmbogățirea propriului vocabular.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *cuvinte autohtone, cuvinte împrumutate, originea cuvintelor, noțiune, vocabular, asimilarea cuvintelor împrumutate, origine, factori sociali, cultură, limba sursă, sferă.*

The results of numerous researches prove that the English language has become a universal language, as it is a co-official language of the European countries and many international organizations. However, not everyone knows that there are many other languages at its foundation that have favored to the improvement of its vocabulary. Among the languages that have been a reliable source of borrowings

for the English language are: Celtic, Greek, Russian, Scandinavian, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese and many others besides.

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines the notion of borrowing as “the process by which a word from one language is adapted for use in another.” Usually, borrowed words are known as borrowings or loans.

Hock (1986) explains the notion of “borrowing” as “the adoption of individual words, or even large sets of vocabulary items from another language, or dialect.”

The British linguist, David Crystal characterizes the English language as an “insatiable borrower”, because over 70% of its vocabulary includes borrowed words. These are the historical connectors that define the past of the English language, making its learners familiar with the factors that have contributed to its development.

As it is well-known English is a Germanic language and it is not surprising that many English words are of Germanic origin. Many of them have become common in the daily use of the English people. However, there are also intellectual, scientific or cultural terms that have not been fully assimilated into the vocabulary of the language. As it is observed, many German terms are used in medicine, chemistry, physics and geology.

All this can be demonstrated by the following examples.

<i>Sphere</i>	<i>Germanic term</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
<i>Chemistry</i>	“alkaloid”	“any of a group of nitrogenous basic compounds found in plants, typically insoluble in water and physiologically active.” (Collins Dictionary)
<i>Minerology</i>	“zinc”	“any of a group of nitrogenous basic compounds found in plants, typically insoluble in water and physiologically active.” (Collins Dictionary)
<i>Astronomy</i>	“satellite”	"an object which has been sent into space in order to collect information or to be part of a communications system." (Collins Dictionary)
<i>Biology</i>	“plankton”	“a mass of tiny animals and plants that live in the surface layer of the sea.” (Collins Dictionary)
<i>Medicine</i>	“Alzheimer's disease”	“brain disease named for the German neurologist Alois Alzheimer, who first identified it in 1906” (Collins Dictionary)

There are Germanic words that entered the English vocabulary during the Second World War.

They characterize the fascist regime, their army and the situation the people were facing at that time. This field exemplifies the following terms: “bunker”; “Nazi”; “Luftwaffe”. Another meaningful factor that should be mentioned here asserts that the majority of Germanic words have been introduced into English vocabulary in their original form, as there are no appropriate equivalents in the English language.

The vocabulary of Modern English has developed under the influence of various historical events. This factor outlines a large number of French and Latin borrowings, therefore these two languages being the main source of vocabulary enrichment. The Norman Conquest, buried the English language underground, as it brought some significant changes in its vocabulary. These changes consisted in replacing the official language used in the country and in the educational system. It is common knowledge that French borrowings invaded every aspect of English social life, however, the majority of French loans relate to such areas as: politics, economics, law, diplomacy, arts and cuisine. This factor can be proved by the following examples.



Politics

- Liberalism - nationalism - plebescite
- Capitalism - regime - sovereignty
- Bureaucracy - federal - constitution



DIPLOMACY

- diplomacy - accord - embassy
- protocol - treaty - rapprochement
- passport - alliance - envoy



Cuisine

- beef - croissant; - pork - salad;
- fillet - marmalade - sauce - mayonnaise
- fondant - mustard; - sausage - soufflé



ART

- music - stage - montage - surrealism - symbolism
- dance - canvas - pallet - impressionism - fauvism
- theatre - portrait - brush - cubism - aquarelle

Although, French was used in all life areas, it was not fully adopted in the use of all English people. The use of French words has been observed to be used for the first time in the speeches of upper-class people. However, the loan-words have undergone some changes in their semantic, morphological and phonetic structure. Their assimilation and use in everyday language of the English people have contributed to the loss of their initial etymology. The Norman Conquest also brought considerable changes in the implementation of English noble titles, e.g. *king, queen, lord, lady, duke, duchess, marquesses, viscount, baron*. French culture has also left its mark on the English military field, e.g. *army, captain, corporal, sergeant and soldier*.

The cultural contact between English and French is observed in the conversations of the English people until now. People use words of French origin, assimilating them according to their own rules of language use.

Spanish immigrants also contributed to the development of the English vocabulary, as it contains a variety of words of Spanish origin. Though it is considered that the United States of America is the host of Spanish culture, researchers show that Spanish words have existed in the English vocabulary for a very long time. The first

Spanish loans have been observed since the 16th century. Therefore, it is known that the words of Spanish origin are more often used by Americans, who have Spanish as their second state language. Most Spanish borrowings include terms related to food, such as: *tamale*, *taco*, *salsa*, *guacamole* and *burrito*. They are usually used in their original Spanish forms. It is known that there are other food terms adopted in English, they are of American Indian origin, but they came into English via Spanish. These include the following examples: *tomato*, *chocolate*, *potato*, *banana*. The Spanish also contributed to the enrichment of English animal terms, which are of Indian Origin. Thus, we can say that *puma*, *jaguar*, *iguana* are just some examples of this type.

Furthermore, Spanish has played a significant role in some of the names of American States. To illustrate the existence of this factor, I would like to mention such examples:

Colorado- “red-colored” (it refers to the color of the river that is the state’s namesake).

