

Class 22

Borrowing

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Reading: Campbell Ch. 3

1 Borrowing and Language Contact

- “**Borrowing**” is a general term for one language(/speech variety) adopting linguistic content from another language(/speech variety).
 - The most common type of borrowing is the borrowing of *words*, but other grammatical features can sometimes be borrowed as well.
 - And even just the adoption of new words can itself have an impact on the grammatical system of the borrowing language.
- ★ The language that *borrow*s the linguistic feature is called the “**recipient**” language.
- ★ The language which is the linguistic feature *is borrowed from* is called the “**donor**” language.
- Borrowing typically occurs in situations of “**language contact**”, where speakers of different languages are in contact with one another.
- This can range from:
 - *Intense* language contact, where there is extensive bi-/multilingualism, to
 - *Casual* language contact, where this just a small amount of cultural exchange without much actual bilingualism.
- One of the most common types of word that gets borrowed is food words.
- In English, we have different words for food animals than for the meat the comes from those animals:
 - (1) a. *cow* vs. *beef*
 - b. *deer* vs. *venison*
 - c. *pig* vs. *pork*
 - d. *sheep* vs. *mutton*
- In all these cases, the name for the animal is an inherited Germanic word, while the name for the meat is a borrowing from French.
 - Originally, the name of the animal was used also for its meat.
 - During the period after the Norman conquest, French was spoken extensively in England, especially by the upper class.
 - The people who handled the animals all spoke English, but the people who prepared and served the meat often spoke French (or at least interacted with people who spoke French).
 - So the French words for the meat were *borrowed* into English.
- Borrowings often go from “**prestige**” languages into less-prestigious varieties.

2 Basic types of word borrowings

- There are two different ways that a language can “borrow” a new word:
 - (2) a. **Loanword:** a word which is directly borrowed from another language, adopting both the phonetic properties and the semantic properties of the donor language word.
 - b. **Calque** (a.k.a. *loan translation*): a word (usually a compound) which borrows the morphological and semantic composition of a donor word, but replaced the individual pieces with native words/morphemes.
- Ironically, *loanword* is a **calque** and *calque* is a **loanword**.
 - (3) a. English *loanword* \Leftarrow German *Lehnwort* lit. ‘lend-word’ (= *leihen* ‘lend’ + *Word* ‘word’)
 - b. English *calque* \Leftarrow French *calque* ‘a copy’
- A number of Ancient Greek words have been borrowed into English (directly or indirectly) as both loanwords and calques:
 - (4) Ancient Greek $\alpha\nu\tau\omega\nu\mu\omicron\varsigma$ [ant- ω :numos] = *ant(i)-* ‘in place of; against, opposite’ + *\omega*numos ‘noun’
 - a. Calqued into Latin: *pro-nomen* ‘pronoun’ = *pro* ‘in place of’ + *nomen* ‘noun’
 \rightarrow later loaned into English as *pronoun*
 - b. Loaned into English: *antonym* (based on the ‘against, opposite’ meaning of *ant(i)-*)
 - (5) Ancient Greek $\epsilon\nu\tau\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma$ [en-tomos] ‘bug’ = *en-* ‘in’ + *tomos* ‘cut’
 - a. Calqued into Latin: *in-sectum* ‘bug’ = *in* ‘in’ + *sectum* ‘cut’
 \rightarrow later loaned into English as *insect*
 - b. Loaned into English (in a compound): *entom-ology* ‘the study of bugs’
 - (6) Ancient Greek $\upsilon\pi\omicron\theta\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ [hupo- θ :*ē*:sis] = *hupo-* ‘under’ + *\theta*:*ē*:sis ‘placing’
 - a. Calqued into Latin: *sup-position* = *sub* ‘under’ + *position* ‘placing’
 \rightarrow later loaned into English as *supposition*
 - b. Loaned into English: *hypothesis*
- We’ll focus mostly on loanwords, since they can actually reveal things about linguistic structure/history.
- But here are some more calques just for fun:
 - (7) a. Eng *black market* \Leftarrow Germ *Schwarzmarkt* ‘black market’ (*schwarz* ‘black’ + *markt* ‘market’)
 - b. Modern English *almighty* < Old English *æلميhtig* (*æ* ‘all’ + *mihtig* ‘mighty’) \Leftarrow Latin *omnipotens* ‘all powerful’ (*omni-* ‘all’ + *potens* ‘powerful, strong’)
 - c. Modern English *gospel* < Old English *gōdspell* (*gōd* ‘good’ + *spel* ‘news, tidings’) \Leftarrow Latin *evangelium* (borrowed from Greek *eu-aggelion* ‘good-news/message’)
 - d. English *skyscraper* \Rightarrow , German *Wolkenkratzer* (*Wolken* ‘clouds’ + *kratzer* ‘scratcher, scraper’), French *gratte-ciel* (*gratte* ‘grate, scrape’ + *ciel* ‘sky’), Spanish *rascacielos* (*rasca* ‘scratch, scrape’ + *cielos* ‘skies, heavens’)
- * NB: the order of compound members can get switched to match the productive pattern for compound formation in the recipient language — *skyscraper* \Rightarrow *gratte-ciel*, *rascacielos*

