The Study of Loanwords in English

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Abstract: From the perspective of language contact theory, this thesis analyzes the formative causes of English loanwords, the etymology of English loanwords, the classification of English Loanwords and the influence of loanwords on English, so as to deduce which languages have the greatest influence on English vocabulary. This thesis can make learners have a more profound and comprehensive understanding of English vocabulary constitution, so as to promote their English learning.

Keywords: Foreign words; Language contact; Etymology French; Latin; Greek

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1 Introduction

1.1 Need for the Study

Sapir Wolfe once said, "The simplest effect of one language on another language is the borrowing of words. "Foreign words, also known as "loanwords", are words absorbed from other languages. Under the background of economic globalization, economic, political and cultural exchanges between countries are bound to be more frequent. Cultural exchanges will inevitably lead to language contacts. Language contacts, in turn, will inevitably make the national language absorb foreign words from other languages. Language is a dynamic and open system. In nowadays, with the rapid development of science and network technology, a large number of new things, new concepts and new ideas have emerged. Foreign words representing different cultures will naturally be integrated into the national language, because only foreign words representing new things can accurately describe and express those new concepts and new things. Loanwords are common lexical components in all languages. Like all languages in the world, English naturally has to interact with foreign languages and cultures, absorb and integrate with each other. English has a long history of absorbing and introducing foreign words, in addition, foreign words are absorbed in an inclusive manner in every historical period. Therefore, the number of foreign words in English is extremely large. In English vocabulary, loanwords account for about eighty percent of the total vocabulary. To say the least, English is a language on loan from other languages. Foreign words in English have a wide range of etymologies. They come from French, Latin, Ancient Greek, Spanish, German, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Arabic and so on. These foreign words are used in economic, legal, political, religious, medical, scientific fields as well as in various fields of social life. Among them, French, Latin and Greek vocabulary have the most profound influence on English language. It is generally known that Ancient Greek and Roman Culture is the Source and Soul of English. Many ancient Greek and Latin words were either borrowed directly by English to become English words or become the word root of English vocabulary. For example, the Latin word "aqua"is the word root of the English word “aquarium”. Therefore, foreign words are of extreme importance in English.

The research value of foreign words has three points: Firstly, from the perspective of linguistics value, the study of foreign words can help us understand the development regularity of English language. Secondly, From the perspective of cultural value, the study of foreign words can help us understand the historical process of communication
between Britain and other nations. Thirdly, from the perspective of educational value, the study of foreign words enable English learners to have a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of English. It can also stimulate interests of learners in studying English and improves their English achievements. Nowadays, there are a lot of literature on English foreign words, but the research on each kind of foreign word is not deep enough. Therefore, my thesis should not only make a comprehensive study of English loanword, but also make a detailed analysis of each kind of loanwords especially the foreign words from French, Greek and Latin.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Research Developments Abroad

In 1973, Thomas Finkenstaedt and Dieter Wolff published Ordered Profusion, a report that computerized about 80,000 words in the old edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary (third edition). The results of the report show that the sources of English words are as follows: French, including Old French and Early Anglo French account for 28.3% of total English vocabulary; Latin (including modern scientific Latin vocabulary) account for 28.24% of total English vocabulary; Old English and Middle English, Old Norwegian and Dutch account for 25%; The foreign words from Greek account for 5.32%; Through this report, we can draw a simple conclusion: in modern English, the inherent English words originating from Germanic English account for about one fourth of total English vocabulary, while the words originating from Latin, French and Greek occupy a pivotal position. On the Kinship of Language, English and German belong to the same language family (the Germanic language family), while French and Spanish belong to the Roman family (all the Roman languages originated from Latin). So why is modern English the most similar to French rather than German in vocabulary and etymology? It is necessary to explore the development and evolution regularity of English language. Language is the carrier of culture and the witness of historical changes. By combing the changes of language, we can see the historical context behind it. For example, Germanic language won an all-round victory in Britain because Anglo, Saxon and Jute tribes of the Germanic people invaded Britain. In the 9th and 10th centuries, Britain was invaded twice, this time by the Viking people who spoke another kind of Germanic language. With the blending of these Germanic dialects, the basic vocabulary and grammar of English are gradually stereotyped. Because German also belongs to Germanic language family, ancient English is very similar to ancient German. In 1066, a major British historical event affected the development and evolution of the English language. Duke William of Normandy invaded and occupied Britain, he established the Norman Dynasty, known as the Norman Conquest. The French-speaking Norman became King of England, so the English aristocracy all worshiped French and liked to learn French and French culture, and the upper classes of English society were proud of speaking French. During this period, Britain was invaded by foreign cultures, which led to the change of English language. The Norman Conquest brought a large number of French words into English.