Florida- ‘flowers’

Montana comes from ‘*montaña*’ (mountains)

Nevada- ‘snow’

It is worth mentioning that a large number of words are of Italian origin. These are mostly musical terms, such as: *alto*, *piano*, *opera*, *soprano*, *viola*, and so on. Other Italian borrowings that are frequently used in everyday speech are: *pizza*, *broccoli*, *macaroni* and *cappuccino*. This factor occurs due to the use of Italian cuisine that is popular worldwide. However, there are cases when the English people use terms of Italian origin without realizing their significance. For instance, the word ‘*pepperoni*’, English speakers probably know it as a spicy sausage used as a pizza topping. In Italian, this word doesn’t mean ‘sausages,’ at all! The original Italian meaning is ‘peppers.’ ‘*Confetti*’ is another example of Italian borrowings, the English speakers will understand this as the colorful paper you throw at weddings and celebrations but the origin of the word is completely different. In Italian, the word ‘*confetti*’ signifies ‘sugared almonds’. The Italian word for confetti paper is ‘*coriandoli*’. These examples denote the cultural differences between Italian and English languages. That is why, people who use words taken from another culture should be very careful to understand them correctly, in order not to cause certain cultural misunderstandings.

Another language that played a significant role in enriching the English vocabulary with new words is Japanese. Thus, we can state that the vast majority of these words are the symbols of Japanese culture: *geisha*, *kimono*, *samurai*, *judo*, *karaoke* and others. There are Japanese words that are used in their original form. For example, *emoji*, are those little pictures that are frequently used in communication with people on social networks. Actually, not everyone knows that it came from Japanese and it literally means “pictograph”. *Origami* is an old Japanese art which literally means ‘paper folding’, however, nowadays this word is often used in English culture as well. The word *karaoke*, which has become such a popular means of recreation nowadays, has its etymology in Japanese culture. This word denotes a form of entertainment used by different people as a way of relaxation. *Kimono* is another Japanese borrowing, which designates a traditional female dress worn during different cultural events. However, it has become a common attire

during different festivals and graduation ceremonies. It is proven that words borrowed from another language are used as a result of an event. For example, the Japanese word, *tsunami* became widespread after the devastating disaster that struck Indonesia in 2004. This word is considered to be of Japanese origin because such types of natural phenomena often occur in Japan.

It is worth mentioning that English has also adopted words of Russian origin. Though their number is smaller than in other languages, but anyway Russian culture has left its mark on the English Vocabulary as well. The first Russian loans took shape in the 16th century when England and Russia established their first contacts. Then the list was enriched with terms denoting *cuisine, politics, history* and *Russian culture*, due to the establishment of the Soviet Union as the world's supreme power. The most common Russian words used in English vocabulary reflect the cultural aspects of Russian culture. For example: the Russian word '*balalaika*' denotes a traditional instrument of Russian origin, which is used at various cultural festivals. This word has no equivalent in other languages, therefore it was taken over in several languages, as well as in English in its original form. *Matryoshka* is another Russian cultural symbol that is known and spread all over the world. This word is used in the English vocabulary in order to describe this tourist object that fascinates enthusiastic visitors. Moreover, there are also borrowed words that describe the famous Russian cuisine. For instance, tasty pancakes in Russian culture are called "*blini*", they are thinner than the usual English ones. As it is known, they are often served for breakfast or at grand Russian festivals. Another area from which Russian words have been taken is politics. The word '*duma*' is an appropriate example that designates this factor. It comes from the Russian word '*думать*', which means 'to think'. The influence of Russian words is not so visible in the English vocabulary, but still, they have contributed to its enrichment.

It should be noted that, the Romanian language also contributed to the development of the English vocabulary. These words are meant to denote the uniqueness and special beauty of Romanian culture, namely, these are elements that describe our national customs and traditions which represent us as a nation. One of the examples of Romanian borrowings is the word '*hora*' which remarks a type of Romanian national dance, which is prone to capture English tourists. This type of dance exists only in Romanian culture, so it has no equivalent in another culture, thus being taken in its original form. Another word that reflects Romanian culture and is used in its original form is the word '*martisor*'. It refers to a celebration that takes place on the 1st of March to celebrate the beginning of spring. The word '*Martisor*' is known as the national symbol of Romanian people. Undoubtedly, this word can only be understood by the natives, as they know the socio-cultural background of its existence. The Romanian currency also has no equivalent in other languages and in English as well. Therefore, English speakers use this word when it is necessary to specify the Romanian currency. The words of Romanian origin are not very many in the English vocabulary. They manifest the Romanian cultural charm, as they represent the symbols of its culture.

A language is a living substance, so it develops daily taking into account various social, cultural and historical factors. As English is a universal language, it develops and enriches its vocabulary by coming into contact with many other lan-

guages. These languages attach a considerable value to its vocabulary. Due to these cultural contacts, the English language has become so widely used today, containing a limitless number of words from coming different world cultures. The examples mentioned above reflect the historical impact that the English language has faced during its evolution. All these loans entered the language bringing with them the imprint of the source culture, thus attributing to the English language a multicultural value. Furthermore, it can be observed that, each borrowed word has its own background and its own circumstances of appearance in the language, however it carries the same meaning as in the language it came from.

Winding it up, it can be mentioned that containing a significant number of loan words, English is easily understood by most people in the world as it has a multicultural and global touch, making it an international language.

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