



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

The Importance of Being English

~ A Look at French and Latin Loanwords in English ~

Ritgerð til B.A. prófs

Hjördís Elma Jóhannsdóttir

Janúar 2011

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Abstract

This essay examines twenty six synonym pairs in English, looks at their etymology and briefly explains where they come from and how they work in a sentence.

It discusses what was happening in England at the time these words came into English. And finally this essay shows how any language is only as important as its speakers.

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Introduction

When people study the social history of England, they realize that after the battle of Hastings, in 1066, not all classes spoke English. For many years England was under French rule and the upper classes were French and spoke only French. English became the language of the lower classes, the servants and farmers. This meant that the farmer who brought the meat and wheat to the manor spoke English, but the residents of the manor, who ate the food, spoke French. Those who made the decisions spoke French, but those who executed their will most likely spoke English. The Church used Latin and the courts of law used French. What influences did that have on the English spoken in England? Those who study English language history see that English is of a Germanic root, but it is littered with French and Latin (L.) loanwords. When languages coexist for such a long time as French, Latin and English did in England, transference of words is inevitable. Since English was the language of the lower classes, often the Old English (O.E.) word would be pushed out of the language in favour of either a Latin or French loanword. But in some cases the O.E. word still stands proud side by side with either a Latin or French word. And sometimes the O.E. word stands next to words from both languages. Those cases are very interesting, and raise the question of why the language needs so many versions of the same word¹. Have all these words kept their original meaning or has it changed in any way? In this essay my plan is to look at some of those pairings and see when the loanword found its way into English and how and if either word has changed its meaning.

¹ Baugh 2002:180, 181, 186, 187

Social context

The question might arise why and how all these words came into English then you will have to take a look at the social history of England.

In 1066 the battle of Hastings resulted in a Norman conquest over England and the Duke of Normandy William I took over the reign over England from King Harold II and became King William I. With a French King came a French court and French nobility. Many of the English upper class had been killed in the Battle of Hastings and the rest was treated as traitors. Because of this most of the Old English nobility was wiped out².

In the Church much of the same happened as in the court. Gradually all important positions were filled with Norman prelates. The English were allowed to hold their positions, but as soon as someone died or was deprived their positions were filled by foreigners³.

The main difference in those who spoke English and those who spoke French became more of a social standing rather than ethnicity⁴. The upper classes spoke French while English was the language of the masses. So much did the upper class speak French that the literature produced for the upper class was written in French.

The French rule in England started to crumble in the 13c. in 1204 King John lost Normandy. King John lost Normandy because he fell in love with Isabel of Angoulême and married her even though she was engaged to be married to Hugh of Lusignan. Since John anticipated that the Lusignans would not be all that happy with his marriage to Isabel he attacked them. The Lusignans asked King Philip to set things right. King Philip summoned John to appear before his court and be judged accordingly. When John did not appear before the court the court confiscated Normandy⁵.

This in turn forced the nobility in England to rethink their allegiance. Since the Norman Conquest much of the nobility held lands in both England and France, and most of the nobility were forced to give up one or the other. Some nobles were able to hold on to their positions in both countries, but as time went on double allegiance became awkward⁶.

By the year 1250 the biggest reason for the use of French in the court had been lost. Since the nobility in England had lost their estates in France, they did not have any reason to not think of themselves as English⁷. And by the 1250s a great opposition against foreigners was forming in England, and a sense of a national feeling drove the middle class together.

In the thirteen century the emphasis on French in the court changed, it was no longer a first language but a language of the polite society. But at the same time English was becoming the common language amongst the upper classes, and it is at this time that many French words are adopted into English⁸. It is at this time that much of the literature intended for the upper classes is

² Baugh 2002:112

³ Baugh 2002:113

⁴ Baugh 2002:114

⁵ Baugh 2002:128

⁶ Baugh 2002:129

⁷ Baugh 2002:130

⁸ Baugh 2002:135

translated from French into English. Of these translations and writings the romance was most popular⁹.

At the same time as English is taking its slow but steady steps to become the main language of the English people the courts and Parliament still use French as their main language. French remained as the language of lawyers and the court until 1362¹⁰. And that same year the chancellor opened Parliament for the first time with a speech in English.

By the beginning of the fourteenth it is becoming obvious that French is losing its hold over England. The tendency to use English had found its way into both the Church and universities. In the last years of the thirteenth century some monasteries had made a rule that forbid the use of English. In the fourteenth century Oxford resorts to similar methods as the Church, where the university required its students to translate into both English and French¹¹.

In 1356 it was ordered that courts in London should be held in English. And in 1362 Parliament passed *Statute of Pleading* which was to be in effect from January 1363, and it said that all law proceedings should be conducted in English¹².

But the biggest effect on the importance of English has to be the effect that the Black Death had on the population. In the summer of 1348 the plague was discovered in the south west of England and it moved rapidly. By 1349 reached its height but continued its way north into early 1350. According to *A History of the English Language* as much as forty percent of the clergy died during the epidemic and thirty percent of the rest of the population died¹³.

The aftermath of the Plague was serious shortage of labour and that, in turn, increased wages of those who survived. The Plague increased the importance of the working classes and therefore increased the importance of English. A language is only as important as the importance of its speakers¹⁴.

