Chapter 3
Foreign Elemens in English

Foreign Elements in English:

English vocabulary is abundant, heterogeneous and varied. It reflects the whole of English history, external and internal, political and social. All the peoples with whom speakers of English have come into contact during almost the fifteen centuries of its growth have almost, without exception, left indelible marks on the vocabulary.

It is, therefore, essential to sketch and illustrate the influences of foreign languages that have contributed to the building of English vocabulary and have also in so doing helped to shape English thought and expression.

The Celtic Element in English:

Three different strata of Celtic loan-words may be recognized in Old English.

1- There are a few early continental loans, borrowed from Old Celtic and are common to all Germanic languages, e.g.,

Germanic   : rīki (kingdom)

Old English   Rīce

Modern German   Reich

Modern English   Rich

2- Words borrowed from the Britons after the Anglo-Saxon invasion are chiefly the names of natural objects, animals and things of everyday use, e.g.:

assa   - ass

carr   - rock

luh   - lake

Names of districts, places, hills, rivers and forests were also taken over directly by the Anglo-Saxons from the Britons; Kent, Devon, Cornwall and Leeds were formed from Celtic tribal names. Celtic names of rivers are also to be found in all parts of England. Several have simply the meaning of "water" and occur repeatedly: Avon, Stour and Isca (... Esk, Usk, Exe, etc.). Some are descriptive, such as cam "crooked" and Dee "holy". Of place-names other than those of the types referred to, the chief survivors are names of the most important Roman-Briton towns, though many of them have an English suffix added such Salis (bury) and Win-(chester).

3- There is also a very small group of ecclesiastical and religious terms introduced into Old English from Old Irish by Irish missionaries during the Seventh Century, e.g. dry: "a magician, sorcerer".

Almost all the Celtic loan - words became established as popular words; there is very little "learned" element since nearly all of them passed from mouth to mouth and not through the influence of literature.

Latin and Greek Elements in English:

The early inhabitants of Britain came to know a number of Latin words as a result of their contact with the Roman Empire through trade. Then the country became the field of an organised invasion by Roman troops and subsequently parts of the Roman Empire whose mother tongue was Latin. As a result a great many Latin words were introduced into the native tongue of the Britons. These were basically names of essential commodities, mostly articles of diet and words connected with the arts of civilization. Examples:

Latin	Old English	Modern English
Vinum	Wīn	Wine
Pisum	pise	pea
Coquus	coc	cook
Coquina	cycene	kitchen
Catinus	cytel	kettle
Ponto	punt	punt
Molina	mylen	mill
Pondo	pund	pound
Uncia	ynce	inc
Moneta	mynet	mint
mille passum	mīl	mile

About the year 600 C.E. Britain was converted to Christianity, and the conversion had far-reaching linguistic consequences reflected in the borrowing of a great number of ecclesiastical

terms most of which were originally Greek but had become latinized. Examples:

Greek	Latin	Old English	Modern English
Kuriakon	....	cirice, cyrice	Church
	monasterium	mynster	minister
Diabolos	diabolus	deofol	devil
Aggelos	angelus	engel	angel
Presbyteros	presbyter	preost	priest

Besides borrowing, the English utilized the resources of their own languages to a great extent, and this was done in three ways: by forming new words from the foreign loans by means of native affixes, by modifying the sense of existing English words, and finally by framing new words from native stems. The process of affixing native endings to foreign words resulted in such words as priesthood (Old English prēothād combining prēost and the suffix- -hād), and Christendom (Old English crīstendōm combining crīsten (Christian) and the suffix - dōm). Existing native words were largely turned to account to express Christian ideas, the sense only being more or less modified. An example of this process is the word easter (Old English eastron, the name of an old pagan spring festival, called after Austro, a goddess of spring).

Compounding was also resorted to, and in some instances the three Magi were called tungolwītegan from tungol "star", and wītega "wise man". The new terms were simply fitted together from translations of the component parts of the Greek or Latin

word they were intended to render. For example, Greek evaggelion was rendered god-spell which was often taken to be the "spell" or message of God (modern gospel). Another example is Ørynnes or Ørines ("three-ness") from Latin trinity.

The Norman conquest in 1066 led indirectly to a strengthening of the Latin element in English. The French churchmen who then almost monopolized the higher ecclesiastical positions were more learned than their predecessors and adopted Latin words freely in their writings, a practice all the more natural since their own language was of Latin origin.

