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Alumno: Laura Rubio Parras

Tutor: Prof. D. Alejandro Alcaraz Sintes

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Abstract: This essay is aimed at explaining the semantic and lexical changes in English and provides an overview of the types of changes which they have undergone through history of English, the differences and similarities between both changes and the causes why these changes occur. Lexical and semantic changes share some similarities in terms of their causes, however, they are clearly different if we observe their types of changes within each one. Semantics and lexis are always changing in a language and constitute a reflect of the constant change in society.

Key Concepts: semantics, lexis, semantic change, lexical change, vocabulary, meanings, ellipsis, metonymy, amelioration, discrimination of synonyms, degeneration, taboo replacement, narrowing, widening, hyperbole, irony, litotes, borrowings, composition, derivation, conversion

Resumen: El principal objetivo de este ensayo es explicar los cambios semánticos y léxicos en inglés y proporcionar una visión general de los tipos de cambios a los que se han sometido a través de la historia del inglés, las diferencias y similitudes entre ambos cambios y las causas por qué estos cambios ocurren. Los cambios léxicos y semánticos comparten algunas similitudes en términos de causas, sin embargo, son claramente diferentes si prestamos atención a sus tipos de cambios dentro de cada uno. La semántica y el léxico están siempre cambiando en una lengua y constituyen un reflejo del cambio constante de la sociedad.

Conceptos clave: semántica, léxico, cambio semántico, cambio léxico, vocabulario, significados, elipsis, metonimia, mejora, discriminación de sinónimos, degeneración, reemplazo de palabras tabú, reducción de significado, ampliación de significado, hipérbole, ironía, subestimaciones, préstamos, composición, derivación, conversión

1. Justification and objectives.

Semantic and lexical change is for me one of the most mysterious parts of English linguistics because of his unknown reasons that makes language change, this is why I choose this theme for my essay.

The objectives of this essay are to know what semantic change and lexical change are and the differences between them and to know the main causes of semantic change in English: speakers need to add new elements to the language too. Also to systematize the different types of semantic change in English and understand why and how these changes occur in the language. To know the main causes of lexical change in English and their historical background and to systematize the different types of lexical change in English: linguistic borrowings, composition, derivation and conversion. And, in general, to describe how language changes due to contact with other languages.

2. Introduction to linguistic change in English

This essay deals with the semantic change and lexical changes suffered by English during its three main periods (Old English, Middle English and Modern English). It provides an overview of the changes and attempts to explain and systematize these both types of changes.

The essay is divided into two different sections that explain and illustrate the different processes involved in semantic change and lexical change that give as a result the change in meaning of words. The first section, called *Semantic change* (S.3) is a brief summary about what semantic change is and when it started to be studying by scholars, in addition with the different lines of thoughts followed over many centuries to study this branch of linguistic change. It contains an overview of all the different types of changes that the English vocabulary has suffered: *ellipsis*, *discrimination of synonyms*, *metonymy*, *degeneration*, *amelioration*, *taboo replacement*, *narrowing* and *widening*, *hyperbole*, *irony* and *litotes* (S. 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.5, 3.3.6 and 3.3.7) The second section, called *Lexical change* (S.4), deals with the other type of change that English words suffered. It goes from the borrowings from other languages as a result of the coexistence of English with other languages, such as Celtic, Latin (S.4.3.1.1), Scandinavian (S.4.3.1.2), French (S.4.3.1.3) and Greek (S.4.3.1.4), during a part of the story of United Kingdom, until processes that occurred within the language that also result in a change in meaning in the vocabulary: *composition* (S.4.3.2), *derivation* (S.4.3.3) and *conversion* (S.4.3.4)

All these processes are illustrated by means of examples. As concerns *Semantic change*, the examples were mainly taken from the OED Online, Katamba (2005), Millward et al (2012) and among others. As regards, *Lexical change*, the majority of examples belong to Baugh et al (1951), Fernández (1982) and among others, and also to the OED Online and the *Collins Online Dictionary*.