But the Norman Conquest and the Plague were not the only occurrences that had great influence on English. There are also mundane things that had great influences on the language, for instance, the printing press and increase in general education both had great influences on how English developed.

In the year 1476 William Caxton introduced mass printing to England. He had learned this technique in Germany and less than a century later manuscript books were almost obsolete¹⁵. The increase in English titles grew rapidly and by 1640 more than twenty thousand titles had appeared¹⁶. This mass production of books and pamphlets decreased the cost of books and made them accessible to more people. All this printing in large quantities also helped promote a standard uniformed language.

⁹ Baugh 2002:155

¹⁰ Baugh 2002:146

¹¹ Baugh 2002:139

¹² Baugh 2002:149

¹³ Baugh 2002:142

¹⁴ Baugh 2002:143

¹⁵ Baugh 2002:200

¹⁶ Baugh 2002:200

But this production of books alone cannot take all the credit for its influence on English. This influence would not have been possible were it not for the fact that education was becoming more and more common. In the years following popular education was only on the rise. This can be seen in the increased number of schools and the rise of the novel¹⁷. By the 1660s literacy had become a basic skill for man, all this material would not have been published if there had not been any market for it. This can also be seen in the fact that schoolbooks started to cater to the lower classes as well as the upper ones¹⁸.

Religion

Church – chapel – temple

Some Christians only go to *church* for Easter, Christmas, weddings, christenings, confirmations and funerals. People of other religions, for example Jewish, Muslim, Hindi and Buddhism, will be said to go to *temple* as a synonym for all of their houses of worship. If you go to *chapel* you are going to a sanctuary.

The word *church* is an O.E. word. Originally it was spelled *cirice* and is derived from the West Germanic (W.Gmc.) word *kîrika*¹⁹. You can find the same word with a similar spelling in other Germanic languages e.g. Old Norse (O.N.) *kirkia/kyrkja*, Old Swedish (O.S.) *kirika/kerika* and Middle Dutch (M.Du.) *kerke*. This word has been used since the year 300 to refer to Christian houses of worship. The word *church* means “The building, the Lord’s house. A building for public Christian worship.”

The word *temple* is an early Latin loanword with the meaning “building for worship,” it derives from the Latin word *templum*. *Temple* means “an edifice or place regarded primarily as the dwelling-place or ‘house’ of a deity or deities; hence, an edifice devoted to divine worship.” This word has been in the English language since circa 825. And in 971 the meaning changed to “historically applied to the sacred buildings of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and other ancient nations; now, to those of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and the ethnic religions generally.

The word *chapel* is found in English in the c1225. It comes from the Old French (O.Fr.) word *chapele*, which comes from the late Latin word *cappella*. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* the word *chapel* originally means: Little cloak or cape, dim. of *cappa*, cloak, cape, cope. From the *cappella* or cloak of St. Martin, preserved by the Frankish kings as a sacred relic, which borne before them in battle, and used to give sanctity to oaths, the name was applied to the sanctuary in which this was preserved under the care of its *cappellani* or ‘chaplains’, and thence generally to a

¹⁷ Baugh 2002:201

¹⁸ Knowles 1997:95

¹⁹ Unless other is stated all etymological information comes from the Oxford English Dictionary.

sanctuary containing holy relics, attached to a palace, etc., and so to any private sanctuary or holy place, and finally to any apartment or building for orisons or worship, not being a church, the earlier name for which was oratorium.

All three of these words still stand side by side and none has shown any signs on giving way to the other. And though *church* and *temple* both refer to places of worship they do not refer to the same places of worship and *chapel* means “any sanctuary.” *Chapel* is different from *church* and *temple* because you don’t have to be in the house of God to go to a *chapel*. You can for instance find *chapels* in hospitals and funeral homes.

Holy – sacred –consecrated

We say that our bible is a *holy* scripture. Our churches are said to stand on *consecrated* ground. And in India cows are *sacred*.

The word *holy* comes from O.E. and in the beginning it was spelled *hálig*. Other Germanic words meaning the same are spelled as so: O.N. *heilagr*, O.S. *hêlag*, O.Fris. *hêlech* and O.H.G. *heilag*. *Holy* is first found in English texts from c1000. And it meant “kept or regarded as inviolate from ordinary use, and appropriated or set apart for religious use or observance; consecrated, dedicated, sacred.”

To be able to look at the etymology of the word *sacred* one must look at the obsolete word *sacre*. *Sacre* comes into English around the year 1225. It means “to consecrate (the elements, or the body and blood of Christ) in the Mass.” It comes from the Latin word *sacrāre*. *Sacred* is formed from the word *sacre* and the ending *-ed*. The suffix *-ed* was added to Latin loanwords to assimilate them to the native words they resembled. *Sacred* means “consecrated to; esteemed especially dear or acceptable to a deity.” *Sacred* is first found in English in c1380.

Consecrated is from 1552, it derives from the Latin word *consecrāt-*. *Consecrated* means “dedicated to a sacred purpose; made sacred; hallowed, sanctified.” In 1601 *consecrated* gained the more specific meaning “of a church, churchyard, or burialground: Set apart with religious forms by a bishop, for public worship, or the burial of the dead, and having such ecclesiastical and legal status as this gives in England and some parts of the Commonwealth.”