3 Loan (non-)adaptation

- Frequently, the recipient language has substantially different phonology than the donor language.
- Sometimes, the disallowed foreign structures are *repaired/replaced* by licit phonological patterns of the recipient language.
 - This is referred to as *loan adaptation/accommodation* or *phonemic substitution*.
- Sometimes, the donor language's structures are maintained faithfully, and this results in the adoption of *new phonological structures* into the recipient language.
 - This is sometimes referred to as *direct phonological diffusion*.

3.1 Loan adaptation

- Finnish originally lacked voiced stops (i.e. no [b, d, g]).
 - When it borrowed words from Germanic that contained [b, d, g], these sounds were *replaced* by the closest sounds that Finnish had, namely that voiceless stops [p, t, k].
- (8) a. Finnish *parta* 'beard' ← Germanic **bardaz*
 b. Finnish *humpuuki* 'humbug' ← English *humbug*
- Finnish also had no [f], so intervocalic [f] in loanwords was replaced by the sequence [hv].
 - Finnish independently does have both [h] and [v].
- (9) Finnish *kahvi* 'coffee' ← Swedish *kaffe*
 (9) Finnish *pihvi* 'beef' ← English *beef*
- This is basically "**fission**": the voicelessness of the donor fricative is expressed with the first segment [h], the place of the donor fricative (labiodental) is expressed by the second segment [v].
- Sayula Popoluca (a Mixe-Zoquean language of southern Mexico) didn't originally have liquids [l, r].
 - When it borrowed words from Spanish that contained liquids, it replaced them with the closest sound it had, which was [n] (similar to [l, r] in that it is an alveolar sonorant).
- (10) a. Sayula Popoluca *k'unu:f* 'cross' ← Spanish *cruz* [krus]
 b. Sayula Popoluca *mu:na* 'mule' ← Spanish *mula*
 c. Sayula Popoluca *puna:tu* 'plate, dish' ← Spanish *plato*.
- Beyond the direct sound substitutions among the sonorants, there is another notable changes that took place in the borrowing process.
 - Unlike Spanish, Sayula Popoluca didn't allow consonant clusters.
 - They fixed Spanish's consonant clusters by inserting a vowel [u] inside the cluster.

3.2 Direct phonological diffusion

- It's not always the case that disallowed structures get repaired during borrowing. When this happens, the recipient language comes to allow new phonological patterns/structures that it previously didn't permit.
 - In native words, Finnish doesn't allow word-initial consonant clusters (similar Sayula Popoluca).
 - In early loanwords, it repaired donor-language initial clusters by deleting all but the last consonant in the cluster:
- (11) a. Finnish *Ranska* 'French' ← Swedish *Franska* 'French'
 b. Finnish *risti* 'cross' ← Old Russian *kristĭ*
 c. Finnish *ruuvi* 'screw' ← Swedish *skruv* 'screw'

- But in more recent loanwords — especially from Swedish and English, languages with which Finnish is in more intense language contact than in previous times — word-initial clusters are retained:

- (12)
- Finnish *krokotiili* ‘crocodile’ \Leftarrow English *crocodile*
 - Finnish *presidentti* \Leftarrow English *president*
 - Finnish *kruunu* ‘crown’ \Leftarrow Swedish *krona* ‘crown’
 - Finnish *smaragdi* ‘emerald’ \Leftarrow Swedish *smaragd* ‘emerald’

\Rightarrow But notice that Finnish (generally) doesn’t allow word-final consonants, and it is still inserting vowels for consonant-final loanwords.

- So it picks and chooses which features it can tolerate and which ones it still can’t.

4 Identifying loanwords

- Loanwords, especially ones that bring in otherwise illicit phonological structures, can present a problem for reconstruction:

\rightarrow If loans are borrowed between related languages, the loanword might mess up the sound correspondences.

- So, if you’re doing reconstruction and you come across a word that breaks your analysis, it’s reasonable to investigate whether it might be a loanword.

4.1 Phonological irregularity

- The easiest way to identify loanwords is indeed that they don’t conform to your phonological expectations. Consider an example from Nahuatl:

- Native Nahuatl words don’t begin with [p], because there was a sound change that got rid of initial *p:

- (13)
- Proto-Uto-Aztecan *p (> *h) > Nahuatl \emptyset / #_
 - e.g., Proto-Uto-Aztecan *pa: > Nahuatl *a:-* ‘water’

- Nevertheless, when you look at Nahuatl, you’ll find roots with initial [p].

