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Karl-Heinz Gersmann · Oliver Grimm (eds.)

Raptor and human – falconry and bird symbolism throughout the millennia on a global scale

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2

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Karl-Heinz Gersmann and Oliver Grimm

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Top to the left: Seal of the Danish king Knud IV (late 11th century). Redrawing. Taken from M. Andersen/G. Tegnér, Middelalderlige segl-stamper i Norden (Roskilde 2002) 129.

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New words for new things – an overview on lexical borrowing

By Robert Nedoma

Keywords: Language contact, lexical borrowing, loanword, loan translation

Abstract: This paper gives a brief account on lexical borrowing, usually the implementation of new words results from intercultural transfer. The transfer of new words from one language to another can be categorized in two ways: 1. loanwords emerge from lexical borrowing, where both form and meaning of the foreign linguistic sign are transferred to the native language (Lat. compassio – *E* compassion*); 2. loan translations emerge from semantic borrowing, where the meaning of the foreign linguistic sign is expressed by means of native language elements (Lat.* compassio – *NHG* Mitleid*).*

[Editors' note: The fact that intercultural transfer can result in lexical borrowing, producing loan words in the language of the recipients, is very important with regards to the question of origin of falconry and its transfer to other areas. Compare Grimm & Gersmann, Introduction].

"No man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the maine". These famous words by John Donne (1573–1631)[1] apply to humans insofar as they are ethnic, political, social, cultural, religious, linguistic etc. beings – and the human linguistic capacity is always realized through the relations and interactions of languages. The intensity of contacts and, thus, the intensity of mutual interferences between speakers of neighbouring linguistic varieties differs from case to case. The transfer of language elements occurs at various levels of the linguistic system. However, mostly vocabulary is concerned – we call this process lexical borrowing.[2] (Although, it is worth noting here that the metaphor of *borrowing* remains somewhat inappropriate, seeing as the donees return the 'borrowed' words to the donors by mere coincidence[3]). Some parts of the lexicon, however, are less affected than others: the basic vocabulary, for example, remains more or less unchanged (see, e.g., Tadmor 2009, 65ff.).

The implementation of a single lexical item, or a group of correlating lexical items (e.g., an entire terminological system like that of chess) is almost always the result of an intercultural transfer in which new words are used to signify new objects or concepts. In former times, linguistic borrowing could occur on independent occasions of intercultural contact (cf. Hinderling 1981, 41). The number

1 *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, Meditation 17 (ed. Sparrow 1923, 98).

2 General references on lexical borrowing: Haugen 1950; Betz 1965; Birkhan 1985, 234ff.; Algeo 1990; Hock 1991, 380ff.; Haspelmath/Tadmor 2009; Hock/Joseph 2009, 241ff.

3 One of the few examples is WFranc. **warda* fem. (OS *warda*, OHG *warta* 'guard post') that passed on to French (**guarda* > OFr. Fr. *garde* fem. 'guarding, protection, custody', masc./fem. 'guardian, protector') and, in turn, gave NHG *Garde* fem. 'guard regiment'.

of persons or institutions engaged in reception, reproduction and initial spreading of a novel vocable is usually quite limited, and the new word then owes its acceptance to the prestige of the first users. In contact situations where two languages are involved, the proportion of lended to borrowed vocabulary is greater where a language is associated with superior political-military power (Old English vs. Celtic in Migration Period England), cultural status (Greek vs. Latin in ancient times) or technical development (English vs. German in the last decades).

We have two categories of borrowed words: first, loanwords (which are unmotivated for native speakers); second, loan translations (which are motivated for native speakers, at least to a certain extent).

1. Loanwords emerge from lexical borrowing (*sensu stricto*; sometimes called lexical copying), where both form and meaning of the foreign linguistic sign are transferred to the native language. As far as the manner of their integration is concerned, there are two types of loanwords, but they are distinguished only with difficulty.

1.1. When a loanword is assimilated by adoption, the source word is entirely preserved so that this type of borrowed word – in German, called a *Fremdwort*, in Danish, a *fremmedord* etc. (there is no generally accepted term in English) – is pronounced identically or, at least, quite similarly, in the native language: MPers. *šāh* > Arab. *šāh* 'king' (in chess), NHG *Zeitnot* > Russ. цейтнот *cejtnot* 'time trouble' (in chess). In a few of early instances, the lack of evidence makes it difficult to determine which of the two languages is the source: Lat. *falco* 'falcon' could be borrowed from Germanic (cf. OHG *falko*), or the Germanic word from Latin.[4]

Of course, the loan undergoes sound changes of the borrowing language later on. For example, an earlier adoption of MLat. *parricus* 'fence, enclosure' was first adopted and eventually yielded OHG *pferrih* 'pen, fold yard'. This may, at first, seem quite different. However, when we consider the High German Sound Shift (*p* > *pf*, *k* > *h*) and *i*-umlaut (*a* > *e*) it is clear that OHG *pferrih*, NHG *Pferch* should be regarded as a *Lehnwort* (see below, 1.2.).