Sarah G. Thomason is a professor of linguistics at the University of Michigan. He has published a series of works on language contact and language evolution, and he is one of the leading figures in the field of language contact research. He argues that there is no evidence that a language developed in complete isolation from other languages. Any language will contact other languages in varying degrees during its evolution and development. Language contact often leads to language evolution. In his book Language Contact: An Introduction, Thomason divides the evolution caused by language contact into two Categories: “borrowing” and “shift-induced interference”. “Borrowing” refers to the incorporation of foreign elements into the mother tongue of a language user. The borrowing of linguistic components has a certain degree or order. The most common borrowing is the borrowing of lexical components. In language contact, the borrowing of lexical elements always precedes the borrowing of syntactic or phonological elements.

1.2.2 Research Developments in China

In China, different scholars have different understandings of the definition of loanwords. The earliest dissent was raised by Mr. Wang Li in 1980. According to Wang Li, translation loanwords only borrow meanings and concepts from other languages and cultures, and then find suitable components in English to create new words, such as “moon cake”, “Dragon Boat Festival” and so on do not
belong to the category of English foreign words, because “moon” and “cake” are inherent words in English. The real and standard English foreign words are pure loanwords, such as "mosquito", "paparazzo". Except for a slight change in pronunciation, pure loanwords are borrowed wholly in form and meaning. Opposite views were first proposed by Xu Weihan in 1992. Translation loanwords are no longer excluded from foreign words, the translation loanwords belong to English foreign words, because the concepts borrowed in the translation loanwords come from countries or regions of other languages and cultures, the concept of moon cakes originated from China, not from England or America, only China has the “moon cake”. Therefore, Xu Weihan believes that the definition of foreign words should be broadened and the scope of foreign words should be expanded. Because pure loanwords and translation loanwords both originate from the languages and cultures of foreign countries.

Mr. Hu Xingzhi, an early scholar who used the concept "foreign words", compiled the earliest Dictionary of Chinese loanwords, The Dictionary of Loanwords (Tianma Bookstore, Shanghai, 1936 edition). Mr. Luo Changpei used “foreign borrowing words” and “loanwords” in his writings Language and Culture. He thinks that the concept “foreign borrowing words” is the same as “loanwords”. Huang Borong and Liao Xudong pointed out in their writings Modern Chinese: “foreign words are also called loanwords.”

2 Basic Concepts and Theories

2.1 Basic Theories

2.1.1 The Language contact-induced language change theory

The theory is raised by Thomason and Kaufman (1988). Language contact refers to the frequent communication between different languages and the results it produces. The main causes of language contact are war conquest, trade, cultural exchange and immigration. Language contact can be manifested as mutual influence, which makes some changes in both languages. Borrowing is a common manifestation of the influence of one language on another language. Under certain historical conditions, stable and long-term contact may transform a language. Sarah G. Thomason is a professor of linguistics at the University of Michigan. He has published a series of works on language contact and language evolution, and he is one of the leading figures in the field of language contact research. He argues that there is no evidence that a language developed in complete isolation from other languages. Any language will contact other languages in varying degrees during its evolution and development. Language contact often leads to language evolution. In his book Language Contact: An Introduction, Thomason divides the evolution caused by language contact into two Categories: “borrowing” and “shift-induced interference”. “Borrowing” refers to the incorporation of foreign elements into the mother tongue of a language user. The borrowing of linguistic components has a certain degree or order. The most common borrowing is the borrowing of lexical components. In language contact, the borrowing of lexical elements always precedes the borrowing of syntactic or phonological elements.