3. Semantic change

3.1. Definition

Following what Keith Allan says in his work:

Semantic change has been used to refer to both processes and results. Depending on the researcher's view of semantics, it has also been used to denote changes either in reference to the external world (object, cultural, norms, etc.) or in a linguistic-internal sense, including ways in which pragmatic implicatures and inferences may become semanticized (coded) over time. (Allan 2010: 853)

Semantic change is the grammatical process in which scholars and linguists can notice easily how language is changing at the very moment in which they are studying it. Words and their meanings are in continuous evolution. Semantic concepts are always changing in a language. For example, *addicted*, from the Latin form *addictus*, has the meaning of “devoted or attached to a person, party, or cause” (*OED*, s.v. *addicted*, 1.a.), whose first attested appearance is dated in 1535:

- (1) Whan do we not lyue so addicted [...] vtterly gyuen, or bonde vnto them [sc. riches], that we ar founde..to be bonde seruantes vnto them, rather than the lordes or maysters of theym? (*OED*, s.v. *addicted*, 1.a.).

However, in the year 1930, people started to use a new sense for this word, in spite of the fact that this sense began to be used long time before this year. *Addicted* came to be used for people with dependence on drugs:

- (2) To be addicted to the wine or strong drinke, taketh away the heart. (*OED*, s.v. *addicted*, 2.b.).

Sometimes, a change is so abrupt that it is difficult to establish the common origin of some words. For example, *grammar* and *glamour* share the same linguistic root. Two words meaning something completely different have the same origin. Both words come from the Greek word *grammatikh*, which means “belonging to the literature” (Cruz Cabanillas & Martín Arista: 2001). Another example is the word *muscle* and its origin from the Latin word *musculus* “mice” on account of the anatomical form of some muscles.

However, semantic studies of the language have not had the same importance for many scholars as the other levels over the past centuries. Nowadays, for some linguists it is the least studied language branch of English due perhaps to this belated beginning of studies in semantic change.

The study of semantic change may be said to have started with some theories by Greek and Roman grammarians, who began to study why and how language changes, and formulated theories about homonymy, polysemy and other aspects focused on the referents and their nature. Nonetheless, very few works survive nowadays from this period. However, the first scientific studies on historical linguistics, in the 19th C., mainly focused in sound shift, as Traugott and Dasher explained in his work:

In the nineteenth century the work on language families that led to comparative Indo-European linguistics focused on sound correspondences and plausible sound change, but crucially required a notion of cognate meaning and of plausible meaning changes as well. (Traugott & Dasher, 2005: 51)

Therefore, modern studies on semantic change started in order to resolve this shortcoming. In this century it is when Bréal (1897) and his first studies began to be important. This in-depth study of semantic change made way to other linguists to develop their theories and reasons for the change of meanings.

It is possible to find two main lines of thought explaining why and how the meaning of words changes. The first one, shown by scholars as Bréal (1897), Bloomfield (1933), Stern (1931) or Ullmann (1942) defend the creation of a set of fixed and regular laws to be applied in each case of semantic change. They tried to develop a method explaining how the meaning of words changes, using what they called laws, as if they were grammar structures. Jadacki and Strawinski (1998) conducted a study about what Bréal wanted to defend in his essay:

The grouping of words into major patterns is governed by two basic, intellectual laws: “The law of repartition”, which limits the use of synonyms by assigning to them different stylistic values or by converting them into distinct and opposite terms, and the “law of irradiation”, which accounts for the grouping of words into homogeneous, semantically related sets. (Jadacki and Strawinski, 1998: 257)

This line of thought claims that it is possible to study the patterns of semantic change as if they were phonological laws or grammatical laws. The theory was followed by many linguists, such as de Saussure, Ullmann or Stern, in the decade in which Bréal published his essay, but this hypothesis was controversial for other linguists.