There are examples from earlier times where roots were adopted, but the endings were substituted in instances where the foreign and the native languages had comparable grammatical systems: Gr. φιλόσοφ-ος *philósoph-os* → Lat. *philosoph-us* 'philosopher', Lat. *skamell-us* masc. → WGmc. *skamell-a* masc. 'footstool' (4th c.; Nedoma/Düwel 2012, 147f.). In principle, loans of this type are hybrids, because they have translated inflectional morphemes (for loan translation, see below, 2.) such as we see in the case of Gr. ἰδιώτης *idiṓtēs* 'private person' → Lat. *idiōta* 'layman, uneducated or ignorant person' → Span. *idiota* 'idiot' → E *idiot* (cf. Simon 1981), an instance which illustrates semantic changes, too. Another example of a loanword shifting its meaning in the process of its adoption appears in Arab. *šāh* 'king (most important chess piece)' vs. loaned MLat. *scac(h)um*, *-us* '(any) chess piece' (cf. Nedoma 2014, 48).

1.2. As a result of adaptation, some characteristics of the source word are substituted due to phonological-phonetic (and/or morphological; see above, 1.1.) differences so that the borrowed word – in German, called a *Lehnwort*, in Danish, a *låneord* etc. – is pronounced differently in the native language. For instance, Non-English speakers may replace the characteristic English voiceless dental fricative [θ] *th* by the alveolar fricative [s], by the dental stop [t] or even by the labial fricative [f] – if a sound does not exist in the native language, it is substituted by means of a similar sound. A well-known example from former times is PrGmc. **hrengaz* that was the source for Finn. *rengas* 'ring' (Kylstra et al. 2012, 145): the foreign initial cluster [xr] (or [hr]) was reduced to [r], and final voiced [z] was replaced by voiceless [s]. The greater differences between the sound and/or morphological

4 Cf. Nedoma in this book, with notes 24 and 25.

systems of the two languages involved are, the greater is the remodeling: E *girlfriend* [ˈgɜːlfrɛnd] was borrowed as Jap. *gārufurendo*, and E *microphone* [ˈmaɪkrəˌfəʊn] as Chin. (Mandarin) *mài kè fēng*.

More recently, written words often remain unchanged and, thus, do not reflect implemented sound substitution. For instance, French *béton* [beˈtɔ̃] is mostly articulated in Standard and Northern German [beˈtɔŋ] with oral vowel [ɔ] and velar nasal [ŋ] replacing foreign nasal vowel [ɔ̃], written *Beton* (not *Betong*).[5] Another role that orthography can take in nativization is illustrated by Norw. *hallo* [hɑˈluː], an interjection used for initiating or answering a telephone call (and for greeting): this seems to be the pronunciation of written (not spoken!) Dan. *hallo* [hæˈlɔ(ː)] (a loan from NHG *Hallo*) based on the common Norwegian realization of ‹o› as [u(ː)] (cf. Norw. *bo* [buː] 'to reside'). Yet, there was no need for such a substitution [ɔ(ː)] → [uː] since both forms of Norwegian (Bokmål, Nynorsk) have *o*-sounds [ɔ, oː] as well as *u*-sounds [ʊ, uː]. Another interesting case is E *zenith* (NHG *Zenit* etc.), which owes its form to a misspelling: Arab. *samt ar-raʾs* 'highest point (in the sky), zenith' (literally 'direction of the head') was simplified to *samt*, and its vulgar variant Arab. *semt* then gave *zenith*, *cenith* in Middle Latin sources and *zenit* in Italian, obviously the result of a scribal error in which the original orthographic ‹m› was mistaken for ‹nı› *ni* (Kiesler 1994, 286f. and Tazi 1998, 271f.; the rendering of Arab. /s/ by ‹z› is regular). Remodeling can be caused by secondary motivation, too: in early modern times, Taíno[6] *hamaka* 'hammock' was transferred via Span. *hamaca* into many European languages (e.g., Fr. *hamac*, E *hammock*). Yet, because of its opacity, it was folk-etymologized as 'hang-mat' in 17th century Germany and the Netherlands (NHG *Hängematte*, Du. *hangmat*; Philippa et al. 2005, 379f.).