2.2 Basic Concepts

2.2.1 Foreign words

Foreign words are also called "loanwords", which are words absorbed from other languages. The loanword is a common phenomenon, all the languages have foreign words. According to the way loanwords are borrowed, English foreign words can be divided into three types: Pure Loanwords, Mixed Loanwords and Translation Loanwords.

2.2.2 Lexical gap

Vocabulary is the basic element of language and the carrier of culture. Only the vocabulary can reflect the unique cultural color of different nationalities. Because human languages and cultures have their own commonalities, there are equivalents between languages. However, due to the differences between languages and cultures, some words in one language do not have equivalents or identical components in another language, which is called lexical gap. For example, Salad is a kind of dish originating from France. There was not this kind of thing in England at first, and the word “salad” does not exist in English language, so British people had to "transplant" it from French, and so did Chinese.

2.2.3 Latin

Latin was first used in Latin and Rome. It became
the official language of the Roman Republic in the early fifth century B.C. With the expansion of Roman military and political power, Latin, as an administrative language, spread to the islands of the Western Mediterranean, the Iberian Peninsula and Gaul (now France), until Dazia (now Romania) in the Danube River Basin, and it was used by the Roman Empire across Europe and Asia at that time. From the 5th to 15th centuries, Latin was the exclusive language of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the language of communication among different ethnic groups in Western Europe. In the 13th century, a new teaching institution, Studium generale (today's university), which was licensed and controlled by Roman Catholic Church, began to emerge in Europe. It included three kinds of disciplines: theology, law, philosophy and seven "artes liberales": Chinese, rhetoric, logic, mathematics, geometry, astronomy and music. All disciplines are based on Latin. Until modern times, there are still many fields that cannot give up Latin, such as the classification of species and medicine, need to use Latin to label the types of diseases or animals and plants. Latin is also widely used in chemistry and physics to define professional vocabulary. In the legal field, Latin can be said to be monopolistic, all legal terms come from Latin. The Romans were proficient in law and governance, and the legacy was inherited wholly by today's world.

2.2.4 Germanic language family

The Germanic language family is a branch of the Indo-European language system. It was originally used by the Germanic people who lived in Northern Europe. English, German and Dutch belong to the Germanic family.

2.2.5 Roman language family

The Roman language family also known as Latin family, belongs to the Indo-European language system and is a modern language family derived from the Italian family, it mainly includes modern languages which evolved from Latin. Roman speakers mainly refer to "European Latinos" in the traditional sense. After the collapse of the Roman Empire around the epoch, the original unified Latin changed into different dialects in different regions. These dialects are the rudiments of today's Roman language, which includes French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Romanian.

3 the Analysis of English Foreign words

3.1 The reason for the emergence of English foreign words (Factors leading to language contact)

3.1.1 Geographical factors

Britain and other civilized countries are located in the Western European continent together, so it is very easy for these countries to generate language contact with each other. The superior geographical position of Britain enables it to carry out economic, trade and cultural contacts with its neighboring countries. Economic, trade and cultural contacts between countries inevitably generate language contact, and language contact can cause the borrowing of vocabulary. So more than half of the English vocabulary comes from French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and languages of other neighboring countries.

3.1.2 War and military occupation

War and military occupation is one of the factors leading to language contact. After war and military occupation, the victorious country often imposes its own language, culture and will on the defeated country in order to rule and enslave the defeated country. The victorious country requires the people of defeated country to learn its language and culture, which leads to the contact between the two languages. After the military occupation, the dominant national language must infiltrate and influence the language of the disadvantaged nation, the disadvantaged language of defeated nation tends to borrow a large number of vocabulary from the dominant language of victorious nation. For example, from 450 AD to 1066 AD, it was called the Norman Conquest. During this period, the Normans conquered and occupied Britain, and the Frenchman became the King of England. Therefore, the British aristocracy worshiped French and liked to learn French and French culture. The upper classes of British society were proud of speaking French. The Norman Conquest brought a large number of French words into English.