Goodness – virtue – probity

Goodness is from O.E. and was in the beginning spelled *gódnes*. It is put together from the word *good* and the suffix *-ness*. *Good* derives from the O.E. word *gód*. The meaning “having in adequate degree those properties which a thing of the kind ought to have” is from c1000. But the meaning “untainted, fit to eat” is from the years 805-31. It can be found in other Germanic languages with similar spelling e.g. O.N. *góðr*, O.Fris. and O.S. *gôd* and Goth. *gôps*.

Goodness means “the quality or condition of being good.” It is first found in texts dating from c888.

Virtue is first found in texts from around 1225. It comes from Anglo-Fr. and O.Fr. and was spelled *vertu*. It can also be found in Latin with the spelling *virtūt-*. The Latin word has the meaning “manliness, valour, worth etc..” But when *virtue* came into English it meant “conformity of life and conduct with the principles of morality; voluntary observance of the recognized moral laws or standards of right conduct; abstention on moral grounds from any form of wrong-doing or vice.” Since c1320 people have been talking about the seven *virtues*. And a good Christian knows and hopefully to some extent tries to live by them.

Probity is from the year 1514. It comes from the Latin word *probitās* which means “goodness, honesty, modesty.” In English it means “Moral excellence, integrity, rectitude, uprightness; conscientiousness, honesty, sincerity.”

Law

Ask – Question – Interrogate

When Timmy was five he *asked* “Mummy, can I have chocolate chip cookies?” He was seven when he started to *question* if it were in fact chocolate chip cookies his mother was giving him. And when he was twelve he *interrogated* his mother until she caved in and told him the truth. He hadn’t been eating chocolate chip cookies she had been giving him raisin cookies all these years.

The O.E. verb *to ask* comes from the earlier form *áscian*. It can be compared to other words of the Germanic root. It was *áskia* in Old Frisian (O.Fris.), *êscôn/êscan* in O.S. and *eiscôn* in Old High German (OHG). Up until the c.1600 *ax* was an accepted variant of *ask*. When you *ask* about something you can be looking for answers ranging from a simple yes/no, to; “Yes, I admit it, it was I who killed Professor Plum in the dining room with a candlestick... and yes the earth is round.” *Ask* means “to call for; to call for an answer; to call for a thing desired, to make a request.” Just as Timmy did when he asked to have cookies, he was asking for a thing desired.

Question is first found in the language in around 1300. It comes from the Anglo-Fr. word *questiun* which comes from the O.Fr. word *question*. And the O.Fr. word comes from the L. word *quæstiōnem*. It means “the interrogative statement of some point to be investigated or discussed; a problem; hence a matter forming, or capable of forming, the basis of a problem; the subject involving more or less difficulty or uncertainty.” When you *question* something, then you doubt it, just like Timmy did at the tender age of seven.

The verb *to interrogate* is first found in texts from 1485. It is derived from the Latin word *interrogāre*. And it means “to ask questions of, to question (a person), esp. closely or in formal manner; to examine by questions.”

When you, in the modern sense of the word, *interrogate* someone then you are *questioning* someone, who most likely, doesn't want to be *questioned*. You can be both *questioned* and *interrogated* by the police. The difference is mostly that a witness and a person of interest that is not yet under suspicion are *questioned*. But a person of interest that is under suspicion of having committed a crime is *interrogated* not *questioned*.

Take – apprehend

When you *apprehend* something then you understand it. When you are *apprehended* then you most likely have done something wrong and you are now in police custody. If you have *apprehensions* then you are fearful of something.

Apprehend is derived from the Latin word *adprehendĕre*. In 1513 it was first recorded in English with the meaning “to seize (a person) in name of law, to arrest.” But it was first found in texts from 1398 with the meaning “to learn, gain practical acquaintance with.”

The word *take* can have so many meanings that it would take too long to list them all here. But you use the verb *take* when you lift something e.g. “I *took* two bags in each hand.” When a man gets married it can be said that “he *took* a wife.” A child can accuse its sibling of stealing by using the verb: “Mum! David *took* my I-pod and won't give it back!”

Take is from late O.E. and was originally spelled *tacan*. When *take* is compared to other Germanic words one can find *taka* in O.N. and *tage* in Da.

The earliest meaning of the word *take* is: “To lay hold upon, get into one's hands by force of artifice; to seize, capture, esp. in war; to make prisoner; hence to get into one's power, to win by conquest (a fort, town, country). Also, to apprehend (a person charged with an offence), to arrest; to seize (property) by legal process, as by distraint,” and it is circa from the year 1100.

Doom – Judge

Today the word *doom* is rather ominous. Today it is mostly used in an ill boding context, for instance you can be said to have met your *doom*, other than that this word is seldom used. But the verb *to deem* is derived from the word *doom* and is much more commonly used in English now.

The word *doom* comes from the O.E. word *dóm*, meaning “a statute, law, enactment.” Similar words can also be found in other Germanic languages e.g. O.Fris. *dóm*, O.N. *dómr*, Gothic (Goth.) *doms*. The modern meaning of “final fate, destruction, ruin, death” is from c.1600 and is then found in Shakespeare's sonnet xiv.

The verb to *deem* comes from O.E. *dæman/déman*, which means “to give or pronounce judgement; to act as judge, sit in judgement; to give one’s decision, sentence, or opinion; to arbitrate.” It is derived from the base of the O.E. word *dom*.