2. Loan translations emerge from semantic borrowing (sometimes called semantic copying) where the meaning of the foreign linguistic sign is expressed by means of native language elements. There are four types, two of them being morpho-semantic imitations of the foreign word (calques *sensu lato*: 2.1., 2.2.), the other two being discrete terms without a foreign model (2.3., 2.4.):

2.1. The source word is translated morpheme by morpheme so that this type of borrowed word – a calque *sensu stricto*, called a *Lehnübersetzung* in German – is an exact re-formation of a phrase, a compound or a derivative. Examples are Lat. *diēs sōlis* 'day of the sun, Sunday' → OE *sunnandæg*, MLG *lēnhēre* 'fee-lord, overlord' → OIcel. *lánardróttinn*, and Gr. συμπάθεια *sympátheia* 'fellow suffering, compassion' → Lat. *compassio* (which was calqued into MHG *mitelîde*, *mitelîden*).

2.2. The source word is translated more freely so that this type of borrowed word – occasionally called a loan rendering, German uses the term *Lehnübertragung* – is an approximating re-formation or rendering: E *skyscraper* → NHG *Wolkenkratzer* (literally 'cloud scraper'), Lat. *humilis* 'humble' → OWN *lítillátr* (Walter 1976, 63; literally 'lowly-behaving'), Lat. *patria* 'native land' → OHG *faterlant* (literally 'fatherland').

2.3. The meaning of a foreign linguistic sign is transferred to a self-coined new lexical item (neologism) in the native language. This type of semantic borrowing – occasionally called loan creation, German uses the term *Lehnschöpfung* – means re-wording instead of re-formation. Examples of this include Lat. *philosophus* 'philosopher' ~ OHG *unmezwizzo* (literally 'excessive-knower, extreme wise man'), and E *computer* ~ Icel. *tölva* (a blending *tala* 'number' × *völva* 'sibyl, prophetess'; cf. Jónsson 1994), Fr. *cognac* ~ E *brandy*, NHG *Weinbrand* (literally 'wine-destillate').

2.4. The meaning of a foreign linguistic sign is transferred to an established lexical item in the native language. This type of semantic borrowing – that is, a loan shift (Hock 1991, 398f.), as opposed to loan-meaning and its German equivalent *Lehnbedeutung*, which do not cover processuality – is,

5 There is also the adoption *Beton* [beˈtɔ̃(ː)] in Standard and Northern German. By contrast, Bavarian and Austrian German chooses [beˈtoːn] with long oral vowel [oː] and alveolar nasal [n].

6 Taíno is an extinct Arawakan language that was used throughout the Caribbean until the late 19th century.

like a loan creation, a re-wording rather than a re-formation. However, instead of coining a new lexical item, it does this by conferring an additional meaning on a preexisting word (semantic widening), e.g. Lat. *redemptiō* 'redemption, salvation' ~ OIcel. *lausn*, originally 'liberation', added 'redemption, salvation' (Walter 1976, 130f.). Usually there is proportional modeling: Lat. *caelum* '1. sky, 2. (Christian) heaven' ~ OE *heofon*, originally 'sky', added '(Christian) heaven', Arab. *faras* '1. horse, 2. knight (in chess)' ~ MLat. *equus*, originally 'horse', added 'knight (in chess)', E *link* '1. connection, 2. hyperlink' ~ Icel. *tengill*, originally 'connection', added 'hyperlink'.

From a historical perspective, loan translations of all types (2.1.–2.4.) were commonly used in order to introduce Christian terminology to the early Germanic peoples. In modern times, proponents of linguistic purism – which can be interpreted as protectionism – certainly prefer loan translations to loanwords. For instance, modern Icelandic has a notable aversion against loanwords: a large part of them would not match the complex inflectional morphology, something which discourages their use, given that the maintaining of the (structure of the) language is an essential part of Icelandic national identity.[7]

Whatever the views of a specific community on the subject may be, borrowing words from other languages, whether involuntarily or consciously, is a vital means of developing a language, our first and fundamental cultural technique.

Abbreviations and symbols

Arab. = Arabic, Chin. = Chinese, Dan. = Danish, Du. = Dutch, E = (modern) English, fem. = feminine, Fr. = (modern) French, Finn. = Finnish, Gr. = ancient Greek, Icel. = (modern) Icelandic, Jap. = Japanese, Lat. = Latin, masc. = masculine, MHG = Middle High German, MLat. = Middle Latin, MLG = Middle Low German, MPers. = Middle Persian, NHG = New (modern) High German, Norw. = Norwegian, OFr. = Old French, OIcel. = Old Icelandic, OWN = Old West Norse, PrGmc. = Proto-Germanic, Russ. = (modern) Russian, Span. = Spanish, Swed. = (modern) Swedish, WFranc. = West Franconian, WGmc. = West Germanic.

Operator > indicates regular changes by sound law (*a* > *b* '*b* is regularly replaced by *a*'), operator → indicates sporadic changes, e.g., by analogy (*a* → *b* '*b* is occasionally replaced by *a*').

Asterisk * indicates non-extant (i.e. reconstructed) forms.

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7 See, among others, Wahl 2008.

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