The other line of thought defends another point of view different from Bréal's theory, namely, that semantic change cannot be explained with a set of laws because

semantic change is very irregular and very difficult to predict. This is the most widely supported theory in most recent books of historical linguistics. Berg shows this differences between the phonological and semantic changes in order to be study:

One reason for this is that the semantic system is less tightly organized than the phonological one, such that a particular change in the semantic domains is less constrained and can take place as an isolated event whereas a change in the phonological domain is more highly constrained and can often be construed as one part of a more global development. (Berg, 1998: 292)

The group of linguists supporting this line of thought are, in my view, correct in some aspects, but I do not entirely agree in others. On the one hand, some changes that occurred in semantics can be studied as change laws because they appear in many semantic shifts. But on the other hand, it is true that semantic change is not predictable.

Nevertheless, taking into account the linguistic theory most valid nowadays, for example the one made by Ullmann in 1942, it is possible to predict general tendencies in the change of meaning of words. In his study, Ullmann differentiates between changes due to linguistic conservatism, the tendency of the speakers to assimilate the new words with the old ones and semantic changes due to linguistic innovation, totally contrary, new words are different from the existing words.

In any case, the fact is that it is impossible to find a general immutable law that explains how semantic change occurs.

3.2. Causes

In order to analyse the causes of semantic change it is convenient to divide them into two groups: linguistic and extra-linguistic causes. Linguistic causes are those that occur within the language, that is, the change is produced due to the internal laws of the language, for example in ellipsis, analogy, etc., whereas extra-linguistic causes are those which occur outside the language structure, due to social changes affecting the speakers of the language. There are many causes trying to explain this change in meaning of words in English. These range from changes in society, such as the scientific developments or the discovery of new lands with things never seen before, to the appearance of new words to fill semantic gaps. I will attempt to explain and analyse these causes independently and in depth.

In general, semantic change indirectly shows the social, historical and scientific changes of a linguistic community. In this sense, many situations, as scientific and technological developments and social changes started to need new words to satisfy the new communicative and expressive necessities of society. Speakers need a new term for a concept that is not lexicalized in their language. For example, in the Old English (OE henceforward) period, the Anglo-Saxon word *burh/burg* suffered a change in its meaning and was applied to a new real-life referent. *Burh/Burg* is related to *beorgan*, “to give shelter; to protect, preserve; to deliver, save” (*OED*, s.v. *beorgan*, 1). *Burh/Burg*, from Germanic *bergan*, and in evolved Middle English (ME henceforward) to the form *burrough*. Later on, in England and Scotland, the word became *borough*. Its meaning was at the beginning “fortress, castle, or citadel” (*OED*, s.v. *Borough*, 1a), but in the 16th century, English speakers added to the term the meaning of “a town possessing a municipal corporation and special privileges conferred by royal charter or that of “a town which sends representatives to parliament” (*OED*, s.v. *Borough*, 3a). In the year 1528-30 the term was totally accepted with this meaning:

- (3) The auncyent townes called borughes the moost auncyent and eldest townes that be within Englande. (*OED*, s.v. *Borough*, 3a).

Aitchison (1991) grouped the causes of semantic change in three main groups: fashion, foreign influence, and social need.

Fashion in semantic change may be compared with fashion in clothes: people start to use a word form for no other reason than it being a trend. It is a random tendency in language, and, therefore, unpredictable. Even though fashion cannot be ignored in semantic change, there are three reasons why it cannot be considered a major cause of change in the language (Aitchison, 1991: 108-109). Examples changes due to fashion can be seen in the processes called *pejoration* or *amelioration*, as occurred with words such as *silly* or *knight* (explained in 3.3.4).

These types of changes are what speakers can see of a more complex process of change within the language. They only can perceive a change in the words meaning, but they are not able to understand what is the complex reason of this change.

In addition, semantic change sometimes is due to a particular fashion, a very small change in society. In fact, sometimes these changes occur only during a limited period of time or become a permanent change. However, there are other type of changes that are

permanent, such as the changes due to foreign influences. An example of a permanent shift between two words is what occurred with the pair of words *swine* and *pork*; *swine* was the Germanic word used during the OE period to refer to the pig's flesh and the animal. The word comes from the OE form *swin*: "an animal of the genus *Sus* or family *Suidæ*, comprising bristle-bearing non-ruminant hoofed mammals [...] Now only literary, dialectal, or as a generic term in zoology, etc., being superseded in common use by pig or hog" (*OED*, s.v. *swine*, 1a). The loanword *pork* was the reason why *swine* suffers a semantic change, a semantic reduction in its meaning. The first attested appearance is in the year 725:

(4) Mara ic eom ond fættra þonne amæsted swin. (*OED*, s.v. *swine*, 1a)

In the 14th century a new form appears to designate this animal: *pig*. This word is of unknown origin, but may come from Dutch or Old Swedish. The first appearance was in the year 1387 in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*:

(5) In a glas he hadde pigges bones (*OED*, s.v. *Pig*, I.1a).

