

## LATIN AND FRENCH BORROWINGS IN ENGLISH

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**Rezumat:** *Articolul dat prezintă un studiu al împrumuturilor de origine latină și franceză în limba engleză. Sunt examinate cauzele, principiile și procesele de integrare a împrumuturilor din latină și franceză. De asemenea, se descriu etapele principale de incorporare a acestor împrumuturi în vocabularul limbii engleze, prezentând exemple de cuvinte, care au fost împrumutate în limba engleză pe parcursul cuceririlor romane și normande. În final este subliniată contribuția împrumuturilor latine și franceze la îmbogățirea vocabularului limbii engleze în diferite domenii în baza unui material factologic selectat pentru acest studiu.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *împrumuturi latine, împrumuturi franceze, etape de dezvoltare, vocabular, contribuție a împrumuturilor.*

The topic of loanwords has always presented interest for research. The vocabulary of modern English contains a large number of lexical elements of various origins. These elements produced a great impact on the English language throughout its entire historical evolution and especially upon the development of the vocabulary. The English vocabulary was greatly enriched by loanwords from different languages at certain stages of historical development. A considerable amount of English vocabulary is presented by the Latin and French borrowings. These Romance

languages brought into English a variety of words from diverse areas. The enormous impact of the Norman Conquest which lasted for more than 300 years lead to the fact that the amount of French borrowing in English is approximately 70% [4, p. 198]. The Latin influence upon the English language is no less consequential. Namely these facts make the topic of Latin and French borrowing appealing for research. Hence, the purpose of the present study is to analyze the Latin and French borrowings and see their ratio in enriching the vocabulary of the English language in different spheres. Thus, the objectives of the research are to examine the causes, principles, and procedures of adopting the Latin and French loanwords; to describe the main stages of introducing these loanwords into the English vocabulary, considering samples of loanwords assimilated by the English language throughout the Roman and Norman conquests; and finally, observe the spheres which were enriched by Latin and French loanwords.

Looking back at the history of England, which happened to have various contacts with other civilizations and languages, especially with Latin and French, the English language absorbed a rather considerable amount of loanwords from different domains. A *loanword* (loan word) is a word imported into one language from another language, also called a *borrowed word* or a *borrowing* [5, p. 163]. Thus, merging with the local population, new notions had appeared and adjusted to the existed vocabulary of the natives. This can be regarded as the historical causes of borrowings. Being the dominant civilization in 43 B.C., the Romans brought to the British Isles their mother tongue - Latin, that consequently established itself as the language of education and religion. On the other hand, the French language penetrated into English in the times when the Normans were enlarging their borders in 1066. This caused a nearly total suppression of the English dialects. However, R. S. Ginzburg emphasizes the fact that there are other reasons for borrowings penetration, depending "on the degree of genetic structural interaction" of the languages [5, p. 165]. Moreover, the causes of borrowed words can bear the characteristics of the technical and social development of the peoples, whose languages are in a close contact with English.

In this context, it is crucial to point out that loanwords come into the language in two ways: directly (orally) or indirectly (through written texts) from the source language. According to linguists, the term "source" highlights the language from which the word was immediately borrowed. Thus, in order to determine whether the word belongs to the borrowed item, it is of vital importance to consider the principles of its penetration mentioned above. The criteria which we can evidenciate when talking about the words borrowed orally is the phonetic stage, which includes the pronunciation of strange sounds, sound combinations, and the position of the stress, as, for example, in such words as *matinee*, *employee* taken from French. The words borrowed by using the indirect contact, through written texts, are known as written borrowings, and cover and keep the spelling, the morphological and grammatical structure of the initial word from which it had been loaned, e.g. *gesture* (*L.*), *zinc* (*Gr.*), *vase* (*Fr.*). However, namely these words which did not undergo changes in spelling and sound form create many difficulties in their assimilation [8, p. 165].

In other cases the pronunciation of the word and its spelling indicate the traces of its foreign origin. This is the case with *chamber* (from French). It originated from *shaumbre* > *caumbre* > *chaumbre* known today as "chamber" [7]. Here we can clearly see the hands of French scribes, namely their introduction of French graphic habits which have survived till nowadays. So, the diagraphs *ou*, *ie*, *ch* were adopted as new ways of indicating the sounds [u:], [e:], [tʃ]. By comparing OE and ME spelling, the influence of the French language is emphasized: OE *scip* -> ME *ship*, OE *fisc* -> ME *fish*, OE *Þēf* -> ME *thief*, etc. [8, p. 65]. The initial position of the sounds [v], [dʒ], [ʒ] or the letters *x*, *j*, *z* certainly designate the word borrowed nature, e.g. *zero* (Fr.), *vaccine* (L.), *jungle* (Hindi), etc. [5, p. 163]. These are only few examples of how the process of introduction and transformation of new features took place. From the point of view of the assimilation of new words, it is appropriate to denote three main types of assimilation: phonetic assimilation, grammatical assimilation, and lexical assimilation.

Migrating from one language into another, words tend to adjust themselves to their new environment and get adapted to the norms of the target language. Due to the changes they undergo, the presence of their foreign elements may be erased, and, therefore, they get assimilated. Sometimes the process of assimilation develops to the point when the foreign origin of a word is quite doubtful. Thus, even some "basic" words in the English language – *cup*, *street*, *dinner* – are not English by origin. Other words, though well assimilated, still bear traces of their foreign background, e.g. *distance*, *development*, *police*, *regime*.

The English language has endured enormous changes over the years of its development from the Old English period to the Middle stage and then to Modern English. In the course of the development of the English language Englishmen were in close contact with other languages and people, who were located next to them. This research paper points out two most significant periods of time: the period, when England was in contact with the Roman Empire and the Norman Conquest.