In 1453 the Turks took Constantinople from the Greeks who scattered throughout Europe, carrying with them the knowledge of their language and culture. Italy was the first country to feel the effects of this great historical event, the Renaissance or revival of learning. From Italy the movement spread to France and then to England.

The spirit of the Renaissance had far-reaching linguistic influences on European languages in general and on English in particular. Latin words, which, throughout the Middle Ages had been adopted as single borrowings, began to be used in great numbers. Among the educated people there was a tendency to mix the native speech with Latin words. The Renaissance also gave a great strength to the direct borrowing of Greek words. English writers, philosophers, scientists and translators found in Greek a rich source of terms in which their native tongue was comparatively poor. This tendency went on in the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries. Educated people thought it dignified to say 'sufficient' instead of 'enough', 'transpire' instead of 'sweat'; 'expire' instead of 'end' ; 'valedictory address' instead of "farewell speech", and 'He expired in indigent circumstances' instead of 'He died poor'.

The Renaissance revealed new vistas, in art as well as in science, and classical literature became a fruitful source of information and inspiration. As a result, English writers, philosophers, and translators adopted hundreds of words together with the ideas they stood for, and these seemed to them an indispensable means of enriching their native language, which to them appeared poor as compared with the rich storehouses of Latin and Greek. But as time passed on, the ideas derived from classical authors were no longer sufficient for the civilized world; new ideas and new ways of life developed and demanded linguistic expression. In their quest for this 'linguistic expression', the educated people whose minds had been very much influenced by classical studies, turned to Latin and Greek and drew upon their vocabularies in preference to their own native stock of words. This is seen very extensively in the domain of modern science, in which hundreds of terms have been framed from Latin and Greek roots, most of them compound words. A few examples are telescope, microscope, telephone, telegraph, and television.

Furthermore, quite a number of words have been coined through the use of Latin and Greek prepositions and adverbs as prefixes. A few examples are:

Hypersensitive - hyperactive - (Greek hyper = above).

Hyposensitive - hypoactive - (Greek hypo = under).

ante- Christian   (Latin ante = before)

ante- Norman

Antewar

anti - imperialist   (Greek anti = against)

Antinoise

Antiwar

pro-Arab   (Latin pro = for).

pro - German

pre - arrange   (Latin prae (pre) = before).

pre-engage

Preprint

Preview

inter-national   (Latin inter = among, between).

Interlay

Interrelate

inter- Allied

Interracial

rebirth   (Latin re- = back, again).

re-organize

re-submit

re-collect

recover

re-act

reconstruct

exhale   (Greek exo= outside/Latin ex= out of).

expose

exceed   (beyond)

expatriate   (out of)

exchange

exclude

paragraph   (Greek para= beside)

Paraphrase

para-typhoid

ex- king   (ex= former)

ex- headmaster

Hybrids, in which one of the component parts is either Latin or Greek, have also been coined, Following are a few examples:

1) Hybrids with -ist (Latin -ista, from Greek- istes = A suffix denoting agent nouns).

Industrialist	dentist	walkist
Specialist	tourist	
Socialist	individualist	
	economist	

2) Hybrids with - ism (Latin ismus, from Greek- iscos = forming a suffix denoting action or state.

industrialism	witticism
socialism	
capitalism	
colloquialism	
organism	

3) Hybrids with- ize (Latin - izare, from Greek - izein. A suffix forming verbs = in the senses of to render or to make or to practise).

Industrialize
Capitalize
Satirize
Realize
Organize
Womanize

Greek words have also been used as the root of new compounds.

Examples:

Hydroplane	(Greek hydor = water)
Hydro-electric	
Hydrometer	
Hydrosphere	
Phonology	(Greek phone = sound)
Phonetics	
Phonemics	

Phonograph	(phōnō, Latin graphicus, from Greek graphi-kos, from graphein = to write).
Photography	(Greek phōtos = light).
Photofilm	
Photostat	
Photo-offset	
Photo-sensitive	

The French Element in English:

Even before the Norman Conquest, there had already been established a social, political, as well as an ecclesiastical intercourse between the ruling classes of England and Normandy. Although most people of the two countries had nothing in common, there existed a kind of relation between the Courts, Aristocracy, and the Churches of the two countries.