Judge is from around 1225. And it means “To form an opinion about; to exercise the mind upon (something) so as to arrive at a correct or sound notion of it; to estimate; to appraise.” It comes from the Anglo-Fr. word *juger* which in turn is derived from the O.Fr. word *jugier* and it means “to judge.” The O.Fr. word *jugier* is then again derived from the Latin word *jūdicāre* which means “to judge.”

Miscellaneous

Family life

Kin – family

People living in a Western society will, during their lifetime, have to fill out many forms where they are asked to list their emergency contact or next of *kin*.

Kin is an Old English word, in the beginning it was spelled *cyn*. It is first found in texts from c825. A similar word with the same meaning can also be found in other Germanic languages e.g. O.N. *kyn*, O.S. *kunni*, O.Fris. *kin, ken, kon* and Goth. *kuni*. *Kin* means “a group of persons descended from a common ancestor, and so connected by blood-relationship; a family, stock, clan.” So *kin* represents your closest *family*, your parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

The word *family* comes from the Latin word *familia*. It is first recorded in English in circa 1400. The earliest meaning, which is now obsolete, is “the servants of a house or establishment; the household.” The meaning “The body of persons who live in one house or under one head, including parents, children, servants, etc.” is from 1545.

But the use of the word *kin* has been slowly fading with the word *family* taking centre stage. But you can still see remnants of the word in aforementioned forms. The word *kin* can be used in much the same way as the word *family*. Even though it sounds very Scottish you can still say: “We’re *kin*, you and I”, it still has the same meaning as “we’re *family*, you and I”.

Motherly – Maternal

You do not have to be a *mother* to be *motherly*. A woman that is said to be *motherly* can be a kind hearted, gentle, helpful, loving person. The word *motherly* is put together from the word *mother* and the suffix *-ly*. *Motherly* is an O.E. word and was originally spelled *módorlic*. It is first found in texts from c1000. It means “of or pertaining to a mother.” Around the year 1240 *motherly* had gained the meaning “befitting or characteristic of a mother.”

Mother is first found in English texts that date from c1050. It means “a female parent; a woman who has given birth to a child.” In the beginning it was spelled *móder*. It can be compared to other Germanic languages e.g. O.Fris. *môdar*, O.S. *môdar/muodar*, O.H.G. *muotar*, O.N. *móðer*. The *-th* spelling is from the beginning of the 16c, but the pronunciation is thought to be older.

The suffix *-ly* is used to form adjectives from nouns. And it gives the adjective the meaning “having the qualities appropriate to, characteristic of, befitting.” So when a woman is said to be *motherly* she is said to have the attributes of a *mother*, it doesn't mean that she is a *mother*.

Maternal can be used in many ways; a *maternal* grandmother is the mother of your mother. When things are inherited *maternally* you have inherited something from your mother. You can trace your family history through the *maternal* line. That is when you only look at the mothers in your family, your mother, your grandmother, your great grandmother and so on. The word *maternal* is first found in English in 1481. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary* this is the earliest recorded use both in French and English. And then it was used in the meaning “mother tongue, native language.” This meaning is now rare. But in 1492 *maternal* gained the meaning “of or pertaining to a mother or mothers; characteristic of mothers or motherhood; motherly.” *Maternal* comes into English from the Latin word *māternus*.

Fatherly – Paternal

The male parent is defined by the word *father*, which was spelled *fæder* in O.E.. The word *father* means “one by whom a child is of has been begotten, a male parent, the nearest male ancestor.” Similar words with the same meaning can be found in other Germanic languages, e.g. O.S. *fadar/fader*, O.H.G. *fater*, O.N. *faðir/faðer*.

The suffix *-ly* is to form adjectives from nouns and gives the adjective the meaning “having qualities of, appropriate to, fitting.” So when a man is said to be *fatherly* he is said to have the attributes of a *father*, it doesn't mean that he is a *father*.

Fatherly is found in texts from around 1000. And then it meant “of or pertaining to ancestors; ancestral.” But the meaning “resembling a father” is from 1577.

Paternal comes from the Late Latin word *paternālis*. *Paternal* means “of or belonging to a father or fathers; characteristics of a father; fatherly.”

Even though the word *father* is found in O.E. it is still a Latin loanword. Since *father* is written with an *f* we know that it has gone through a change which has become known as Grimm's law. And that means that *father* came into English through another related Germanic language.

What Grimm's law describes is that words beginning with *p* in IE were preserved as such in Latin and Greece but changed to an *f* in the Germanic languages. This can also be seen if the words fish and piscis are compared. Fish is an O.E. word but can be found in other Germanic languages with an *f* spelling e.g. in O.N. it was fiskr and in Ger. the word is Fisch. But all these words are all derived from the Latin word piscis.

House – Mansion – Manor

It depends mostly on wealth and social status whether you live in a *house*, *mansion* or on a *manor*.

The word *house* comes from the O.E word *hús*, which means "a building for human habitation." If you compare the O.E. word to other Germanic languages you can see that most of them have the same word. For instance you can find *hûs* in O.N., O.Fris., O.S. and O.H.G.. It is first found in English texts from c1000.

