

A Diachronic Study on the Expansion of the English Lexicon

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English which is claimed to encapsulate a rich vocabulary has been nourishing its lexicon from antiquity to the modern times. This study aimed at conducting a diachronic study on the expansion of the English lexicon in emphasizing how the rags to riches story of English coincides with the enrichment of the English lexicon. To accumulate data for the study, the secondary data collection sources such as research articles, books, and journals were referred and semi-structured interviews were conducted with two senior lecturers in English. It was discovered via a qualitative analysis that the external history of England immensely contributed to widen the English lexicon. In expanding on the external history, the contribution of the first known inhabitants of England, Celts was merely limited to the names of rivers and places. The Germanic tribes, Anglo Saxons that comprised Angles, Jutes, and Saxons arrived at England to assist Celts against Picts and Scots and the fusion of their dialects gave birth to Old English which was spoken from around the 5th century to the 11th century. The Christianizing of Britain during this period upon the arrival of St. Augustine in 597 BC added a host of Latin words related to religion, education, clothing and household etc. Then, the Age of Vikings contributed many Scandinavian words while the Norman occupation in the Middle English period which was characterized by the use of French contributed about 10,000 French words to the enrichment of English. Later, Shakespeare's works, King James Bible, and the mega events such as industrialization, colonization, and globalization gifted a great deal of new lexemes, borrowings, loan words, and idioms to enrich its vocabulary. In conclusion, English can be identified as a flexible language which absorbs the lexical items to suit the needs for its enrichment, development, and growth.

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