

The Investigation of Loanwords in English

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Abstract: A well-known fact about English is that it shows an impression of vividness and similarity, which is not only because America itself is composed of many major nations, but because it has borrowed a great many words from other languages in the process of its formation and development. Loanwords reflect the different cultural connection, enrich English vocabulary and show the contents of new things more accurately, visually and directly, thus it makes English more internationalized.

1. The Course of Development in Loanwords

1.1 The Definition of Loanwords.

Loanwords are words adopted by the speakers of one language from a different language (the source language). A loanword can also be called a borrowing word. Of course, the "loan" and "borrowing" appeared here are of 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 come to be used by a speech community that speaks a different language from the one they originated in.

1.2 Loanwords in Different Times.

The history of the development of the English language can be divided into three periods: old English (or Anglo-Saxon), middle English and modern English. As early in the ancient English time, with the Roman relation, English has borrowed the massive glossaries from Latin. From then on, English continues to borrow the Latin glossary, at that time a majority of them were the religious terminology. The transitional period appears from the ancient English to the modern English, along with Norman Conquest in 1066, and receives the huge influence of French. It applies to all political affairs and the majority of social and cultural business. Therefore, English language manifested the huge and remarkable change of English glossary. In modern English time, the Renaissance made its great impact on English glossary. The introduction of massive Latin glossaries has opened a new source for the loanwords in English. One of the most basic characteristics of the modern English is its openness of vocabulary. Openness of vocabulary implies both free admissions of words from other languages and the ready creation of compounds and derivatives. Since the 16th century, the type of loanwords in English greatly increased. Along with the borrowed words from Greek and Latin in the Renaissance period, Loanwords came from more than 50 languages, the major sources being the three Roman languages—French, Spanish and Italian.

2. The Contributing Factors of Loanwords

2.1 Historical Reasons.

In history, on one hand, English has many identical words and the similar grammatical structures with west Roman; on the other hand, the majority of English glossary originates from Latin, like Italian, Spanish as well as Portuguese. The influence of these external languages on English is caused by other nations' invasions, simultaneously also took great impact of their own language on British island, which has had the relation with the English people in the middle ages. Moreover, it is the result of the expansion of English itself. When the English extends its own antenna to each

quoin of the world, the local language was borrowed, but just in a different way and to a different extent. This language expansion of English is mainly realized through the literature, colonization and trade. The influence of literature happens particularly in the Renaissance time when Latin and Greek were considered to be the typical language of the west flourishing cultural heritage by all. And many writers and translators used Latin to carry on The creation or borrow Latin words to depict things, which contribute to the melting of loanwords into English. In addition, before English was separated from the Germanic language family, the trade, along with conquest, had caused English to absorb the first batch of loanwords, typical loanwords known by us like wine and cup. Afterwards, the trade, the science exploration and the commercial exploration also caused us to be familiar with massive glossaries, like litchi, tobacco and chocolate.

2.2 Social Reasons.

In the 20th century, as a result of modern dissemination tool of mass media, along with the international cultural exchange and the rapid development of information technology. The native English words are not so adequate anymore that the massive loanwords enter into English and become an important part of English glossary which meet the needs from the society. Meanwhile, the rapid growth of living standards in human society cause people dissatisfied with the current situation. They had the desire to communicate with the outside world; consequently, the loanwords are the necessity to the exchange of information between different regions and different countries.

3. Loanwords from Different Continents

English has borrowed a very large number of words from many different languages by viewing its history. The loanwords may be labeled a new concept which is called synonym. According to the origin, the loanwords in English have two big original sources, one is Europe and the other is Asia.

3.1 Loanwords from Europe.

Loanwords from Europe are the main component in English. They mainly come from languages like Latin, Greek, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Dutch and other ones. Loanwords from Europe play the vital role in the development of English glossary.