This word replaced the term *swine* to designate the animal and this form remains as the common one.

However, with the arrival in England of the Normans and the French language, the ruling class started to use the French word *pork* when speaking in English to refer to the flesh of this animal. The first attested use was in 1300:

(6) Huy nomen with heom..porc, motoun, and beof (*OED*, s.v. *Pork*, 1a).

As a result, the words *swine* and *pig* stopped being used among English speakers to refer to the flesh or the animal.

Foreign bodies, as Aitchison (1991:117) says, are the evidence of semantic change as a result of the use of the language by natives of other languages. These changes, due to a bad use of a word that starts to become standardized by the speakers, and results in the introduction of new words from other language in it.

The third cause explained by Aitchison is the social need of a language. "Language alters as the needs of its users alter, it is claimed, a viewpoint that is sometimes referred to as a functional view of language change" (Aitchison, 1991: 117). This third cause is the most important if we speak about vocabulary change in English. For example,

words such as *doublet* or *kirtle*. *Doublet* means “a close-fitting body-garment, with or without sleeves, worn by men from the 14th to the 18th centuries” (*OED*, s.v. *doublet*, 1a), a term widely used over four centuries, but now it is reserved just for a theatrical setting. The same occurs with *kirtle*, “A man's tunic or coat, originally a garment reaching to the knees or lower, sometimes forming the only body-garment, but more usually worn with a shirt beneath and a cloak or mantle above” (*OED*, s.v. *Kirtle*, 1), nevertheless “as the common name for an article of male attire, kirtle seems to have gone out of use about or shortly after 1500; writers of the 16th and 17th c. use it chiefly in describing robes of state” (*OED*, s.v. *Kirtle*, 1).

But, beyond all this, a word can stop being used by some speakers of a language, remain for other group of speakers. Many words disappear for a huge group of speakers and, eventually, these words that disappear for the majority are still used by a few speakers in a specific dialect or area where the language is spoken. For example, the ME word *tonguey*, meaning “full of ‘tongue’ or talk; talkative, loquacious” (*OED*, s.v. *tonguey*, 1), still survives in some local American English dialects, but it cannot be found in the normal language of other English-speaking regions such as Australia, Canada, Ireland or the United Kingdom. Another example is *fortnight*, originally “a period of fourteen nights, two weeks” (*OED*, s.v. *fortnight*, 1)

This is, however, just a summary of all the causes proposed in the studies on semantic changes. In spite of all the studies to trying to throw light on why word meaning change, we still do not have a clear answer to this question. Linguists have forwarded different causes, all of which are important to try to understand how these changes occurred. There is not an only reason why semantic changes, they all complement the others and as a result language changes.

3.3. Types of changes

There are multiple processes that give as a result a change in the meaning of words. In this section we offer a brief summary of the main phenomena illustrated with examples.

3.3.1. Ellipsis

Vocabulary suffered semantic change through *ellipsis* when, in a combination of words, the whole meaning of it is given to one of the elements of the word-combination. It is one of the most common types of change if we speak about semantic change. According to

Blank (1999), ellipsis is a “semantic change based on the contiguity of names, e. g., *car*, *cart* → “automobile”, due to the invention of the (*motor*) *car*” (Blank, 1999, in Bafou, 2012: 197). This phenomenon is the result of the principle of economy of the language: “an organism like a human being attempts to gain as much information as possible about its environment while minimising cognitive effort and resources” (Evans, 2007: 176). As a result, words started to change or, even, disappear from the language in some uses.