If you live in a *mansion* then you are a member of the upper class. This word finds its way into English first in c1340. Then it meant "the action of remaining, abiding, dwelling, or staying in place." But since around 1512 *mansion* has meant "the chief residence of a lord; the 'capital messuage' of a manor, a manor house. Hence, in later use, a large and stately residence." *Mansion* comes from the O.Fr. word *mansion*, which in turn is derived from the Latin word *mansiōnem*.

If you live on a *manor*, then yet again, you would be a member of the upper class. This word finds its way into English in c1290. It means "a mansion, habitation; a country residence; the principal house of an estate." Like with the word *mansion*, *manor* comes from French and is derived from the O.Fr. word *manoir*. *Manoir* is derived from the Latin word *manēre*.

Morals

Heartily – Cordial

John had had a miserable Monday, in fact he felt so miserable that if he would have come cross a real life Care Bear he would have kicked it, and he was really contemplating on how he could paint the rainbow black. He felt that the song Painted Black with the Rolling Stones captured his feelings perfectly. John came home in a thunderous mood; his five year old son Jamie greeted him with a question: "Dad, what do you call an Igloo without a toilet?" And John, in his thunderous mood, answered, in a not so *cordial* way: "Jamie! I don't have the faintest idea," and Jamie said: "You call it an Ig!" and started to giggle. John stood there for a few moments and watched his son laugh so whole *heartily* and all his worries melted away, life became tolerable again. He stopped contemplating how he could paint the rainbow black and if he would in fact kick a Care Bear if appeared in front of him.

The word *heartily* is put together from the words *Hearty + ly* and that is put together from the words *heart + y*. The ending *-y* is adj. suffix meaning “‘having the qualities of’ or ‘full of’ that which is denoted by the substantive to which it is added.” It comes from the O.E. ending *-ig*.

Heartily means “in a hearty manner. With full or unrestrained exercise of real feeling; with genuine sincerity; earnestly, sincerely, really; with goodwill, cordially.” *Heartily* finds its way into English in c1300.

Heart is from O.E. and was originally spelled *heorte*. It can be compared to other Germanic languages such as, in O.S. you can find *herta*, O.N. has *hjarta* and Goth. *hairtô*.

Cordial comes into English in the late 14c.. It means “of or belonging to the heart” which is an obsolete meaning nowadays. It comes directly from the Fr. word *cordial* which in turn is derived from the M.L. word *concordiālis* which means “of or for the heart.” The meaning “heartfelt, from the heart” is from c1477. If described as *cordial* in the meaning courteous, gracious or friendly then the one describing you is using *cordial* with the meaning the word gained in 1795.

Wish – Desire

Steven was, in his mind, an extremely misunderstood teenager and very often the neighbours could hear him scream: “MUM! I *wish* that you would understand that it’s my sole heart’s *desire* is to become a professional Bat Cave Scavenger!” To which his mother would reply: “But my dearest Steven, how am I to explain to your grandmother that you want to collect bat guano for a living!”

The word *wish* is a modern version of the O.E. word *wýscan* which meant “to hold dear, love, desire.” Other Germanic languages have both similar and not so similar spellings of this same word, e.g. O.N. *æskja*, Dan. *ønske*, Swed. *önska*, O.H.G. *wunsc*. All of these words mean “to wish.” *Wish* can be found in texts from c897 with the meaning “to have or feel a wish for; to desire.”

Desire is from c1230. It comes into English through the O.Fr. word *desirer* which means “to have a strong wish for; to long for, covet, crave.” That in turn comes from the Latin word *dēsīderāre* which means “to miss, long for, desire.”

Weariness – Lassitude

If Geoff could describe himself he would say that he was relaxed, other would call him lazy. His grandmother was one of the first to discover exactly how lazy, or in his terms how relaxed he was. For many, many weeks she had been waiting for him to realize that it was not cool to live with your ailing grandmother, she was growing *weary* of his *lassitude*.

Weary is from O.E. and was originally spelled *wærig*. It means “having the feeling of loss of strength, languor, and need for rest, produced by continued exertion (physical or mental),

endurance of severe pain, or wakefulness; tired, fatigued. Now in stronger sense: Intensely tired, worn out with fatigue." *Weary* is first found in texts which date from c825.

Weariness is put together from the word *weary* and the suffix *-ness*, which was spelled *-nes* in O.E.. In O.E. *-nes* is the suffix most usually attached to adjectives and past participles to form substantives expressing a state or condition. *Weariness* is first found in texts which date from c900. *Weariness* means "weary condition; extreme tiredness or fatigue resulting from exertion, continued endurance of pain, or want of sleep."

Lassitude is first found in English in the 1533. It comes from the Fr. word *lassitude*. *Lassitude* is taken into M.Fr. from the Latin word *lassitudo*. It means "the condition of being weary whether in body or mind; a flagging of the bodily or mental powers; indifference to exertion; weariness; an instance of this."

Fear – Terror – Trepidation

Jane is an old lady. When she was raising her children she would sometimes get bouts of *trepidation*. Her youngest son was a great *terror* and was *feared* by all the other children in their street. She herself was afraid of her son and that *fear* is what caused her *trepidation*, she went to her GP and he prescribed her a bottle of Valium. After that no one *feared* her youngest son, because she misunderstood the doctor on purpose, and gave her son the pills.