3.2 Loanwords from Latin and Greek.

Loanwords from Latin and Greek together have been called the classical ingredient in English glossary. The greatest influence of Latin on the ancient English is the introduction of Roman Catholicism in the year of A.D. 597. Of course all Latin was related to religion at that time. In old English period, especially the time when Roman Christianity was introduced into Briton, a lot of Latin words reflecting religion came into English such as dogma, manifesto, memo, school, epoch, pamphlet, salary, castle, bishop, devil, street, mountain, synthesis, altar, thesis, candle, temple, energy and some specialized words concerning about trade such as box, fan, fork, kettle, linen, mat, pound, ton, spend etc.

3.3 Loanwords from French.

The quantity of loanwords from French is enormous in English. The phenomenon of borrowing words from French has its special historical background. After the Norman Conquest, the business of the government and the court were conducted in Norman French. A lot of French words from all walks of life poured into the English language. For examples: law, administration(people, bourgeoisie, elite, crown, noble, blame, state, judge, jury, justice, evidence, state, country, county, parliament, police); military(captain, army, battle, peace, war, victory); religion(religion, lesson, virgin, pity, bible, confess, divine, sacrifice); clothing(fashion, coat, dress, robe, collar); food(beef, mutton, pork, dinner, sauce, spice, salad); architecture(image, design, castle, tower); literature(art, beauty, literature, story, chapter, poem, college); science(medicine, physician); life(salon, cheer). Since the 16th century, along with more close contact between England and France, France offered many new words in English such as vase, unique, soup, canteen, brochure etc. Among the upper

class of English society, the land-lords who have the relations with the court all speak French while the ordinary English people still speak English. Therefore England has become the bilingual country at that time. The influence of French which is direct and obvious caused the change in English grammar and glossary, and the two languages have coexisted for a very long time. French has made great contribution to the English development.

3.4 Loanwords from Italian.

Loanwords coming from Italian are related to trade, war and art. England starts to have trade with Italy even from the 14th century. Along with the trade development, some Italian words related to commerce started to enter into English. There are many other loanwords in the field of the trade. For example: bankrupt, contraband, traffic and others are concert, piano, solo, costume, model, sonnet, stanza, model, opera. Italy is the center of European Renaissance, many domain International terms about music and the fine arts all come from Italy. From the 16th century to the 18th century, many related artistic Italian is absorbed by English and retains the spelling and the pronunciation.

3.5 Loanwords from Spanish.

Loanwords from Spanish absorbed before the 16th century had a relatively less significance in English, glossary introduced in the 16th Century include the following: armada, comrade, tornado and so on. In a broader sense, the majority of loanwords coming from Spanish mainly exist in the form of affixes by the letter like "d" or "o". And other examples: banana, bizarre, cafeteria, plaza, risk, galleon, embargo, cargo, parade, cigar.

3.6 Loanwords from Greek.

During the time of the Renaissance, Greek had made great contribution to the English vocabulary. Some words introduced in English are directly from Greek which are most connected with the fields like literature and science, words such as philology, euphemism, myth, monologue, geometry, tragedy, gymnastics, crisis, rhapsody, analysis, telephone, telegraph, zoology, psychology, epidemic, cosmetic, Christmas etc. At the same time many affixes coming from Greek were introduced in English such as auto-, mono-, homo-, -ism, -graph, -ise, -meter, -gram etc. In English glossary, many technical glossaries come from Latin and Greek. In other words, the classical ingredient is the main origin of the technical glossary in English. Suffixes existing after noun, like -ics, -tics, -logy, -ology, -mony all have the meaning of "the science".

3.7 Loanwords from German.

Fundamentally, Roman language has a closer relation with the English language. Many loanwords coming from German are related to science and technology. Also in the daily Life, there are some German external words like "kindergarten", In German the meaning of "kind" is "the child" while the meaning of "garten" is "the garden", therefore "kindergarten" is child's garden". The aggressive war caused by Hitler made the word "blitz" become an international word. In German its meaning is a piece of lightning. Therefore, its Meaning can be explained as the rapid victory in any competition or trade after it is introduced to English.