3.1.3 Religious influence

The introduction of religion will cause language contact. Every kind of religion has its own language. For example, the language of Buddhism is Sanskrit, the language of Christianity is Latin. When the religion is introduced into a country, the official
language of the country are bound to generate contact with the language of this religion due to the study of religious classical works. People tend to translate religious classical works into the language of their own country. The translation of religious classical works will bring a large of foreign words into the native language. For example Christianity was introduced into Britain. Latin was the language that the church learned and used. Some Latin words related to Christianity, such as monastery, clerk, strive, were also introduced into English through the language contact.

3.1.4 Colonial rule and trade exchanges
Colonial rule and trade exchanges inevitably lead to language contact. The language of colonialists and the language of indigenous inhabitants contact with each other and borrow vocabulary from each other. For example, in the mid-19th century, after the first Opium War between China and Britain, foreign words from Chinese began to be integrated into English, such as tofu and typhoon, while foreign words from English was also integrated into Chinese, such as jeep, sofa, tank.

3.1.5 Immigration
Immigration is one of factors leading to language contact. The immigrants make their own language enter into the country of immigration, which can generate language contact and vocabulary borrowing. For example, Hispanics is the second largest ethnic group after African Americans in number, and one of the largest colored people in American society. The definition of Hispanics in American academia: Hispanics refer to those born in Spanish-speaking or Latin American countries whose culture originated in Spain, and usually regard Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans and Columbians as the five main members of the Hispanic community. The definition of Hispanics in American academia: Hispanics refer to those born in Spanish-speaking or Latin American countries whose culture originated in Spain, and usually regard Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans and Columbians as the five main members of the Hispanic community. Hispanic immigrants have exerted a certain influence on the politics, economy and culture of American society, a large number of Hispanic words enter into American English such as, rumba, maize, tomato(tomate), marijuana. Mencken said in American Language that the direct borrowing of words from Spanish was formed during the major historical changes from 1800 to 1850 such as Texas independence, the American-Mexican War and the California Gold Rush.

3.1.6 The Needs of Social Development
With the development of the world, the English language must develop accordingly. With the rapid development of politics, economy, science and technology, cultural life and other fields, the number of foreign words in English is increasing. As the world enters the rapidly changing 20th century, science and technology become the main providers of foreign words. The Internet brings different languages into contact with each other, the rapid development of network technology has provided a convenient channel for the spread of foreign words. A profusion of foreign words have been absorbed by English and become an integral part of English vocabulary to meet the requirements of social development.

3.2 Etymology of English foreign words

3.2.1 Foreign words from French
France and Britain are geographically separated only by the English Channel, and the UK's Great Britain and the French Peninsula of Bretagne(Little Britain) are separated by the sea. Therefore, the two countries have had many contacts and close relations since ancient times. Foreign words from French account for about one third of total English vocabulary. For example, the French loanwords about government and administration: reign, tariff, Dynasty, Palace (palais), emperor (empereur), regime. French loanwords about law and religion: jury, culpable(coupable), preacher(precheur), doctrine, theist. French loanwords about military and clothing: combat (combattre), arm, rebellion, pilot (pilote), aviation, stylist (styliste), jupe, confection.

3.2.2 Foreign words from Latin
The incorporation of Latin foreign words into English is closely related to three major historical events in British. firstly, The Romans invaded and occupied Britain. Secondly, Christianity spread in England. Thirdly, the Renaissance. These three major historical events have brought a large number of Latin loanwords into English. In modern English, Latin loanwords account for a quarter of English vocabulary, such as the Latin loanwords about astronomy and calendar: July ( Julius is Caesar's name). August (Augustus was the ruler of ancient Rome). Venus (goddess of love and beauty in ancient Rome). Mars (the ancient Roman God of war). Jupiter(King of the Gods of ancient Rome). Virgo,
Libra and Aquarius. Latin loanwords about medicine: Caesarean (It comes from Caesar in Latin). It is said that Caesar was born through hysterotomy. Cardiac (heart disease) (car = cor = core, in Latin core means "heart". Latin loanwords about Christianity: Christianity (Christianismus) and Bible (Biblia).