With the Conquest, this intercourse was strengthened especially through the re-ordering of the government and upper social life under the influence of a French occupying power. The English Court, Aristocracy and Church and Fashion, were recast on the French model, and the French words that had been previously borrowed in small numbers, began to invade the native language. For almost three centuries after the Conquest, two languages were spoken in England, French at the Court, among the nobility, in administrative circles, English by the common people. The French taught the English many things relating to art, not only such words as art, beauty, colour, image,

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design, figure, paint, but also the greater number of more special words of technical significance are French; from architecture may be mentioned arch, tower, pillar, vault, column, aisle, chapel and cloister. Hence we find that the early French element in English is largely concerned with special aspects of the national life; 'Court' is French, as also are the English titles of nobility such as baron, duke. To the titles of nobility may be added constable and marshal; chancellor, judge and jury are also of French origin.

As a rule, the elementary callings: smith, weaver, skinner, kept their native names, while the luxury trades became French: draper, spicer and tailor. Similarly, the French merchant was as superior to the native dealer as dentist to tooth-drawer.

In the Thirteenth Century the French element gained strength through the influence of the University of Paris which was then the most famous university in Europe, and the literary vocabulary was affected by the imitation and translation of French models.

The Fourteenth Century witnessed a great increase in the number of borrowed words. French words were no more confined to the use of the aristocracy but had become integral parts of the English language. By the end of that century, the fusion had been more or less accomplished and (Chaucer) had at his command a vocabulary in which the native and French elements had become blended. Chaucer undoubtedly uses a far greater number of French words than most other writers of his

time due to the fact that he was more familiar with French culture and literature and consequently more strongly tempted to introduce French words in his literary works in a lucid and unrepulsive manner. There is no linguistic parallel to this complete fusion of two languages, one Germanic, the other of Latin origin, and it is to this fusion that English owes its unequalled richness of vocabulary and its power of poetic expression.

The Seventeenth Century witnessed an exceptionally close contact between English and French in matters of literature and social intercourse. The restoration of the monarchy to England in 1660 was the basis of this contact. Charles II who had been exiled in France was called back to England, and he and his party coloured the England Court, aristocracy and diplomacy with the French colour and this gave the French element in English more strength than ever.

The French Revolution which had a great influence on English life and thought offered the English language a number of words such as guillotine, regime, tri-colour, etiquette, ennui, police, poste- restante, coup, and espionage.

In the nineteenth century English started to borrow French words concerning dress, textiles and furniture. French diplomatic and military terms also continued to enrich the English vocabulary. In the Twentieth Century the process of borrowing from French was given vent because of the two

World Wars that brought England and France into closer contact than ever.

Recent borrowings from French show an increasing tendency to take in whole phrases. either as they stand in French, or by a literal translation, e.g.

comme il faut

enfant terrible

amour propre

goes without saying (va sans dire)

jump to the eyes (saute aux yeux)

Many of the French words, such as cry, claim, state, poor, and change have become part and parcel of the English language, so that they appear to speakers of English just as English as the pre-Conquest stock of native words. But a great many others have not become so popular. There are great many gradations between words of everyday speech and those not at all understood by the common people. These help us to understand some at least of the differences that have developed in the course of time between two synonyms when both have survived, one of them native, the other French. The former is always nearer to the nation's heart than the latter; it has the strongest associations with everything primitive, fundamental, popular, while the French word is often more formal, more polite, more refined and has a less strong hold on the emotional side of life.

English	French
Harm	injury
Upper	superior
Foe	enemy
Deep	profound
Lonely	solitary
Help	aid
Ghost	phantom, apparition
Weep	cry
Hut	cottage
Hearty	cordial

In some cases the chief difference between the native word and the French synonym is that the former is more colloquial and the latter more literary, e.g.

English	French
Begin	commence
Hide	conceal
Feed	nourish
Hinder	prevent
look for	search for
Inner	interior
Outer	exterior

So completely has the French element been blended into English that the speakers of the latter are not conscious of the mixture when they couple such a word as the native wholesale with the French retail, and it is only after reflection that they

realize that so English a dish as the roastbeef bears a purely French name. Nor are they sensible of hybridism when they attach native affixes to words of French origin. or affixes to native words, e.g.

1. The native prefix un-attached to words of Latin or French origin: uncivil, uninteresting, unwarrantable.

2. The French prefix dis-attached to native verbs: distrust, dislike.

3- The native suffixes -ful, -less, -dom. -ship. -hood, attached to French words: beautiful, artless, dukedom, courtship, childhood.

4- The French suffixes -able, -age, -ance -ity attached to native words: capable. leakage, forbearance, oddity.