An example is the ModE verb *starve*: “To die. Said of a person or animal. In late use app. to die a lingering death, as from hunger, cold, grief, or slow disease.” (*OED*, s.v. *starve*, 1). The current meaning is the evolution of the combination of *steorfan*, “to die, sterven of hunger”, first attested appearance in the 10th century, in the Aelfric *Catholic Homilies*. The second part of the expression was lost, just remaining the part of *starve*.

(7) He underfehð þone awyrigedan cwyde mid Annanian & Saphira þe..mid færlicum deaðe ætforan þam apostolum steorfende afeollon (*OED*, s.v. *Starve*, I.1).

In English the new meaning become to be common among speakers with this new meaning since the year 1450: ¹

(8) Thei lay crynge aftur foode. Summe storuen to dethe (*OED*, s.v. *Starve*, 5a).

3.3.2. Discrimination of synonyms

This phenomenon is the consequence of the principle of economy of languages again: “Synonyms tend to disappear and ambiguity is avoided” (Briscoe, 2002: 64). When a language acquires a new word from another language, over a certain period of time both words coexist, but one of them finally disappear or else one of them starts to change its meaning into a new one.

An example of discrimination of synonyms may be seen in the word *tide*: “a portion, extent, or space of time; an age, a season, a time, a while” (*OED*, s.v. *tide*, I.1), nowadays obsolete since the 19th century:

(9) “my tides are a' i' yer han” (*OED*, s.v. *tide*, I.1).

¹ For example, in German it is possible to find the cognate word *sterben* meaning “to die”:

Wenn es ans Sterben geht¹ (*COD*, s.v. *Sterben*, 1).

The inclusion of the terms *time*, *season* and *hour* in the 13th century from French was the principle reason for the shift of meaning in *tide*. During the ME period the word changed its meaning to refer to “the space of time between two successive points of high water, or between low water and high water, in the sea” (*OED*, s.v. *tide*, II.8).

Thus, speakers change the meaning of synonyms to avoid ambiguity and prevent misunderstanding, to prevent the ambiguity in the meaning of two words with the same referent. This is why there are not any examples of perfect synonymy, one of the words or even both developing their meaning in another direction. Another example is the OE term *deor*, “a beast” (*OED*, s.v. *deor*, 1). With the borrowing of the term *animal* from the Anglo-Norman in the 14th century, the meaning changed in ME to “the general name of a family (“Cervidæ”) of ruminant quadrupeds, distinguished by the possession of deciduous branching horns or antlers” (*OED*, s.v. *deor*, 2). The word focused in a specific kind of animal, and was no longer a general term. This change was due to the fact that *animal* took its place in general meaning, so that *deor* narrowed its meaning, it could have well disappeared as happened to *shun* when *avoid* was borrowed from French, from the Anglo-Norman form *avoider* (*OED*, s.v. *avoid*, etymology).

3.3.3. Metonymy

In language, meanings tend to get associated with others. A word's referent may share some characteristics with a real life object, and speakers often tend to reflect these points in common in language. In semantics, two kinds of associations may obtain between words: a similarity of meanings and a contiguity of their referents, more properly called *metonymy*.

Metonymy is the conceptual mapping of a cognitive domain onto another domain, both domains being included in the same domain or ICM, so that the source provides mental access to the target. (Kövecses and Radden, 1998, in Barcelona, 2000: 32-33)

Similarity of meanings is the mutual relationship between the referent and the word in the language, as if it were a metaphor, in other words, terms are related any way (qualities, phenomena, form, etc.) and their referents have a resemblance between them. Metonymy is “a figure of speech characterized by the action of substituting for a word or phrase denoting an object, action, institution, etc., a word or phrase denoting a property or something associated with it; an instance of this” (*OED*, s.v. *Metonymy*, a). Depending on what they base their similarity on to change the meaning of the word, there are different

types of metonymy. It can be based on shape: *bottleneck* (similarity of the neck of a bottle with the human neck. The body starts to become narrower) and *computer mouse* (similarity between the animal mouse and this computer device); on position: *foot of a mountain*, *foot of a page* (referring to the lowest part of something, as if it were the situation of the human foot in our bodies); similarities of colour: *orange* and *hazel* (the characteristic colour of this object triggers the use of this word for the colour itself); and a complex similarity, the one that mixes in one all the other similarities; shape, function and position: *leg of a table*, *arm of a chair* (compares the situation of the leg and the arm in a human body with the one in these two objects).