3.2.3 Foreign words form Greek

Greek vocabulary entered into English mainly through Latin words as intermediaries. Greek civilization was earlier than Roman civilization. Latin borrowed Greek words first, assimilated them and then entered English. Nowadays, it is difficult to distinguish Latin words from Greek words. Greek words entered English directly during the Renaissance. Educated Englishmen began to be keen on studying ancient Greek literature and culture. As a result, many Greek words entered into English directly before they were translated, such as epicurism (the word originated from the name of Epicurus, an ancient Greek philosopher). Stoicism, Cynicism etc. Narcissus is a Greek loanword related to ancient Greek mythology. Narcissus was infatuated with his shadow in water, but he couldn't get it. At last, he died with regret and became a narcissus after his death. The Muses is the goddess of music, art and Science in Greek mythology. In order to worship the Muses, the ancient Greeks placed works of art and objects related to natural sciences in the Muses Temple. Museum in English comes from the Greek word Mouseion which means "Muse Temple", "Music" and "mousike" in ancient Greek which means "belonging to Muse".

3.2.4 Foreign words from Spanish

The direct borrowing of words from Spanish was formed during the major historical changes from 1800 to 1850 such as Texas independence, the American-Mexican War and the California Gold Rush. Such as mosquito, tornado, banana, rumba.

3.2.5 Foreign words from other languages

(1)Loanwords from German: hamburger kindergarten blitzkrieg waltz. (2)Foreign words from Italian: During the Renaissance, especially in the sixteenth century, the cultural and commercial links between Britain and Italy brought many Italian words into English. Many of them were used in art, architecture, music and other fields. Most of them belonged to the international vocabulary of European languages, and at least half of the Italian loanwords were introduced into English through French. Such as, niche, granite, portico, violin. (3)Loanwords from Chinese: taoist, kung fu, mencius, Confucius, moon cake (translation loanword). (4)Loan words from Japanese: ninja, judo, sashimi, kimono, karate, samurai, geisha. (5) Loanwords from Arabic: Sheikh, Quran, aubergine, alcohol, lemon, mosque, algebra.

3.3 Classification of English foreign words
(According to the way they are borrowed, English loanwords can be divided into three types)

3.3.1 Pure loanwords

Except for a slight change in pronunciation, pure loanwords can be borrowed wholly in both form and meaning. For example, “vignette” comes from French, “mosquito” comes from Spanish, “kindergarten” from German, “respective” from French. “paparazzo” comes from Italian.

3.3.2 Mixed loanwords

Mixed loanwords consist of foreign word roots and English native word affixes. For example, “Submerge”, whose word root “mer” comes from French. (mer=sea), “sub” is an English native word affix. Latin word root “bell” and English word affix can form English words “bellicose” “rebellion”(bell=war). The foreign word “oblivious”, whose word root “obi” comes from the French word “oublier”, “ous” is an English native word affix. (oublier=forget).

3.3.3 Translation loanwords

Translation loanwords refer to translating morphemes and words of foreign words into equivalent morphemes or words in English language one by one. such as “Mid-Autumn Festival”, “mooncake”(from Chinese), classstruggle(from German), surplus value(from German).

3.4 The influence of foreign words on English

3.4.1 Phonetic level

The influence of French words on English pronunciation is particularly important. For example, in English we usually put the stress on the first syllable of a word, but this is not applicable in French loanwords. Unlike the pronunciation of English, the pronunciation of French vocabulary is romantic and soft, Frenchmen usually put the stress on the last syllable of a word. In English Many words from
French are still pronounced according to French stress rules, such as “cigarette”, which is not pronounced as "ci-garette". It reads "ciga-rette". Therefore, English pronunciation is also influenced by foreign culture.

### 3.4.2 Word-formation level

The borrowing of word-forming roots and affixes is also common in English. For example, the English word root “opt” comes from Greek word “opsis”, in Greek “opsis” means eye or sight. These English words “optics, optometrist, hyperopia” are made up of word root “opt”. The word root “terr” comes from Latin word “terra”, in Latin “terra” means “earth” or “land”. The English Words “terrace, terrestrial, territory, Mediterranean” are made up of word root “terr”. The English word affix “eu” comes from Greek word“eu”, in Greek, “eu” means “good or well”. The English words “eulogy, euphony, Eutopia, euthanasia” are made up of word affix “eu”. From here we see that English word roots and word affixes basically derive from Greek and Latin. The influence of Greek and Latin on English is deeply rooted in the bone marrow.