- All/most of them can be directly identified as borrowings from neighboring languages:

- (14)
- Nahuatl *petla-* ‘woven mat’ \Leftarrow Mixe-Zoquean *pata ‘woven mat’
(*a* > *e* by subsequent regular sound change, *t* > *tʰ* / _*a* by regular sound change)
 - Nahuatl *po:ʃo:-* ‘silk-cotton tree (ceiba)’ \Leftarrow Totonac *pu:ʃut* ‘silk-cotton tree (ceiba)’
 - Nahuatl *pak-* ‘to cure’ / *paʔ-* ‘medicine’ \Leftarrow Totonac *paʔk* ‘to cure, get well’

4.2 Morphological complexity

- If you’re trying to ascertain which direction a loanword went in (i.e. which language is the donor and which is the recipient), morphological complexity can be a good guide.

\rightarrow If a word is morphologically complex in one language but not the other, the complex word is probably the donor and the simple word is probably the recipient.

- (15)
- English *vinegar* \Leftarrow French *vinaigre* = *vin* ‘wine’ + *aigre* ‘sour’
 - English *aardvark* \Leftarrow Afrikaans *aardvark* = *aard* ‘earth’ + *vark* ‘pig’
 - English *slogan* \Leftarrow Scottish Gaelic *sluaghghairm* ‘war-cry’ = *sluagh* ‘army’ + *ghairm* ‘shout’

- But beware of folk etymology:

- (16) English *crayfish* (bimorphemic: *cray* + *fish*) \Leftarrow Old French *crevice* (monomorphemic)

- The English word has undergone folk etymology, changing slightly to include *fish*.

5 Loanwords as linguistic evidence

- Loanwords can reveal facts about language change, both in the donor language and the recipient language.

5.1 Germanic loans in Finnish

- There are a number of old loanwords in Finnish from Germanic.
- ★ Some of these loanwords reveal evidence about the development of Germanic which cannot be obtained through comparative reconstruction of the Germanic languages.
 - The evidence from the Finnish loanwords matches strongly with comparative evidence from Indo-European outside of Germanic.

- All of the early Germanic languages disallow [e] before /n/.
 - There is some Germanic-internal evidence suggesting that some [i]'s come from underlying/earlier /e/ (i.e. a phonological process/sound change $e > i / _n$).
 - But it's not very clear.

- There are a number of Finnish words which are clearly borrowings from early Germanic, for example:

- (17) a. Finnish *rengas* 'ring'
b. Finnish *kuningas* 'king'

- These Finnish loans attest to a distinction between /e/ and /i/ before /n/.

→ This allows us to reconstruct the distinct vowels in these words in Pre-Proto-Germanic, and confirms the existence of the sound change.

- (18) a. Finnish *rengas* 'ring' \Leftarrow Pre-Proto-Germanic **hrens-az* (> Eng *ring*)
b. Finnish *kuningas* 'king' \Leftarrow Pre-Proto-Germanic **kuning-az* (> Eng *king*, Germ *König*)

- (19) Pre-Proto-Germanic **e* > (Proto-)Germanic *(*)i / _n*

- ★ As a whole, we would have been able to reconstruct the sound change based on comparative evidence from outside of Germanic.

- However, for some of the individual lexical items, which are actually not robustly attested outside of Germanic and/or are of uncertain morphological origin, we wouldn't otherwise have known whether they originally had an **e/* or **i/*.

- If we didn't have that external comparative evidence, the loanwords in Finnish would have been our best evidence for reconstructing this sound change.

- * See Campbell (2013:66) for several other properties of (Pre-)Proto-Germanic that these Finnish loans give evidence of.

5.2 Mayan loanwords and relative chronology

- Loanwords can also help understand the relative chronology of sound changes in the donor language.

- We know that Cholan (the principal Mayan language of Classical Maya civilization) underwent two changes:

- (20) a. Proto-Mayan **k* > Cholan *tʃ*
b. Proto-Mayan **ŋ* > Cholan *n*

- Motocintlec (Mayan, Q'anjobalan branch) didn't undergo either of these sound changes

- (It looks like **o:* > *o* is a regular sound change in Motocintlec.)

- (21) Motocintlec *koyob* 'market' < Proto-Mayan **ko:ŋ* 'to sell' + *-ob* 'place of, instrumental suffix'

- Motocintlec borrowed a number of words from Cholan.
- The properties of these borrowings tell us the relative chronology of the sound changes in Cholan, even though they don't actually interact with one another:

(22) Motocintlec $tfo:n$ 'to sell' \Leftarrow Cholan $tʃon$ ($<$ Proto-Mayan $*ko:n$)

- ★ Since Motocintlec $tfo:n$ is clearly a borrowing from Cholan (since it does not conform to regular sound changes), and it displays $*k > tʃ$ but not $*n > n$, we can infer that $*k > tʃ$ happened in Cholan **before** $*n > n$.