Fear, the noun, is an O.E. word and was originally spelled *fær* and it meant "sudden calamity, danger." *Fær* can be compared to O.S. *fâr* (meaning ambush), O.N. *fár* (meaning harm, distress, deception), Du. *gevaar* and Ger. *Gecahr* (both meaning danger). The modern meaning "the emotion of pain or uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger, or by the prospect of some possible evil" is first found in c1175. But around the year 1000 *fear* is found in *Beowulf* with the meaning "a sudden and terrible event; peril."

Fear, the verb, was *færan* in O.E. and it meant "to terrify." The meaning "to feel fear; to regard with fear" is from 1393. *Fear* is related to the O.S. word *fârôn* which means "to lie in wait" and the M.Du. word *vaeren* which means "to fear."

In c1375 *terror* came into English from O.Fr and it meant the same as it does now: "great fear." It was derived from the O.Fr. word *terreur*. The French borrowed this word from the Latin word *terrōrem*. *Terror* means "the state of being terrified or greatly frightened; intense fear, fright, or dread." Since 1889 people have been describing wicked children as *terrors*.

Trepidation has been found in the language since 1605. It is derived from the Latin word *trepidātiōnem*. It means "tremulous, vibratory, or reciprocating movement; vibration; oscillation,

rocking; an instance of this; also involuntary trembling of the limbs, as in paralytic affections; tremor.”

Cuisine

Sheep/lamb – mutton

When you go to a restaurant and read the menu, you can often have both *mutton* and *lamb* but never *sheep*. The addition of being able to have *lamb* is quite new. After the Norman conquest of England, the whole upper class was French. Since the upper class was French speaking and the lower class was English speaking there became a difference in usage of words. The French speaking upper class used the French words for the food that was on their plate. And so the lower class, English speaking, servants ended on using the English word *sheep* for the living animal and the French word *mutton* for the flesh of the dead animal.

According to *A Cultural History of the English Language*, it was John Wallis (1653) who first noted that animals with English names took on French names when served up as meat on the lord and lady’s table²⁰.

The word *sheep* is derived from the O.E. word *scéap* or *scép*. *Sheep* means “any animal of the ruminant genus *ovis* (sometimes horned), closely allied to the goats; esp. of the widely domesticated species *ovis aries*, of which there are many varieties, and which is reared for its flesh, fleece and skin.” The word *sheep* is found in texts from c825. The word is also found in texts from 1540 bearing the meaning “stupid, timid person.” But it can be found in biblical texts from c950 where they talk about the wolf in sheep’s clothing (Matt. vii. 15). As well they talk about separating the sheep from the goats in Matt. xxv.33. People with a bad character have been named *black-sheep* since 1792.

Lamb is an O.E. word. It is found in texts from c725. In 725 it meant “the young of the sheep.” But in 1620 it added the meaning “the flesh of the lamb used as food.” *Lamb* has the same spelling in many Germanic languages e.g. O.S., O.H.G., O.N. and Goth.

Mutton arrives in the language in c1290. It is derived from the O.Fr. word *moton* meaning “sheep”. The English use of the word translates as “the flesh of sheep, used as food.” But since the word *lamb* has found its way into the cuisine as well the meaning for *mutton* has changed yet again. Nowadays *mutton* does not mean “flesh of sheep used as food,” now it means “flesh of sheep older than one year used as food.”

²⁰ Knowles 1997:56

Ox – Beef

The main difference in the words *ox* and *beef* is; the first word describes the living breathing animal but the latter describes the product after the animal has been slaughtered.

Ox comes from O.E. and used to be *oxa* with the plural *oxan*. The O.E. word can be compared to other Germanic words e.g. the O.N. word is *uxe*, *oxe* the M.Du. word is *osse* and the O.H.G. word is *ohse*. *Ox* means “the domestic bovine quadruped (sexually distinguished as bull and cow); in common use, applied to the male castrated and used for draught purposes, or reared to serve as food.” It found in texts from c825

The word *beef* has been in the English language since the 1300s.. It is derived from the O.Fr. word *boef*, but the Mod. Fr. word is *bœuf*. The French word is derived from the Latin word *bovem*. It means “the flesh of an ox, bull, or cow, used as food. Often preceded by words indicating the exact part of the animal, e.g. sirloin, ribs of beef, etc.”

Calf – Veal

Calf is from O.E. and was originally spelled *cælf* and it means “young cow.” It can be compared to other Germanic languages, e.g.: M.Du. *calf*, O.N. *kálfr*, Ger. *Kalb*. In the English language *calf* refers to the living breathing animal that goes out to pasture eats grass and moo’s. A calf is an animal of the bovine family that is not yet one year old.

When you go to a restaurant and you have a craving to eat something that says moo, you would either order *veal* or *beef*. The only difference between these words being the age of the animal when it met its maker. *Veal* is from c1386 and means “the flesh of a calf as an article of diet”. and comes from the Anglo-Fr. word *vel* and from O.Fr. word *veel*.

Pig/Swine – Pork

Tommy spends every other weekend with his dad, they are great friends and Tommy always has a great time with his father. Tommy’s greatest passion in life is animals and he has big plans for his future. He has decided that he wants to be a farmer, and not any regular farmer, he wants to be a *pig* farmer. Because of this little boy’s passion, he and his father will often go to the local petting zoo when they are together, and on the way home, they stop by the butchers and buy *pork* and have it for tea.