### 3.4.3 Semantic level

Due to the introduction of foreign words, a large number of synonyms have appeared in English, that is, the same concept can be expressed in several sets of words from two or more languages, such as: the same meaning "learned", English is "learned", French loanword is "erudite", or, for example, the same meaning "hut", English is "hut", Spanish loanword is "cabana".

### 3.5 The attitudes towards English foreign words

Loanwords and foreign cultures are largely integrated into English, which is the direct product of long-term exchanges between Britain and other nationalities. This conforms to the development of English. Loanwords originating from other languages can enrich English vocabulary and supplement synonyms. Every large-scale infiltration and amalgamation of exotic languages and cultures reflects the historical evolution and cultural progress of Britain. Foreign words in English have become an inseparable component. In a language, with the emergence of new things, ideas and cultures, foreign words representing different cultures will naturally be integrated into the language, because only the foreign words representing new things can accurately describe and express those new concepts and nouns. The inclusiveness of American culture makes English culture and foreign culture absorb, assimilate and merge with each other. It not only promotes the popularization and integration of language, but also expands the vocabulary of English. However, from another point of view, the crazy pursuit of foreign words and the improper and incorrect use of loanwords will not enrich the English language, to a certain extent, It disturbs the purity of English, pollutes English, and resulting in a large number of synonyms and a sharp increase in English vocabulary, which causes great difficulties for English learners. Therefore, we must treat foreign words from a comprehensive perspective. English should absorb international universal foreign words and abandon those worthless foreign words. Facing the infiltration of foreign words, we should strictly abide by the purity of national language, stop abuse and misuse, deepen the understanding of foreign words, correctly grasp their meaning and use characteristics, consider the situation of communicators, use foreign words in a rational way to achieve the purpose of communication, while facing the international universal foreign words, English should absorb them so as to make national language advance with the times. We should treat foreign words with a correct attitude and make English flourish and develop.

### 4 Conclusion

English major students should choose French as their second foreign language rather than German: Vocabulary is the basis of listening, speaking, reading and writing for language learners. In modern English, the inherent English words originating from Germanic English account for about one fourth of total English vocabulary(the inherent Germanic words is similar to German words), while the words from French and Latin account for about 60% of total English vocabulary. After the Norman Conquest, the influence of French and French culture on English was far greater than that of German on English. In word-formation level, English word roots and word affixes basically derive from Greek and Latin words but not German words. Therefore, the influence of Greek and Latin on English is deeply rooted in the bone marrow, mastering some Latin and Greek vocabulary can expand English vocabulary at a
geometric speed. French is a variant of Latin, and French belongs to the Latin language family. French vocabulary is extremely similar to Latin vocabulary. Chinese has become the largest source of English foreign words: The Texas-based Global Language Supervision Agency (GLSA) released a report that since 1994, the foreign words from Chinese have dominated the list of new English words, with 5-20% of the total number exceeding any other language source. "It is surprising that because of the influence of China's economic growth, the impact of Chinese on international English is greater than that of English-speaking countries," said Payak, chairman of the agency. The increasing international status of Chinese and its increasing influence on English are attributed to China's increasing global influence and concern. English words and expressions originating from Chinese are the inevitable outcome of the contact between Chinese and English, as well as the inevitable outcome of the integration of Chinese and Western cultures. In recent years, the global "Chinese fever" and various news hotspots from China on the Internet are reminding us that English words and expressions from Chinese will inevitably get more and more.

Through the study of Loanwords in English, we can contribute to the study of English lexicology and further promote the teaching and learning of English vocabulary. By analyzing the etymology of Loanwords in English, we find that French words, Latin words and Greek words account for 70% of the total vocabulary in English. And the word roots and affixes of English all come from Latin, Greek and French. The influence of these three languages on English vocabulary is deeply rooted in the bone marrow. Compared with them, the influence of other languages on English vocabulary can be neglected. It can be said that English vocabulary basically comes from these three languages. If English learners master some French, Latin and Greek vocabulary, they can almost guess the meaning of all English words, so as to achieve twice the result with half the effort in English learning.

References