In 55 B.C. Julius Caesar with his army first stepped on the territory of Britain, but unfortunately with no further outcomes. However, the next several attacks succeeded in the occupation of Britain and the French ruled the country for almost four hundred years, up to the 5th century. Due to the interaction that appeared not only in the political and economical issues, but also in the social life between Romans and British people, a new lexical stock was imported to English vocabulary. Generally, the influx of the Latin loans can be divided according to the spheres of their application: a) words related to agriculture and war: *camp* 'battle' < L *campus*; *weall* 'wall' < L *vallus*; *street* 'road, street' < L *strata*; *mil* 'mile' < L *mile*, etc.; b) words connected with trade: *pund* 'pound' < L *pondus*; *mynet* 'coin' < L *moneta*; (wine trade was one of the most important commercial branches: *win* 'wine' < L *vinum*; *must* 'new wine' < L *mustum*; *eced* 'vinegar' < L *acetum*; *flasce* 'flask, bottle' < L *flasconem*, etc.); c) words relating to domestic life and household articles: *cytel* 'kettle' < L *catillus*; *mese* 'table' < VL *mesa*; *teped* 'carpet, curtain' < L *tapetum*; *cycene* 'kitchen' < L *coquina*; *cuppe* 'cup' < L *cuppa*; *disc* 'dish' < L *discus*, etc. [2, p. 78]; d) words related to religion and church: *engel* (950) 'angel' <

*angelus, apostol* (950) ‘apostle’ < *apostolus*, *candel* (700) ‘candle’ < *candela*; *celic* (825) ‘chalice’ < L *calix*; *credo* (1000) ‘creed’ < *credo*, etc. [6, p. 302]. These words continued to exist and assimilated within the English language throughout the Old English period and certainly carry traces of Latin borrowings up today.

However, it could not last endless and in 1066 the new era began - the Normans seized the throne. Hence, England lost its identity the time King Harold was killed in the battle defending his possessions, and English people were forced by William the Conqueror and his barons to obey new leaders. "In the course of a few years, putting down revolts in various parts of the country, the Normans became masters of England", highlights B. Ilyish [4, p. 135]. Therefore, in the era of the Norman Conquest the French language, in relation to the English language occupied a dominant position as the language of the court. The feudal nobility, government institutions and schools were using French as the main language of writing (along with Latin). Thereby, a huge amount of French words still continues to exist within different spheres of the daily usage: a) government regulation and administration: *nation, government, council, power, realm*, etc.; b) food and cuisine: *beef, meat, pork, bacon*, etc; c) religion and church: *religion, trinity, angel, abbey*, etc.; c) art and architecture: *art, beauty, figure, tapestry*, etc.; d) leisure and entertainment: *sport, cards, feast, leisure*, etc. [1, p. 9]

To have a better insight of the influence of Latin and French borrowings on the vocabulary of the English language, we have selected a number of 300 borrowed words from Latin and French, more precisely - 150 Latin and 150 French loanwords from the *Online Etymological Dictionary* [7]. All selected Latin and French borrowings have been classified according to the spheres from which they originated. The results of this analysis are presented in separate tables in which we have arranged all selected Latin and French loans according to the spheres they penetrated into English.

**Table 1. Latin Borrowings**

<b>Spheres of Application</b>	<b>Number of Borrowings</b>	<b>Percentage of Borrowings</b>
Agriculture and War	60	40.00%
Religion and Church	55	36.66%
Trade	20	13.34%
Domestic Life and Household	15	10.00%

**Table 2. French Borrowings**

<b>Spheres of Application</b>	<b>Number of Borrowings</b>	<b>Percentage of Borrowings</b>
Government Regulation and Administration	70	46.66%
Food and Cuisine	40	26.66%
Art and Architecture	20	13.34%
Leisure and Entertainment	20	13.34%

According to the data presented in Table 1, it happened so that the most ponderous influx of Latin words has to do with *Agriculture and War* sphere, but when

it comes to the French loans, the leading domain which absorbed the greatest number of imported words is *Government Regulation and Administration* field. The results of the analysis show that there are 60 words from Latin origin which make 40% out of the selected borrowings that are connected with warfare and farming issues. The Romans had build a lot of strategic point on the occupied territory, and consequently we have, for example, the word *camp* in English. Moreover, as the Roman Conquest could be seen as an attempt of "civilizing" Britain society by imposing of a foreign culture on the native inhabitants in order to cause necessary improvements or progress, the natives had learned how to cultivate and plow the land. What concerns French loanwords (Table 2), there are no doubts that most words that penetrated into English during the Norman Conquest have to do with *Government Regulation and Administration* issue, due to the fact, that the rulers of the country were Frenchmen and all the decrees and rules were written in French. That is the reason why these loans cover 46.66% of the whole list of words we have analyzed in this research. In addition, there are other borrowings, for instance the presence of Latin borrowings from such spheres as: *Religion and Church* - 36.66%, *Trade* - 13.34%, *Domestic Life and Household* - 10.00%; and the presence of French borrowings from the following domains: *Food and Cuisine* 26.66%, *Art and Architecture* 13.34%, *Leisure and Entertainment* 13.34%, that speak about the huge impact of these languages upon the enrichment of the English vocabulary.

As we can see, Latin and French words were borrowed in particular historical periods and due to close contacts with the Roman civilization and the Norman Empire. Nowadays we have an abundance of Latin and French loanwords in the Modern English word stock in different spheres. Only the Norman Conquest, which lasted for more than 300 years lead to the fact that the amount of French borrowings in English is approximately 70%. Despite the fact that modern English consists of approximately one third of words of Romance origin, it has not lost its originality as the language of the German group.

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