As was said above, metonymy is an important type in semantic change. It is an accidental association of a particular type in space or time, but it is also the result of taking into account the relation between the part and the whole. This phenomenon is also called *synecdoche*: *give me a hand*, *drink the whole bottle*, *tongue* for “language” ... “A figure of speech in which a more inclusive term is used for a less inclusive one or vice versa, as a whole for a part or a part for a whole” (*OED*, s.v. *synecdoche*, 1). An example of this association is the name of the presidential house of the United States, nowadays also known by the name *the White House*. It is known that, when someone say this noun phrase, he or she refers to the presidential residence, and not to an ordinary white house. The origin of the proper name of the presidential house comes from the colour in which it is painted, totally in white. People refer to this house just with this name. Once in a time, speakers started to use this association with *White House* and the presidential house, and a new meaning was added to this noun phrase. In summary, it is an inclusion of meaning not presented in the origin of the word or words. Another example is the use of the noun of a country to refer to the government or the economy of this country.

3.3.4. Degeneration and amelioration

The meaning of words can change through time, speakers interpreting their referent in a negative or a positive way. This is the case of the phenomena known as *degeneration* or *pejoration* and *elevation* or *amelioration*.

In language, in a specific moment, a word started to be perceived in a more negative way by speakers, this is because of the degeneration of language. “Pejoration [...] is a change

to a more negative meaning” (Millward. 2012: 4). It is the process whereby a given word degenerates in meaning, becoming a word with bad prestige or a word used by speakers in a vulgar context. The meaning becomes more negative in the speakers’ mind. It is the case of the ModE word *silly*, a variation from the ME word *seely*, originally from Germanic. At first the meaning of the word was “that provokes sympathy or compassion; that is to be pitied; unfortunate, wretched” (*OED*, s.v. *Silly*, II.4).

(10) The fire raging upon the silly Carcase (*OED*, s.v. *Silly*, II.4).

IE soon developed senses “relating to simplicity of character or form and (by extension) to foolishness or mental incapacity” (*OED*, s.v. *silly*, III.5).

(11) The silly herdman [L. inscius..pastor] all astonnied standes (*OED*, s.v. *silly*, III.5).

Finally, around the 16th century, the word suffered pejoration in its meaning becoming the current one: “Of a person: lacking in judgement or common sense; foolish, thoughtless, empty-headed; characterized by ridiculous or frivolous behaviour” (*OED*, s.v. *silly*, III.6a).

(12) Of this sort are they which creep into houses, and leade captiue silly women (*OED*, s.v. *silly*, III.6a).

Amelioration or elevation of meaning is just the opposite, “a change to a more favourable meaning” (Millward, 2012: 4). The word becomes more positive in the speaker’s mind. To exemplify this phenomenon, a clear example is the semantic evolution of the word *knight* from OE to ModE. At first *knight*, *cniht* in OE, had referred to: “a boy or lad employed as an attendant or servant; hence, by extension, a male servant or attendant of any age” (*OED*, s.v. *knight*, I.2).

(13) Þæs brydguman cnihtas (*OED*, s.v. *knight*, I.2).

However, from the 16th century the word started to acquire a more prestigious meaning, English speakers using it to refer to a: “military servant or follower (of a king or some other specified superior)” (*OED*, s.v. *knight*, I.4a) and as the “name of an order or rank” (*OED*, s.v. *knight*, I.4d).

(14) Obtain thirteen Signatures to the form of Declaration as Knights, or Dames (*OED*, s.v. *knight*, I.4d).

What started being a boy servant, nowadays refers to a member of the nobility, the meaning clearly suffering a elevation.