The word *pig* is thought to be from O.E. and is thought to have been spelled **picga* or *pigga*. In the beginning *pig* meant “the young of swine; ‘a young sow or boar.” It is found in English texts from c1225. But the word *swine* has been gradually giving way to the word *pig*. So now you talk about a *pig* and its *piglet* but not a *swine* and its *pig*.

Swine was *swín* in O.E. and this word can be found as *swîn* in O.Fris., O.S. and M.L.G., in M.Du. it was *swjin* and in O.N. it was *svín* and remains so in Icelandic. *Swine* means “an animal of the genus *sus* or family *suidæ*, comprising bristle-bearing non-ruminant hoofed mammals, of which the full-grown male is called *boar*, the full-grown female a *sow*; esp. the common species *sus scrofa*, domesticated from early times by Gentile nations for its flesh, and regarded as a type of greediness and uncleanness.” *Swine* is first found in English texts from c725.

When you have *pork* for dinner you are eating a *pig*. The word *pork* comes into English in 1290. In English it means “flesh of a swine used as food; *spec.* the fresh flesh.” It is derived from the Latin word *porcus* meaning “swine, hog.”

Deer – Venison

If you take a walk through almost any forest you might be lucky and spot a *deer*. If your favourite movie is *Bambi* then you can be said to like a ‘coming of age’ movie, starring a *deer*. If *venison* is your favourite game to eat then you like to eat *Bambi* and the rest of his family.

Deer comes from the O.E. word *díor/déor* meaning “A beast, usually a quadruped as distinguished from birds and fishes; but sometimes like *beast*, applied to animals of lower orders.” In the beginning *deer* was a general word for animal but was often restricted to wild animal. *Deer* can be compared to other words in languages related to O.E. e.g. O.Fris *diar/dier* and O.N. **djúr* (Icel. *dýr*, Sw. *djur* and Da. *Dyr*.) It was in the M.E. that *deer* gained its modern meaning “the general name of a family of ruminant quadrupeds, distinguished by the possession of deciduous branching horns or antlers, and by the presence of spots on the young: the various genera and species being distinguished as *rein-deer*, *moose-deer*, *red deer*, *fallow deer*.”

Around the year 1300 people started using the word *venison*. *Venison* means “the flesh of an animal killed in the chase of by hunting and used as food; formerly applied to the flesh of the *deer*, *boar*, *hare*, *rabbit* or other game animal, now almost entirely restricted to the flesh of various species of *deer*.” The word *venison* is derived from the Anglo-Fr. word *venesoun* the O.Fr. word was *venison*.

Abstract terms

Spell – enchantment

If you are under a *spell*, in the magical sense of the word, then you are being forced to do things against your will, someone is controlling you like a puppet. If you are *enchanted* you can be either under a *spell* or in the highest form of delight. So if the object of your desire walks into a room then you can be *enchanted* to meet said person.

Spell can be first found in texts from c888. Then it meant “discourse, narration, speech.” *Spell* is an O.E. word and was spelled both *spel* and *spell*. Since *spell* is an O.E. word it can be compared to other Germanic words with the same meaning e.g. O.S. *spel*, O.N. *spjall*, Goth. *spill*. It is in 1579 that *spell* gains the meaning “a set or words, a formula or verse, supposed to possess occult or magical powers; a charm or incantation; a means of accomplishing enchantment or exorcism.”

Enchantment is from 1297. It is put together from *enchant* and the suffix *-ment*. The suffix originally occurred in French loanwords. It is the same as the Latin suffix *-mentum*. This suffix is sometimes added to verb stems to show the results or product of the action.

Enchantment is “the action or process of enchanting, or of employing magic or sorcery.” *Enchantment* comes from the O.Fr. word *enchantment* which means “to bewitch, charm” in turn the O.Fr word is derived from the Latin word *incantāre* which means “to sing against.” The meaning of things being *enchanting* as in alluring is from the 1670s.

So it can be said that both words have kept and changed their meaning. *Spell* having gained some magical potency and *enchantment* having lost some of its magical potency.

Might – Power

You cannot be sure who would win the fight if there ever was one between *Mighty* mouse and the *Power* Rangers.

Might was in O.E. spelled *miht*. And it can be compared to other words meaning the same in other Germanic languages, e.g. O.N. *matr*, O.H.G. and M.H.G. *math* and Goth. *mahts*. It means “of persons or living beings, nations, etc., with reference to bodily or mental power, commanding influence, military resources, extent of dominion, etc.” It is found in English texts from around the year 900.

Power finds its way into English in c1325. It comes from the O.Fr. word *poër/poeir*. And it means “ability to do or effect something or anything, or to act upon a person or thing.”

Stench – Aroma

In Modern English it is not a very good thing when things start to omit *stench*. *Stench* nowadays means “offensive odour, stink.”

Stench is an O.E. word and in the beginning it was spelled *stenc* and was the common word for smell. *Stench* had a neutral meaning, so if you talked about *stench* you could either be talking about a pleasant or unpleasant smell. It can be compared to other Germanic languages O.S. has the word *stanc* and O.H.G. uses the word *stanch*. *Stench* means “an odour, a smell (pleasant or unpleasant); also , the sense of smell.”

