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The Impact of Loanwords on English Precision, Acceptance, Competitiveness, and Dominance in a Globalized World

Introduction

For this paper I want to discuss an intriguing question: "How does the quantity and variation of loanwords in English affect its precision, acceptance, competitiveness, and potential for dominance or dialect formation in a trend to language globalization?"

"Inborn reard quethes what we know. "

There lies the English translation of the below sentence:

"Native tongue speaks what we understand. "

Derives from linguistic purism in English, a tradition that dates back to the Norman invasion in 1066, The term "Anglish", defined by author Paul Jennings in 1966, represents an attempt to distill English to its purest form, stripping loanwords from non-Germanic-origin languages, mainly by Latin or Greek origins, guided by logic and historical precedent. While reaching its peak during the 1572 Accademia della Crusca in Europe, the practice of linguistic purism was institutionalized through language academies.

However, as intuitively deduced, the imprecise and poorly-developed vocabulary of the English translation emphasizes the limitations of excluding loanwords. It leads to a loss of

direction and imagery, hindering effective transcription of information. The result leads to a more loose definition on the meaning of the sentence, less direction to the purpose of the sentence, and weaker function to provoking imaging as an instance of communication.

This observation prompts a deeper inquiry into the role of loanwords in language evolution and their impact on precision, acceptance, competitiveness, and the potential for dominance or dialect formation in a globalized context. Based on the experience in constructing hundreds of English sentences and poems, I think that the more loanword a language has, in terms of both quantity and variety, could boost the precision and centralization of the language, making it more beneficial to native speaker, more acceptable to a broader audience, and increases the competitiveness of the language to its cognate counterparts.

We should begin the illustration of controversy by bringing up historical contexts.

The Inkhorn Controversy and the Opposition to Loanwords

A perfect example to illustrate the reason history of linguistic purism is commonly viewed as a controversy is The Inkhorn Controversy. Arising during the early modern period this controversy revolved around the use of “inkhorn terms” or “inkhornisms”, which are defined as long, Latin words used by scholarly writers. These terms were viewed by many with connotations of pedantry in learning, and invoked a lasting debate about the use of foreign words in English.

On one side of the Inkhorn Controversy were the Neologizers, who supported borrowings of cognates, believing the practices could enrich the English language. On the other side were the Purists, who disparaged the aspects to which many of the Neologizers supported. Thomas Wilson in particular, a noted Purist, made one of the earliest and well-known attacks on inkhorn terms in

his *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), proposed for the use of native terms (of Germanic-Origin) instead of loanwords.

The Impact of Loanwords on Language Evolution

Despite the opposition, the inclusion of loanwords in a language has been found to catalyze its adaptation and evolution. Philip Durkin, in his book “*Borrowed Words: A History of Loanwords in English*”, explores how loanwords have become entrenched in the contemporary English vocabulary. By stating:” The rich variety of the English vocabulary reflects the vast number of words it has taken from other languages. These range from Latin, Greek, Scandinavian, Celtic, French, Italian, Spanish, and Russian to, among others, Hebrew, Maori, Malay, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, and Yiddish,”(Durkin, 2015) Durkin suggests that the integration of loanwords from different sources has resulted in deep transformations in all aspects of the vocabulary of English.

The Limitations of Linguistic Purism

The prevailing goal from linguistic purism proposed for a "purer" form of language with fewer loanwords, aiming to assert dominance and preserve cultural identity of their native language, in other words, the less chance it could become a dialect to other cognate due to higher popularity because of social-political reasons.

However, while linguistic purism aims to preserve the “dominance” of a language, it often fails to adapt to the realities of increasing global interactions driven by the internet and digital media. The interconnectedness of diverse societies reduces geographical and temporal obstacles, catalyzing the exchange of ideas, goods, cultures, and vocabulary. The use of English

as an example illustrates the limitations of excluding loanwords. It leads to a loss of direction, and imagery, hindering effective transcription of information.

The scholarly Oppositions to English Purism

To delve deeper into these dynamics, we turn to scholarly essays to explore further onto the topic based on established basis. The inclusion of loanwords in a language catalyzes its adaptation and evolution, as evidenced by insights from scholars such as David Crystal, John McWhorter, Einar Haugen, Salikoko Mufwene, and Jean Aitchison.

As an OBE(officer of the Order of the British Empire) owner in linguistic, Crystal's examination of language death highlights the positive relationship between language longevity and the incorporation of loanwords, challenging purpose of linguistic purity as a measure of cultural preservation and domination:

Crystal asserts, "The death of a language does not necessarily mean the death of a people's culture or identity. Rather, it reflects the failure to adapt to changing linguistic landscapes, including the incorporation of loanwords from other languages" (Crystal, 2000). This statement emphasizes the ever-evolving property of language, where borrowing from other languages is not a threat but a mechanism for survival and growth.

One historical example that supports Crystal's assertion is the evolution of the English language itself. Following the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, the English language had been forced to undergo significant transformation by the incorporation of Latin vocabulary into the existing Old English. Despite initial resistance, native dwellers eventually became increasingly eager to utilize loanwords driven by the transformation of the geopolitical landscape, enriching its vocabulary while merging with outside culture aside from the isolated

island, contributing to both its resilience and adaptability. This process not only enhanced the survivability of English but also facilitated its growth and colonization into a global lingua franca.(Baugh & Cable, 2013)

McWhorter, an well-known linguistic, further explores the adaptability property of language, highlighting the role of loanwords in increasing linguistic diversity and immunity, in terms of higher chance for dominance or dialect formation:

According to McWhorter, "Languages are dynamic systems constantly in flux, shaped by interactions with other languages through processes such as borrowing and adaptation.

