

The Etymological Background of the English Vocabulary

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Abstract: *Etymology is the study of the history of words, their origins, and how their form and meaning have changed over time. By extension, the term "the etymology (of a word)" means the origin of the particular word.*

Keywords: *written history, etymologists, reconstruct information.*

Introduction

For a language such as Greek with a long written history, etymologists make use of texts in these languages and texts about the languages to gather knowledge about how words were used during earlier periods of their history and when they entered the languages in question. Etymologists also apply the methods of comparative linguistics to reconstruct information about languages that are too old for any direct information to be available.

Main part

By analyzing related languages with a technique known as the comparative method, linguists can make inferences about their shared parent language and its vocabulary. In this way, word roots have been found that can be traced all the way back to the origin of, for instance, the Indo-European language family.

Even though etymological research originally grew from the philological tradition, much current etymological research is done on language families where little or no early documentation is available, such as Uralic and Austronesian.

The word *etymology* derives from the Greek word ἐτυμολογία (*etumología*), itself from ἔτυμον (*étumon*), meaning "true sense", and the suffix *-logia*, denoting "the study of".^{[2][3]} Etymology (Gr. *etymon* "truth" + Gr. *logos* "learning") is a branch of linguistics that studies the origin and history of words tracing them to their earliest determinable source. ---

A native word is a word, which belongs to the original English word stock, as known from the earliest available manuscripts of the Old English period.

A borrowed word (a borrowing, or a loan word) is a word taken over from another language and modified in phonemic shape, spelling, paradigm or meaning according to the standards of the English language.

Words of native origin

• Words of the Indo-European origin (IE) Family relations: *father, mother, brother, son, daughter*

- Parts of the human body: *foot, nose, lip, heart, tooth*
- Animals and plants: *cow, swine, goose, tree, birch, corn*
- The most important objects and phenomena of nature: *sun, moon, star, wind, water, wood, hill, stone*
- Adjectives: *hard, quick, slow, red, white, new*
- Numerals from 1 to 100: *one, two, twenty, eighty*
- Pronouns – personal, except *they* (Sc.): *I, you, he*; demonstrative : *that*; interrogative: *who*
- Some of the most frequent verbs: *bear, do, be, sit, stand*
- Words of common Germanic origin Nouns
- denoting parts of the human body: *head, arm, finger*
- Periods of time: *summer, winter, time, week*

- Natural phenomena: *storm, rain, flood, ice, ground, sea, earth*
- Artefacts and materials: *bridge, house, shop, room, coal, iron, lead, cloth*
- Animals, plants and birds: *sheep, horse, fox, crow, oak, grass*
- Adjectives denoting colors, size and other properties: *broad, dead, deaf, deep, grey, blue*
- Verbs: *see, hear, speak, tell, say, make, give*

Historical causes of borrowing

- ⊙ The Roman invasion (1st c. B.C.),
- ⊙ The introduction of Christianity (7th c. A.D.),
- ⊙ The Danish conquests (11th – 13th c. A.D.),
- ⊙ The Norman conquest (1066 A.D.),
- ⊙ The Renaissance period (14th – 16th c. A.D.),
- ⊙ Direct linguistic contacts and political, economical and cultural relationship with other nations+

Celtic borrowings.

- ⊙ Place names: *Avon, Exe, Esk, Usk, Ux* (Celtic “river”, “water”); London (*Llyn* “river”+ *dun* “a fortified hill”) - “a fortress on the hill over the river”
- ⊙ *cradle, cross, iron, flannel, tweed, lake* (C. *loch*)

The earliest Latin borrowings (1st c. A.D.)

- ⊙ words denoting things connected with war, trade, building and domestic life: *pound, inch, cup, kitchen, pepper, butter, cheese, milk, wine, cherry*

Latin words borrowed into English through the Christianization of England (7th c. A.D.)

- ⊙ persons, objects and ideas associated with church and religious rituals: *priest, bishop, monk, nun, candle, temple, angel*

- ⊙ words connected with learning: *grammar, school, scholar, decline, master, magister*

Latin borrowings of the Renaissance period (14th – 16th c. A.D.)

- ⊙ abstract words: *major, minor, filial, moderate, intelligent, permanent, to elect, to create.*
- ⊙ Scandinavian borrowings (8th - 11th c. A.D.) Verbs: *call, take, cast, die, want*
- ⊙ Nouns: *law, egg, husband* (Sc. *hūs + bōndi* “inhabitant of the house”), *window* (Sc. *vindauga* “the eye of the wind”)
- ⊙ Adjectives: *ill, loose, low, weak*
- ⊙ Pronouns and pronominal forms: *they, their, them, same, both, though.*

Norman borrowings (11th – 13th c. A.D.)

- Government and administration: *state, country, government, parliament, prince, baron*
- Legal terms: *court, judge, justice, crime, prison, jury*
- Religious terms: *saint, sermon* (проповедь), *prayer, parish* (приход), *chapel*
- Military terms: *army, war, soldier, officer, battle, enemy*
- Educational terms: *pupil, lesson, library, science, pen, pencil*
- Artistic and literary terms: *image, character, figure, volume, design*
- Terms of everyday life: *chair, table, plate, saucer, dinner, supper, breakfast*

The Renaissance period borrowings (14th – 16th c. A.D.)

- ⊙ Italian: *piano, violin, opera, alarm, colonel*
- ⊙ Spanish: *potato, tomato, cargo, banana, cocoa.*
- ⊙ Greek: direct (e.g. *atom, cycle, ethics, esthete*), or through Latin (*datum, status, phenomenon, phenomenon, philosophy, method, music*).

Other borrowings

- Japanese: *karate, judo, hara-kiri, kimono, tycoon;*
- Arabic: *algebra, algorithm, fakir, giraffe, sultan*
- Turkish: *yogurt, kiosk, tulip*
- Persian: *caravan, shawl, bazaar, sherbet*
- Eskimo: *kayak, igloo, anorak*
- Amerindian languages: *toboggan, wigwam, opossum*

• Russian: *bistro, tsar, balalaika, tundra, sputnik*

Classification of borrowings according to the aspect which is borrowed

• Translation borrowings (translation loans) are words and expressions formed from the material already existing in the English language but according to patterns taken from another language, by way of literal morpheme-for-morpheme translation. E. g. *masterpiece* < Germ. *Meisterstück*; *Wonder child* < Germ. *Wunderkind*; *wall newspaper* < Rus. *стенная газета*; *collective farm* < Rus. *колхоз*.

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“Words of identical origin that occur in several languages as a result of simultaneous or successive borrowings from one ultimate source” (I. A. Arnold, p. 260).

⊙ Words denoting science and technological advances: *sputnik, television, antenna, bionics, gene, cybernetics*

⊙ Political terms: *politics, democracy, communism, revolution*

⊙ Fruits and foodstuffs imported from exotic countries: *coffee, chocolate, grapefruit*

⊙ Names of sciences: *philosophy, mathematics, physics, chemistry*

⊙ Terms of art: *music, theatre, drama, tragedy*

⊙ The sports terms: *football, baseball, cricket, golf*.

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