5. Other instances of English endings added to French words are faintness, secretness (Chaucer), simpleness (Shakespeare).

Further, a great many adjectives in -ly : (courtly, princely) and adverbs with the same endings (faintly, easily, nobly) have been coined.

As the grammatical systems of the two languages were very different, it is necessary to remark here about the form in which French words were adopted. In the plural, Old French had a nominative without any ending and an accusative in -s. and the English naturally associated the latter form with the native plural ending in -es. In course of time those words which had for a long time, in English as in French, formed their plurals without any ending -(e.g. cas) were made to conform with the general rule

(singular cas, plural cases). French adjectives had the -s added to them just like French nouns, and although Chaucer used goddes celestials, and letters patents survived as a fixed group till the time of Shakespeare, the general rule was to treat French adjectives exactly like English ones, i.e. without the -s.

As to the verbs, the rule is that the stem of the French present plural served as basis for the English form; thus (je survis), nouns survivons, vous survivez, ils survivent become survive.

The French infinitive was imported in a substantial function, as in dinner, remainder, attainder, rejoinder, of the verbs dine, remain, attain, rejoin.

French loan-words have, as a matter of course, participated in all the sound changes that have taken place in English since their adoption.

Examples:

1. [i:] ___ [ay], e.g. fine [fi: n] ___ [fayn].

2. [u:] ___ [aw], e.g. tour [tu: r] ___ [taw∂r]

3. [e:] ___ [iy], e.g. aise [e: z] ___ [iyz].

4. [a:] ___ [ey], e.g. grace [gra: s] ___ [greys].

A great many words are stressed on the first syllable, which in French were stressed on the final syllable. As a matter of fact, French words in English were for centuries stressed in the French manner, as illustrated conclusively by Middle English poetry in which such pronunciations as the following occur: partít, figurés.

It was only gradually that more and more words had their stress shifted on to its present place. A strong reason for this shifting is the Modern English general tendency, inherited from Germanic, to stress strongly the first syllable of a word. This is clearly illustrated in the present pronunciation of such French words as, army, matter, January, February, cavalry, infantry, primary, orient, and others. An equally strong principle is English rhythm, which has not two consecutive strong syllables; compare modern: she is fiftéen, but fifteen yéars. Chaucer stresses many words in the French manner, except when they precede a stressed syllable, in which case the stress is shifted, thus cosyn (cousin), but cosyn myn; in felicité parfit. but a vérray párfit géntil knight. An instructive illustration is found in such a line as this (From the Canterbury Tales: D 1.486).

In divers árt and in divérs figúres.

These principles -stressing the base syllable and rhythm- will explain all or most of the instances in which English has shifted the French stress; but it is evident that it took a very long time before the new forms of the words which arose at first only occasionally through their influence were powerful enough finally to supplant the older forms.

The Scandinavian Element in English:

Near the end of the Old English period, English underwent a fourth foreign influence, the result of contact with Scandinavian which was brought to England by the invading Danes or Vikings.

In the attack of the Danes upon England, three well-marked stages can be distinguished. The first is the period of early raids, beginning according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 787 and continuing with some intermissions until about 850. The raids of this period were simply plundering attacks upon towns and monasteries near the coast. The second stage is the work of large armies and is marked by widespread plundering in all parts of the country and by extensive settlement. The third stage covers the period of political adjustment and assimilation from 878 to 1042.

The amalgamation of the two races (the Scandinavian and the English) was greatly facilitated by the close kinship that existed between them. The problem to the English was not the assimilation of an alien race representing an alien culture and speaking a wholly foreign tongue. Old English and Scandinavian (belonging to West Germanic and North Germanic respectively) were greatly similar as each stood so near to the common source. A great number of words were identical in the two languages. Had it been for the existence of English literature before the Viking invasion, it would have been utterly impossible to tell which language such words as man, wife, folk, house, winter, summer, came from. Also identical in the two languages were verbs like will, can, meet, bring, see, sit, smile, think, and adjectives and adverbs like full, wise, well, better, best, mine, thine. On the other hand, in many cases words were not identical but similar in one way or another. For example, Old Norse (Scandinavian) sveinn, lauss, and scyrte (shirt). Hence the basis existed for an extensive interaction of the two languages upon

each other, and this conclusion is amply borne out by the large number of Scandinavian features subsequently found in English.

The influence of Scandinavian on English is reflected in the unique phenomenon of the existence side by side for a long time, of two slightly differing forms for the same word, one the original English form and the other Scandinavian, e.g. no -nay; rear-raise; from -fro; and church -kirk; mouth -mum (only in dialects).