3.8 Loanwords from Asia.

From the 19th to the 20th century, as results of the overseas exploration, with the development of the colony as well as the trade development, many words from non-European countries were also used in English. The Asian language is one of the origins in English glossary. Arabic, Chinese, Japanese are the main resource.

3.9 Loanwords from the Arabic.

Among all the Asian languages, the Arabic plays the most important role. In the middle ages, the Islamism was prevailing at that time, many Greek and Rome's classical works were translated into the Arabic to spread to western Europe. Along with Arab's cultural exchange with western European

countries, the Arabic was borrowed in English glossary. The majority of loanwords coming from the Arabic end by letter "-al". Also There were some words related to the Islam culture, like sultan, mosque and tennis. They all came from the Arabic.

3.10 Loanwords from other Asian languages.

There are not many loanwords coming from Chinese, among which the majority of them are related to food like ginseng, litchi, tofu, jiaozi, typhoon, Confucius, kungfu. Loanwords from Japanese also make the contribution to English, most of the external words coming from Japanese had the intense Japanese traditional color, like, tatami, tycoon, walkman, judo, Mikado, samurai, sumo. Loanwords from other Asian languages like Persian: caravan, bazaar, shawl, check; Malay: bamboo, rattan and so on. They also provided some glossaries for English.

4. Influences of Loanwords on English

4.1 The Celtic Influence.

Nothing would seem more reasonable than to expect that the conquest of the Celtic population of Britain by the Anglo-Saxons and the subsequent mixture of the two peoples should have resulted in a corresponding mixture of their languages; that consequently we should find numerous Instances of words in the old English vocabulary that the Anglo-Saxons heard in the speech of the native population and adopted. Besides, some more words were used in naming places during the Roman occupation of the Island and were passed on by the Celts to the English, which shows that the Celts impressed themselves upon the Germanic consciousness at least to the extent of causing the new comers to adopt many of the local names which are popular currently in Celtic speech and to make them a permanent part of their vocabulary.

4.2 The Latin Influence.

Latin was the language of a highly regarded civilization known by all, namely one language which the Anglo-Saxons wanted to learn. Besides its civilization, its commerce, military, religion and literature, all of them extended for over many centuries and were constantly renewed. For several hundred years, while the Germanic tribes who later became the English were still occupying their continental home, they had various relations with the Romans through which they acquired a considerable number of loanwords. Later when they came to England, they saw the evidences of the long Roman rule in the island and learned additional Latin words from the Celts that had been acquired by them. A century and a half later still, this new cultural influence resulted in a quite extensive adoption of Latin elements into the language when Roman missionaries reintroduced Christianity into the island.

4.3 The Scandinavian Influence: The Viking Age.

Near the end of the old English period, English underwent the third influence from outside, the result of this contact with another important language of the Scandinavian. The influence of Scandinavian not only affected the vocabulary but also extended to matters of gram-Mar and syntax as well. It is less capable of exact demonstration but it is hardly to be doubted. Inflections are seldom transferred from one language to another. It is much more important to recognize that the English and Scandinavian languages differed chiefly in their inflectional elements in many words. The body of the word was so nearly the same in the two languages that only the endings would put obstacles in the way of mutual understanding.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays there are so many loanwords in English they may appear in each sentence written and spoken by people. The majority of them come from Latin. They have displayed the function in language utilization and communication after mixing the language of French. As essential supplement, they have played an important role in the developing process of English history, and

have had the profound influence on the enrichment and development of English vocabulary. These loanwords had reflected the different cultural relation including the war, the cultural revolution, the religious reform, the geographical discovery, the navigation risk, the colonial activity and so on. In the process of its development, it inevitably assimilates words from other languages and changes daily in order to enrich its vocabularies and meet the demands of the social development. Only through these loanwords, can English display all new thought, new concept and new thing more precisely and comprehensively. The loanwords have enriched English glossary enormously, which make English even more internationalized. With the development of language, the phenomenon of borrowing words will undoubtedly continue and the loanwords will demonstrate a more formidable vitality.

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