However, these semantic changes, pejoration and amelioration, were difficult for scholars and linguists to notice, for centuries the various senses of the word overlapped. In addition, meaning changes depending on the context in which the word is used. For example, the meaning can suffer elevation or degeneration in a specific context, without any change in the other contexts, as Millward illustrates:

“The same word, with essentially the same denotation, may even have different connotations in different contexts. Again, a modern example may make the point clearer. The word *calculate* in most contexts has neutral (or even positive) connotations, for example, *calculating machines*, *the new calculator*, *a calculated risk*. But the word has strongly negative connotations in the phrase *a calculating person*”. (Millward, 2012: 204)

3.3.5. Avoidance of obscenity or taboo replacement.

Very much linked to pejoration is the phenomenon called *taboo replacement* or *avoidance of obscenity*. Taboo words are words that, due to overuse in certain contexts, started to be avoided by speakers because they started to become pejorative and their use was associated with a disrepute (Millward, 2012: 127).

There are plenty of examples that are the result of the addition of taboo words in English. For example: *toilet*, borrowed from French in the 16th century, was replaced in the majority of cases by other words such as *W.C.*, *bathroom*, etc.; likewise, *cock*, from OE, one of whose meanings today is the masculine sexual apparatus, was first used in this sense in the 16th century and is considered vulgar

(15) View my sore cock, his tender wounded head (*OED*, s.v. *cock*, 20)

The word *ass* “donkey”, developed the meaning in some contexts of “arse”. This meaning became popular in the 20th century.

Taboo words are replaced by new words that are accepted by the speakers and this had as a result their disappearance in many social situations, that is, their frequency of usage decreases:

“Taboos are responsible for the loss of some words. Words for death and dying, for example, are often replaced by euphemisms, which themselves become tainted by their meanings and are in turn replaced by other words or euphemisms.” (Millward, 2012: 127)

Following what Millward said, this is an example of the adding of a euphemism in words such as *departed* instead of *died*, or *put to sleep* for *euthanized*.

3.3.6. Narrowing and widening

“Semantic change often involves the widening (i.e. increasing the number of lexemes with distinct meanings associated with a word-form). Widening may result either in more homonymy or in more polysemy” (Katamba, 2005: 174). The last changes are the phenomena called *narrowing* (restriction, specialization) and *widening* (extension). In the first place, widening or generalization is the process whereby the meaning of a word become broader, it increases. The word starts to be use in many new contexts, not only in the original one. “Generalization is extension of meaning to cover wider semantic areas” (Millward, 2012:4). Thus, the word can be used in more contexts due to the change it suffers and not only in a specific situation and for a particular meaning. This type of semantic change is not as common as the opposite one, narrowing or specialization, but there are a quite number of examples in English. For example, *kleenex*, which at first was just “the proprietary name of an absorbent disposable cleansing paper tissue” (*OED*, s.v. *kleenex*, 1), but not eventually used as a general word referring to a paper tissue. Examples of widening are shown in the work by Katamba (2005: 174): *manage* (originally spelt *menage*) means “to handle anything successfully” (*OED*, s.v. *manage*, 1a) but originally it meant “o be able to use skilfully, to manage, to direct or exercise a horse” (*OED*, s.v. *manage*, etymology). *Manufacture* “the process of making products”. *Manufacture* comes from Latin *manu factum* “make by hand”. In early modern times its meaning was extended so as to include “To make (a product, goods, etc.) from, (out) of raw material; to produce (goods) by physical labour, machinery, etc., now esp. on a large scale” (*OED*, s.v. *manufacture*, 1a). Subsequently, in the industrial and postindustrial age it came to mean to make by machinery rather than by hand. The original link with manual work was eventually lost.

Furthermore, there are more examples from those illustrated by Katamba, examples that can be easy to find in daily used words. *Cupboard*, originally meant “a ‘board’ or table to place cups and other vessels, etc. on; a piece of furniture for the display of plate; a sideboard, buffet” (*OED*, s.v. *Cupboard*, 1a), but speakers started to change the original meaning into the one it is possible to find nowadays: “A closet or a cabinet (often placed

in a corner of a room or a recess in the wall) with shelves, for keeping cups, dishes, etc., provisions ready for use, or anything which it is desired to keep safely, as books or valuables” (*OED*, s.v. *Cupboard*, 2a).