Sometimes Scandinavian gave a fresh lease of life to obsolete native words. The preposition till, for example is found only once or twice in Old English texts belonging to the pre-Scandinavian period. But, after that time it began to be exceedingly common in the North, from whence it spread southward; it was used (as in Danish) with regard to both time and space and it is still so used in Scottish.

There are some instances where Scandinavian, the intruding language, succeeded in ousting the native language.For example, Old English ey, tho, swuster and Øuuersdaei were gradually dropped in favour of Danish egg, they, sister and Thursday.

In some words the old native form has survived, but has adopted the signification attached in Scandinavian to the corresponding word. For example, the Old English word dream meaning "joy" assumed its modern meaning from Danish (Old Norse draumr, drom).

A number of legal terms were borrowed by English from Scandinavian quite early. The word law is itself Scandinavian and it means 'that which is laid down: Other examples of

Scandinavian terms associated with law which were borrowed by English are:

Husband	husbondi	= house - holder
Fellow	felagi	= one who lays down fé or money

The extensive Scandinavian settlement in England is reflected by the large number of places that bear Scandinavian names. There are hundreds of places like Crimsby, Whitby, Derby, Rugby, with names ending in the Danish word by, meaning 'farm' or 'town'. Other place names like Althorp, Bishopsthorp, Linthorpe contain the Scandinavian word-throp, meaning 'village'. A third group of place-names like Applethwaite, Cowperthwaite, Satterthwaite contain the word thwaite (an isolated piece of land). A fourth group bear names ending in toft (a piece of ground)- Brimtoft, Langtoft, Nortoft.

Scandinavian loan-words are of a purely popular character. This is clearly brought out by a comparison with the French words introduced into English later. French words represent the refined and aristocratic element in English whereas Scandinavian words are homely expressions for things and actions of everyday life, their character is utterly democratic. Their shortness agrees with the monosyllabic character of the native stock of words; consequently they are far felt as foreign elements than many French words.

The Scandinavian influence not only affected English vocabulary but extended to matters of grammar and syntax as well. For example. the Scandinavian pronominal forms: they, them, their, entered readily into the system of English pronouns

beginning with the same sound (that, this), and were felt to be more distinct than the old native forms which they replaced. Indeed the old native forms were liable to constant confusion with some forms of the singular, so that he, him, hire (singular) and hīe, heom, heora (plural) could no longer be kept apart. In consequence, hīe, heom and heora were gradually replaced by they, them, and their, respectively:

Singular		Plural	
he	He	hīe	they
him	Him	heom	them
hire	Her	heora	their

Scandinavian also left its mark upon English in its extensive use of verbs with adverb/preposition of the type take up, take down, take in, take out, take off, take on, take from, and take to.

Otto Jespersen[1] notes that the omission of the relative pronoun in relative clauses (rare in Old English) and the retention or omission of the conjunction 'that' are in conformity with Danish usage; and that the rules for the use of shall and will in Middle English are much the same as in Scandinavian. To Scandinavian influence he also ascribes such syntactic features as the position of the Genitive case before its noun, where Old English placed it very often after it.

The Influence of Semitic Languages on English:

Important intellectually and, as a rule, of very early date are English loan-words from the two great Semitic Languages,

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(1) Otto Jespersen, Growth and Structure of the English Language, 4th ed; pp. 82-3.

Arabic and Hebrew. It was through the medium of the Greek and Latin Bible versions that an important Hebrew vocabulary became European. Among words directly or indirectly borrowed from that language are abbot, amen, cherub, jubilee, Pharisee, rabbi, Sabbath, and Job's rather mysterious behemoth and leviathan.

In the Middle Ages the Arabs were dominant, and Arabic was one of the chief repositories of medical and scientific knowledge. From a very date Arabic words came into English, generally via the languages of southern Europe and often preserving the definite article al- Examples are admiral, arsenal, magazine, monsoon, simoom, alcohol, algebra, nadir, zenith, alembic, elixir, the last two originally borrowed by Arabic from Greek. Other examples of Arabic borrowings are:

Allâh	alcove	amber	assassin
Artichoc	cable	cheque	camphor
Canal	cipher	crimson	guittar
Logarithm	lute	macabre	masquerade
Racket	risk	saffron	spinach
Sugar	talisman	tamarind	tariff
Zenith			