Comunicazione Interlinguistica Applicata alle Professioni Giuridiche

Modulo di Lingua Inglese 1 - 2018-19

Lesson 7: 25 March 2019

Development of English Lexis

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Founding of England

- Originally, Celtic dialects were spoken in the area known today as Great Britain

- 55-54 BC: First invasion of Britain by the Romans (Julius Caesar)
- Britain remains part of Roman Empire until 410 AD

- From 450 AD: Settlement in Britain of Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians, Vikings

- 1066: Norman Conquest – William the Conqueror becomes King of England

Development of English

- Celtic dialects

- Introduction of Latin through Romans

- Germanic dialects brought by Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians, Vikings

- Further impact of Latin through spread of Christianity

Old English 450-1150

First written forms of English:

- Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (890 on)
- Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People (Latin original 731; OE 890-930)
- Beowulf (975-1010)

Middle English 1150-1500

- Changes in grammar: progressive simplification of conjugations and inflections
- Changes in spelling and pronunciation (Great Vowel Shift) through regional variations
- Changes in vocabulary with progressive introduction of more technical and specialised terms derived from French/Latin
- Eventually the London variant (Chancery English) prevailed, helped by the introduction of the printing press (Caxton, 1476)

- Best known texts in Middle English:
  - Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (1386-1400)

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Modern English from 1500

Standardisation of grammar spelling and pronunciation that has essentially been continued to today.

- Dictionary of the English Language, Johnson (1755)
- OED (1928)
- Critical Pronouncing Dictionary, Walker (1791)
- English Grammar, Lindley Murray (1795)

Anglo-Saxon English

- Basic vocabulary
- Short, mono-syllabic words
- Verbs describing basic processes (often irregular)
- Comparatives with 'er'
- Raw materials (food nouns refer to the animal), simple processes
- Stylistically neutral

Norman/French English

- More complex vocabulary
- Longer, multi-syllabic words
- Verbs describing sophisticated processes (often regular)
- Comparatives with 'more'
- Food nouns refer to the meat
- Language of political, military, economic authority; culture

Influence from Latin and Greek

- Specialised vocabulary (semantic fields): religion, law,
- medicine, arts, science
- Perception of greater difficulty in pronunciation, spelling and
- understanding
- Often used deliberately to impress socially, maintain distance,
- establish groups/elites, etc.
- Some deliberate re-spelling in English to reflect Latin roots:
- e.g. fact, transport, excite
- False friends emerge though different development of words:
- actually, eventually, premises, sensible, sympathetic

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Imported words and Neologisms

- Other languages:
    - Italian (pizza, zucchini, al fresco)
    - Indian (bungalow, guru, pashmina, thug)
    - Japanese (tsunami), Spanish (siesta)

- New areas of activity: computing and online activities, finance and economics, sports, music, social culture
- Politically correct terms: waste-disposal operatives, hearing-impaired, black, Afro-American
- Euphemisms: loo (bathroom), gay (hardly ever original sense of 'merry', 'bright')

- New concepts: selfie, Brexit, 'alternative facts'

Word frequency

- 64% of Shorter OED words from French/Latin/Greek

- 26% from Anglo-Saxon

- 4000 most frequent word = 51% Germanic, 48% French/Latin, hardly any Greek

- 12 most frequent verbs in Longman's Corpus: say, get, go, know, think, see, make, come, take, want, give, mean

- Similar pairs will often have non-semantic differences, but they will vary stylistically: e.g. go in/enter; get up/rise; look into/investigate; book/reserve

Legal English and Legalese

- Dominant use of French and Latin terms

- Doublets and triplets (repetition of similar words), often combining an Anglo-Saxon and French/Latin term:
    - Will and testament
    - Fit and proper
    - Breaking and Entering

- Complex sentence structure:

1. Y will make himself available to X and Z to assist them with respect to the aforesaid disputes and litigation. Such assistance shall include, but shall not be limited to, providing opinion and factual information, assisting in the analysis and preparation of any evidence.

- Particular use of modal verbs, e.g. will and shall

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Legal English and Legalese

- Frequent use of passive forms:

> (2) Some disputes have arisen between Z and various parties in relation to certain transactions carried out by Y and X was engaged by Z to represent it in relation to such disputes.

- Specialised terminology:
  - Waiver, restraint of trade, furnish

- Old fashioned terms:
  - Hereinafter, aforementioned, forthwith

- Use of 'Legalese': deliberate use of complex and obtuse vocabulary and structure to render understanding by lay people more difficult

Legal English and Legalese

CARATTERISTICHE	ESEMPI
ripetizione di vocaboli estremamente simili	by and with write, edit, print or publish cause or cause to be done give, devise and bequeath
locuzioni complesse	In respect of for the purpose of by virtue of
frasi estremamente complesse, con molte subordinate	The chief land registrar shall (if so requested by the Secretary of State) supply him (on payment of the appropriate fee) with an office copy of any document required (source: UK Housing Act 1980)
ridondanza di nomi, assenza di pronomi (e di articoli)	The sex offender shall register plaintiff alleges buyer shall
linguaggio giuridico arcaico	hereunder whereof thereof herento
uso incerto di modali	Shall non ha la funzione di ausiliare del futuro
pedante negazione	Innocent misrecollection is not uncommon (source: California injury instruction) shall, if not inconsistent with
nominalizzazione, anziché uso di verbi corrispondenti	To make an agreement (invece di "to agree") prosecution of a person (invece di "to prosecute") the injury happened (invece di "he/she was injured")
uso ripetuto del passivo	One hour is allotted for oral argument this agreement shall be interpreted
presenza di parole di origine latina o francese	Notary public in re

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