Englische Wortbildung und ihre Geschichte: Allgemeines
Stefan Thim

A Introduction: the English lexicon, historically

(1) Loanwords in present-day English

The ___ ___ held that every ___ had a ___ ___, and ___ weren’t making much ___ in ____ the English ___ and the speech ___ that owned it. Even more ___ was the ___ of ___ for _____.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>SOED</th>
<th>ALD</th>
<th>GSL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germanic</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(“Inselgermanisch”)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other languages</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

from: M. Scheler, Der englische Wortschatz (Berlin, 1977), 72.

Nick Hornby, High Fidelity:

These were the ones that really hurt. Can you see your name in that lot, Laura? I reckon you’d sneak into the top ten, but there’s no place for you in the top five; those places are reserved for the kind of humiliations and heartbreaks you’re just not capable of delivering. That probably sounds crueler than it is meant to, but the fact is that we’re too old to make each other miserable, and that’s a good thing, not a bad thing, so don’t take your failure to make the list personally. Those days are gone, and good fucking riddance to them; unhappiness really meant something back then. Now it’s just a drag, like a cold or having no money. If you really wanted to mess me up, you should have got to me earlier.

These were the ones that ______. Can you see your name in that lot, Laura? I reckon you’d sneak into the top ten, but there’s no ___ for you in the top five; those ___ are ___ for the kind of ___ and heartbreaks you’re ___ not ___ of ___. That ___ ___ than it is meant to, but the ___ is that we’re too old to make each other ___, and that’s a good thing, not a bad thing, so don’t ___ your ___ to make the ______. Those days are gone, and good fucking ___ to ___; un- ___ ness ___ meant something back then. Now it’s ___ a drag, like a cold or having no ___. If you ___ wanted to ___ me up, you should have ___ to me earlier.

William Labov, “How I got into linguistics, and what I got out of it”:

The current theories held that every individual had a different system, and they weren’t making much progress in describing the English language and the speech community that owned it. Even more mysterious was the problem of accounting for language change. If language is a system for transmitting information from one person to another, it would work best if it stayed put. How do people manage to understand each other if the language keeps changing under their feet?
Borrowing in the history of English (cf. Kastovsky 2006)

Old English (450–1066)
Middle English (1066–1476)
Early Modern English (1476–1700)

Word formation: some basics

(i) Compounding

blackboard, policeman, dog-friendly, Anglo-French, singer-songwriter; craftsman etc.
cwic-seolfor, wif-mann, hūnig-swēte, earn-ċeariġ, were-wulf; dægēs-ċage etc.

(ii) Affixation

un-ædele, un-lagu, un-bindan, be-feohtan; scēp-ere, ċild-hād (?), earm-ful, blōd-iġ

(iii) Conversion / Zero-derivation

cheat – cheat, stop – stop, cash – cash
cum-an – cum-a, beorht – beorht-ian, ār – ār-ian

[1] Stæfcræft is sēo cēg de dāra bōca andġiet unlēcō.

Word formation: some problems

(i) Compounding --> affixation

childhood etc. (OE hād ‘order’); outdo, outline, outbid etc. (out- ≠ ‘out’)

(ii) Productivity

warmth, width, length – *poorth *greetth, *hetth etc.

(iii) Lexicalization

business, disorganized, figurehead etc.

(iv) Opacity

woman, Lord (< OE hlāf-weard), gospel (< OE gōd-spell), boatswain
(5) Borrowing and word-formation

(i) Borrowing as word-formation: loan translations

hælend (L. salvator); forþ-cyþan (L. enuntiare) etc.

(ii) Productivity, again: borrowed affixes

French borrowings: allow & dis-allow, arm & dis-arm, establish & re-establish, accept & accept-able etc.

(iii) Hybrid formations

--> speak-able (Germanic+French), re-sit (Latin+Germanic), etc.

(iv) Restrictions: tendencies

Die Herkunft der Präfixe […] ist auch für die Bewertung des Bildungsmusters Präfigierung auf der pragmatischen Ebene der Verwendung von Bedeutung, weil die Dominanz von Präfixen klassischer Herkunft mit der Förmlichkeit und Abstraktheit von Textsorten und Registern in Zusammenhang gebracht werden kann. Obgleich manche Präfixe klassischer Herkunft auch mit germanischen Basen auftreten können […], sind präfigierte Lexeme rein statistisch betrachtet häufiger Latinismen als einheimische Wörter, und deshalb eher in formalen Kontexten und Texten mit abstraktem Inhalt anzutreffen. Viele der hier behandelten Bildungen sind eindeutig dem Register wissenschaftlicher Fachtexte zuzuordnen, etwa die mit lokativen Präfixen und Zahlenpräfixen; andere sind typisch für Pressetexte […]. Besonders häufig im alltäglichen common core des englischen Wortschatzes anzutreffen sind vor allem die negativen Präfigierungen mit un- und hochgradig lexicalisierte Bildungen mit verschiedenen Präfixen […], die bereits in präfigierter Form entlehnt wurden und im Englischen nur noch morphologisch analysierbar, aber phonologisch verändert und semantisch demotiviert sind” (Schmid 2005: 161)

[…] a general awareness of the etymological origin of words and an appreciation that the Saxon and latinate elements in the word-stock had different and complementary expressive properties […] these properties relate directly to the conditions in which the two layers of the lexicon are learned. Saxon words are typically learned early, learned through speech and in the context of physical experience. Hence no one needs to be told the meaning of light or strong; they consult their memories of all the experiences with which the world is connected. Words like illumine or energial, by contrast, are learned late, learned through education and interpreted by reference to explicit definition. They are therefore associated not only with a formal, public style but also with a range of meaning that is primarily abstract and ideational, whereas Saxon words are associated with private and intimate discourse and their semantic range is characteristically experiential (Adamson 1999: 573)

(v) Lexical consequences: ‘dissociation’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Galle</th>
<th>gallig</th>
<th>gall</th>
<th>bilious</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mund</td>
<td>mündlich</td>
<td>mouth</td>
<td>oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Äuge</td>
<td>Augenarzt</td>
<td>eye</td>
<td>oculist/ophthalmologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feind</td>
<td>feindlich</td>
<td>enemy</td>
<td>hostile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(6) Conclusion

References


Recommended background reading:


stefan.thim@lmu.de