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Essay

## The impact of war on language: loanwords in English

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Social change is a sociological concept that refers to the dynamic process of change in all social phenomena and its results, which arises from a variety of causes and conflict is one of them. Being one of the most obvious manifestations of international conflicts, wars attract major attentions by socialists and researchers (Yang, 2016).

In the 20th century, there have been more than 200 wars in the world, and almost 80 million people have died in wars. In one word, wars are uninterrupted since the emergence of mankind. There are many definitions of war. Mao Zedong once said that war is a continuation of politics. In this regard, war is politics, war itself is a political action and there is no war without politics since the ancient times. Politics is a typical social phenomenon; therefore war is also a social phenomenon (Anon., 1969). Apart from politics and wars, language is also a social phenomenon that emerges with the creation of human society. The development of language is while with the changes of human life (Yuan, 2000). Neither war nor language are social phenomena that exist in isolation. Particularly, the relationship between these two social phenomena can be seen from the development of history and is worthwhile to be investigated.

War has not only brought endless suffering and disasters to mankind, but also contributed to the development of human society. Wars have forced people to migrate on a large scale, which boosts the communication of people from different cultures and speaking different languages. People use language when they communicate, and language is a medium that prompts people to communicate. Through this process a lot of loanwords are created, which inevitably has a great contribution to the development of language. In this essay, we will illustrate the role of war on language development, by citing examples of the development of English. In addition, loanwords are focused to explain how the war catalyzed such development.

There are different types of language contact, the most common of which is lexical borrowing. From the perspective of vocabulary, the whole history of English is a history of lexical borrowing. In its more than 1500 years of evolution, English has absorbed vocabulary from more than 120 languages. It has evolved from the language of a few Germanic clans into the most popular language in the world today, becoming "an Esperanto that is not Esperanto". The origin of modern English loanwords is very wide, including vocabulary from Latin, Ancient Greek, German, French, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, and even Oriental languages such as Chinese, which has not been given much attention, although they were mentioned by linguists as early as the late 19th century (Shengli, 2014), because of its small etymology. Although loanwords from many languages appear in English, French has had the most impact on English. The reason why English vocabulary is so enriched is mainly attributed to its openness and inclusiveness (Siyang, 2009). An American encyclopedia mentions that there is a large amount of loaned words for this language, and any English dictionary has 80 percent of the world's loaned words for other languages, most of which are from Latin, and half of which are derived from French (Holland, 1989).

The most familiar influence of French on English vocabulary is during the Norman Conquest

in 1066. But in fact, the influence of French on English vocabulary has never stopped throughout history. Due to the social and geographical affinity of the two countries, there were exchanges between the ruling classes of England and France long before the Norman Conquest. The exchanges were social, political and ecclesiastical in nature. French words were already existing in English at that time, for example, the French word "castel" replaced the old English word "burg" to indicate a castle where the House of Normandy lived. Words such as "capun (capon)" and "bacun (bacon)" highlight the luxury of French cuisine.

Since 1066, Duke William of France in Normandy sacked the whole of England, i.e. the famous "Norman Conquest". This was immediately followed by the reorganization and restructuring of the British government and upper classes. The growth in the number of French loanwords in the 11th century was not significant, mainly because of the initial period after the Norman Conquest. Only a few French immigrants spoke French, and the English people, including the ruling class, still insisted on using English. As the French eventually settled in England and the two nations of English and French interacted with each other increasingly, they became more and more conscious of the importance of learning each other's languages. First of all, some local British people who want to work in the government department have taken the initiative to learn French. Almost simultaneously, the French, who were the ruling class, learned some English appropriately in order to communicate better with the people they ruled. Thus the number of French words in English sharply increased in the 12th century. For example, many words in government and administration come from the French language ---government, govern, administration, crown, state, empire, realm, reign, royal, prerogative, authority, sovereign, majesty, tyrant, usurp, oppress, court, council, parliament, assembly, treaty, alliance, tax, subsidy, revenue, mayor, etc. There are also many words for clothing that come from the French language --- fashion, dress, habit, coat, collar, embroidery, satin, gown, button, tassel, robe, garment, attire, cloak, veil, lace, fur, etc.

By the 13th century, the conquering Normans and the local English were almost integrated as one nation. It is noteworthy that most of the French loanwords introduced in this century were culturally relevant. In the 14th century, English appeared more often in literature, and people of the upper classes began to use it frequently and practically. By the second half of the 14th century, the use of French was gradually declining. In the following 15th century, French was even more neglected. Although French is no longer the standard spoken language, it was still a sign of the upper classes in the 15th century, and later developed into a culture and trend. The 16th century was a turning point in terms of French loanwords. From the 16th century there were two distinct changes in the influence of French on English vocabulary (Wrenn, 2009). The first point is that most of the French words imported into English are focused on a high level of education or a specific area of expertise. The second is that, in contrast to the earlier French loanwords, which were mostly assimilated into English, the later French loanwords have maintained their original pronunciation, repetition and spelling. The French words borrowed into English in the 16th century were mainly associated with war. The military-technical and business words in French also had a relatively heavy influence on English vocabulary in the 17th century and are still continuing to enter the English language. By the 18th century the varieties of French loanwords were also abundant. The most

significant feature of loanwords in this century is the import of French words associated with the French Revolution. Particularly, the terminology of the French language continues to be imported in the military and the French words began to be imported in diplomatic fields. The 19th century was the time when the most borrowed words were imported from French since Middle Ages. The vocabulary categories were mainly focused on art, textile and home. After that, the second world war occurred in the middle of the 20th century. Britain and France were allies in the second world war, and it is this that has kept the French influence on the English vocabulary alive.