In c1220 the word *aroma* came into English. It came from the Latin word *arōma* and in the beginning it meant: “Spice; usually in pl. spices.” This meaning is obsolete and in 1814 it has taken

on the meaning “The distinctive fragrance exhaled from a spice, plant etc.; gen. an agreeable odour, a sweet smell.”

Time – Age – Epoch

Time is an O.E. word and was originally spelled *tíma*. It means “a limited stretch or space of continued existence, as the interval between two successive events or acts, or the period through which an action, condition, or state continues; a finite portion of ‘time’.” *Time* can be compared to the words *timi* in O.N. and *timme* in Swed..

Age is found in the language in c1325. It means “long but indefinite period in human history.” It comes from the O.Fr. word *aäge/eäge*, which in turn comes from the late Latin word *ætaticum*. It means “a period of existence.”

Epoch arrives in English in 1614. It comes from the late Latin word *epocha*. It means “a fixed point in the reckoning of time” and “the initial point assumed in a system of chronology, an era. Also in a wider sense, any date from which succeeding years are numbered” e.g. when John got married it was an *epoch* in his life. As in now John was no longer a single man with little to no responsibilities, he was now a man whom others depended upon.

Various words

Rise – Mount – Ascend

You can be said to *rise* when you stand up from your chair. You *mount* your horse when you take your seat in the saddle. And, finally, you can be said to *ascend* to Heaven.

Rise was spelled *rísan* in O.E.. It can be compared to words with the same meaning in other Germanic languages e.g. O.Fris. *rīsa*, M.Du. *rīsen*, O.S. *rīsan*, O.N. and Icel. *rīsa*. The meaning “to get up from a sitting, kneeling, or lying posture; to assume a standing position; to get upon one’s feet” is from c1200.

Mount comes into English from the French word *mont* in the 12th century. It means “a mountain, lofty hill; from the 17th century in prose use chiefly a more or less conical hill of moderate height rising from a plain, a hillock.”

When a priest talks about someone *ascending* to Heaven he is using a word of a Latin origin. *Ascend* found its way into English in c1382 and the original Latin word had the spelling *ascendēre* and it held the meaning “to climb.”

Fast – Firm – Secure

John does not feel *secure* unless he is sure of two things: that the knots holding his boat are *fast* and that the mattress he will be sleeping on is *firm*.

The adjective *fast* is an O.E. word, originally spelled *fæst*. It means “firmly fixed in its place; not easily moved or shaken; settled, stable.” It is first found in texts from c888. And it can be compared to other Germanic languages e.g.: O.N. *fastr*, O.Fris. *fest*, O.S. *fast*.

When someone uses the word *firm*, he or she is using a word that in the c1374 was new to the average speaker of English. In the beginning the spelling for *firm* was *ferm* and was borrowed from O.Fr., where the original word was *ferme*. The French borrowed this word from Latin where it

was *firmus*. The 1374 meaning of *firm* was “of non-material things: Fixed, settled, established. Of a decree, law or sentence: Immutable.”

In the 1530s a new word joined *fast/firm* family, and that was *secure*. *Secure* means “without care, careless; free from care, apprehension or anxiety, or alarm; overconfident.” It comes from the Latin word *sēcūrus*.

Fire – Flame – Conflagration

The *conflagration* of the forest was traced to the group of young boys who thought they were only starting a *campfire*. Boy scouts plus cold plus *flame* plus no supervision equals disaster.

The word *fire* comes from the O.E. word *fȳr*. Similar spelling can be found in other Germanic languages e.g. O.S, O.Fris and O.H.G. *fiur* and Icel. *fúrr*. In c825 *fire* meant “the natural agency or active principle operative in combustion; popularly conceived as a substance visible in the form of flame or of ruddy glow or incandescence.”

When you light a *flame* you are lighting a small fire. You talk about the *flame* of a candle, a match or a lighter. But *flame* has been in English since around 1340. It comes from French, the O.Fr. word was *flambé/flamme*. The French words were both borrowed from the Latin word *flamma*. In 1340 the word *flame* meant “a portion of ignited vapour, often spire-like or tongue-like.”

In 1555 *conflagration* found its way into English. It came either from the Fr. word *conflagration* or directly from the L. word *conflagrātiōnem*. It means “the burning up of (anything) in a destructive fire; consumption by a blazing fire,” this meaning is now obsolete. The modern meaning is not that different, now it means “a great and destructive fire; the burning or blazing of a large extent or mass of combustible matter, e.g. of a town, a forest, etc.”

Conclusion

England went through many changes in the years 1066 to 1500. First, falling under French rule and therefore getting French speaking nobility which led to segregation via language. Then, later, when England lost its ties to France the biggest reason for using French in England was gone. The biggest change England underwent was the prestige of the English language. Before 1066 English was used everywhere but the Church which used Latin. But after 1066 life had changed. Since the country was under French rule, the king, court and legislature spoke French. But the lower classes spoke English.

Under the French rule English became to be regarded as an uncultured language. But after the King John lost Normandy due to his amorous adventures the main reason to use French in England was lost. But when the English upper classes started to learn English they brought many loanwords into English.

After the Plague struck England in 1349 there were fewer survivors of the working class. This increased the demand for workers which in a way increased the importance of the English language, because any language is only as important as its speakers.

This can best be seen in how the language grew in prestige after the English started to expand their commonwealth. This shows that a language is only as important as its speakers.

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