Loanwords contribute to the richness and complexity of language, enabling it to evolve and thrive" (McWhorter, 2003)." This highlights the value of loanwords in enriching language and enhancing its capacity for expression in a more precision-focused direction.

The development of English dialects in medieval England provides a historical example that aligns with McWhorter's assertion regarding the role of loanwords in increasing linguistic immunity. During the Middle Ages, England, in other words, the British island was linguistically diverse, with various dialects spoken across different regions. As a result of interactions between speakers of different dialects, English absorbed loanwords from Old Norse, Old French, and Old Dutch, naming a few major dialects. These loanwords not only enriched the vocabulary of English but also contributed to the unification of language, assisting Old English, while not other dialects, to assert dominance over the island, eventually developing into its native tongue. For instance, the presence of Norse loanwords in the dialects of northern England reflects the influence of Viking settlements in the region, so more of its population are willing to speak a more inclusive language for a more adaptable communication that brought mutual

understanding. This process of borrowing and adaptation enabled English dialects to evolve independently, more resilient and free of dialects.(Mugglestone, 2014)

Building upon these foundations, Haugen's ecological metaphor presented an extended understanding of language as a open and exchangeable system shaped by interactions within its environment:

A Harvard University linguistic professor Haugen states, "Language can be likened to an ecosystem, where various elements interact and influence each other's evolution. Loanwords play a crucial role in this ecosystem, contributing to the diversity and adaptability of language" (Haugen, 1972). This perspective supported the innate tradability of languages and the importance of loanwords in facilitating linguistic exchange and evolution.

Beyond the limit of the English language, the linguistic exchange between the Arabic and Spanish languages in the Iberian Peninsula during the period of Islamic regime provides a complementary illustration of Haugen's statement. During this time, Arabic loanwords were adopted in the Spanish language in scientific areas including mathematics and architecture due to unification in religion. These loanwords enriched the vocabulary of Spanish and facilitated the exchange of knowledge and ideas between Arabic-speaking and Spanish-speaking communities, intuitively more beneficial to the adopting side. As a result, Spanish is cultivated to be a language with more diverse branches of linguistic loanwords, reflecting the interconnectedness of cultures and language evolution within an interconnecting linguistic ecosystem.(Grant, 2019)

Moreover, linguistic professor Mufwene's ecological perspective emphasizes the lucrative role of loanwords in language evolution, solidifying borrowing as alternative to cultural economic activity that contributes to the longevity and adaptability of languages:

Mufwene contends, "Borrowing is not a sign of weakness but rather a manifestation of language's capacity to adapt and innovate. Loanwords enhance the vitality of language by introducing new concepts and facilitating communication across cultural boundaries" (Mufwene, 2001). This challenges the opposition that loanwords dilute linguistic purity but instead defines them to be allomorphic agents of creativity and connectivity.

The Silk Road, an ancient network of trade routes connecting the East (China) and West (Arabic-speaking countries), serves as a historical example that illustrates Mufwene's statement in expressing the lucrative role of loanwords in language evolution. Especially during the Tang dynasty, merchants, travelers, and scholars not only exchanged commerce and goods, but also as by-products, cultural events, holidays, and most importantly, loanwords along the silk road; leading to the diffusion and collision of ideas, goods, and loanwords across vast geographic landscapes. As a result, languages such as Persian, Arabic, and Chinese adopted conceptual-focused loanwords from one another, enriching their vocabularies and facilitating communication between diverse linguistic communities. This process of trading loanwords not only contributed to the adaptability and resilience of languages along the Silk Road but also played a crucial role in boosting cultural fusion and technical innovation across Eurasia.(Frankopan, 2023)

Eventually, University of Oxford's linguistic professor Aitchison's analysis of language change complements these perspectives, emphasizing the inevitability of linguistic change and the constant overlapping boundaries between preservation and evolution:

Aitchison observes, "Language change is a natural phenomenon driven by various factors, including social, cultural, and technological developments. Loanwords reflect this ongoing process of innovation and adaptation, enriching language and enabling it to meet the

evolving needs of its speakers" (Aitchison, 2012). This highlights the evolutionary pressure all language faces and the role of loanwords in shaping its trajectory to evolve.

In correlation to the previous example, the main cause of invasion of British island in 1066, the expansion of the Roman Empire serves as a historical example that illustrates Aitchison's assertion regarding the inevitability of language evolution driven by geopolitical transformations. As the Roman Empire asserted its military dominance and spread its influence across Europe, Latin served as a lingua franca for religion and governmental administration, trade, and communication. So inevitably, local languages in regions such as Gaul, Hispania, and Britannia adopted Latin loanwords, integrating them into their vocabularies while retaining their distinct grammatical structures and phonetic features. This process of adoption of Latin loanwords set a fertile ground for languages like French, Spanish, and English to evolve from their Germanic roots, reflecting the influence of social and cultural interactions on language evolution and adaptation.(Woodard, 2008)

Conclusion

According to the insights, it is evident that the inclusion of loanwords in a language serves not only as a plain reflection of cultural exchange but also as a catalyst for linguistic vitality and adaptation. Rather than viewing loanwords as threats to linguistic purity, they should be recognized as essential components of language evolution, enriching communication and fostering inclusivity in an increasingly interconnected world. By embracing loanwords, languages can thrive as open systems capable of adapting to contexts of increasing complexity, iterations, and quantity; and meeting the diverse needs of their speakers.

As we navigate the increasing in both complexities and exchangeability of language dynamics in the digital age, the focus should shift from rigid notions of purity towards embracing the diversity and inherency in linguistic borrowing. By acknowledging the mutative power of loanwords, languages can thrive as changing systems capable of evolving to meet the evolving needs of their speakers, reducing obstacles and increasing mutual understanding in a globalized society.

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