In modern English, after centuries of interaction with France through wars and conquests, the phenomenon of English borrowing French words exists in almost every aspect of daily life. Primarily, the Norman Conquest made French the language used by the upper classes in England, so French loanwords are associated with government and administration. Another large category of French loanwords is related to religion and the church, as the French dominated religious matters throughout the years of their rule in England. These include words such as: carnival, preach, mercy. There are also many loanwords used in military-related contexts, like army, assault, sergeant, soldier, troops. Besides, there are many elegant table culture and dining related words in French, here are just some examples: dinner, table, napkin, beef, pork, boil. The French loanwords also include words for art and architecture, for example, art, architecture, beauty, design, colour, etc. In the field of fashion, there are loanwords such as: barber, beautician, carpenter, painter, institutor.

It is worthwhile to be noticed that when words from French are borrowed into English, some changes are bound to be made. First from its pronunciation, followed by the accent. The latter takes more time, while spelling is the latest to undergo the transformation. Although some French loanwords maintain the classical signs of the French language, when a large amount of them were borrowed into English, they change in form to a greater or lesser extent. This change is called the "English localization of French loanwords". In other words, the longer the loanword is involved and the more frequently it is borrowed, the more likely it is to follow the English pronunciation, repetition and spelling. A fixed pattern in French pronunciation is that the (g) at the end of the word is pronounced (ʒ), which is followed by almost all French accents. There is a similar rule in English; however, this rule is relatively flexible and may occur from the first to the last syllable. In addition, in order to make French loanwords sound more like English, the stress is usually tabulated in front of the word. Taking the word camouflage as an example, at the beginning of the borrowing, the accent position was on the last syllable. Later, with the frequent use of the word, the position of the medial consonant shifted from the final syllable to the first syllable. The words rouge, loge, message, and orange are with the same situation and fully reflect the localization of French loanwords. Although the spelling of French has not changed much since it was borrowed, there are many spelling changes that can be found. For example, the French noun ending "-eur" for "person" and "country" becomes "-er" or "-or" in English. Similarly, the French words racketeur, instituteur, traducteur, erreur, facteur become the English words racketeer, institutor, translator, error, factor.

However, French does not exist solely as a language being not influenced by other languages, its evolution is also accompanied by conquests and wars. French is a member of the Romance and Indo-European language families and has its origins in Latin. Before the Roman conquest and the introduction of Latin, Celtic is the local language spoken in France (now France seems to have been a Celtic-speaking region). The Gallic languages have also become the third branch of the Celtic language family, alongside the Goidelic (Scottish Gaelic, Irish, Manx), and the Brythonic (Welsh, Cornish). Gaul beyond the Alps fell under Roman rule at the end of the second century B.C. Caesar completely unified Gaul in 51 B.C. The Gauls gradually abandoned their Celtic language and learned the Latin language used by their rulers. These Gauls were what came to be known as the Gaulish-Romans, and the Latin they spoke was slightly different from Italian. This general Latin was already influenced by non-Latin languages before the conquest of Gaul. For example, the spread of Christianity from the eastern part of the empire to the west added more foreign elements to Latin, and it was particularly influenced by the Greek language which is used to write the New Testament. Therefore, it is evident that when Latin accompanied the invasion of the Roman Empire to influence other languages, the Latin itself was also influenced.

There are many discussions that why lexical borrowing was frequently occurred through wars, as well as how these words related to wars and conquests are gradually widespread in daily life. One feasible explanation is the use of metaphor. Metaphor is an indispensable linguistic technique in daily conversation, allowing the expresser to illustrate information more vividly and imaginatively. In general, the language of war has a strong metaphorical character. The basis of metaphor is the association in the mind, and the words produced in war are military words with a certain story background or a special meaning. When used, they can be associated with the real situation through their original special meaning. Therefore, the words related to wars are most likely the easiest batch of words to be spread and used in daily life. Especially, some military words are still being used with its original meaning in multiple fields, for example, in reporting sports competitions.

With the introduction and analyses above, it can be concluded that English language has never ceased to have loan words from French, which are closely linked to the history of England and are a product of war history. There are many ways in which the number of English words has grown, such as the use of constructions, but lexical borrowing in English is still responsible for a large part of the growth of the vocabulary. In the course of more than 1500 years of historical development of the English language, some French words have been preserved intact, while others, although their development can still be seen, have been given more new forms and meanings. It can be also revealed that the evolution of language and the phenomenon of lexical borrowing are not unilateral in company with wars. In a war, the more civilized side normally has a more developed grammatical system in their language. Consequently, their language system will inevitably have an effect on the less civilized language system. However, this process would be bilateral, which causes influence on the original language or even create new languages with a more abundant vocabulary and a more matured grammatical system.

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