Another example is a word widely used in English: *trunk*. At the beginning, this word referred only to the trunk of a tree: “The main stem of a tree, as distinct from the roots and branches; the bole or stock.” (*OED*, s.v. *Trunk*, I.1a), but in the 16th century speakers started to add to the word a wider meaning. The word started to have an additional meaning, not only the one associated with the body of a tree, but also the main part of any thing: “The main part of something as distinguished from its appendages” (*OED*, s.v. *Trunk*, I.1a). For example, it is possible to say the trunk of the human body, referring to the main part of our bodies.

The opposite process is the one called *narrowing* or *specialization* of meaning, in which words with a general meaning change into a more specific one, that is, there is a restriction in the range of meaning(s) of a word” (Millward. 2012: 4). Many words suffered this semantic change, especially during the transition from OE to ME, with the addition of words borrowed from other languages. These English words either suffered a process of change, or else were lost. From this period, it is possible to find many examples, as the one that the linguists as Akmajian and Richard Demer in their work in the word *hound* (Old English *hund*). “This word one referred to any kind of dog, whereas in Modern English the meaning has been narrowed to a particular breed” (Akmajian et al, 2001: 344). The word *dog* (Old English *docga*), on the other hand, referred in Old English “to the mastiff breed; its meaning now has been broadened to include any dog” (Akmajian et al, 2001: 344). The meaning of dog has also been extended metaphorically in modern casual speech (slang) to refer to a particularly unattractive person.

Therefore, *hound* and *dog* are perfect examples of this narrowing of meaning, but also are plenty of examples of this phenomenon. The word *wife* from Germanic suffered during OE a narrowing or specialization in its meaning. At first the word *wife* has the meaning of “a woman: formerly in general sense; in later use restricted to a woman of humble rank or ‘of low employment’” (*OED*, s.v. *wife*, 1)

(16) Then came I by a wife that did costerds sell (*OED*, s.v. *wife*, 1).

However, the word narrowed into a less general meaning and since the 13th century it means “the (or a) female partner in a marriage” (*OED*, s.v. *wife*, 4a).

(17) Slaves unto their wives goods (*OED*, s.v. *wife*, 4a).

3.3.7. Hyperbole, irony and litotes.

Other processes contributing to semantic change are *hyperbole*, *irony* and *litotes*. They are not properly speaking processes of semantic change, but as a result of their operation the meaning of words tends to change drastically.

The first one, *hyperbole*, is an exaggeration of the reality presented. “The hyperbolic expression exceeds the (credible) limits of fact in the given context: contains attribute ‘more of X’, i.e., ‘more of *the same*’” (Claridge, 2011: 5). This process of “exceeding the reality” has a direct relationship with semantic change. It is only when an extension of meaning takes place in a word that this hyperbolic process becomes possible, that is why this phenomenon contributes to the change in the meaning of words:

“The connection of hyperbole with lexical and semantic change has of course been noted in the literature. Samuels (1972: 53) remarked that ‘the selection of a stronger [...] form that the hearer believes the context to warrant will in time produce a devaluation’ and thus a new sense of the item in question”. (Claridge, 2011: 174)

An example for this phenomenon can be the sentence: *I have not seen you for ages*. In this sentence, the meaning that the speaker gives to *for ages* is not the normal one. It is a hyperbolic expression and *ages* has the meaning of *for a long time* or a *long period of time*. The word *age* did not change in its meaning. It changed based in the context in which it appears.

The same occurs with the process of irony, depending on the context in which the words or the expressions appear it can change the meaning. It is an optional meaning that sometimes the speaker wants to add to what he or she is saying, an implicature in the process of communication as the linguist Keith Allan shows:

“In the traditional definition irony is seen as saying something to mean the opposite of what is said. This definition is demonstrably incorrect. [...]. A recent and fruitful restatement of the irony-as-trope theory has been presented by Paul Grice who sees irony as an implicature, i.e., as a deliberate flouting of one of the maxims of the principle of cooperation”. (Allan, 2010: 446,447)

An example of this process of irony in a communicative situation between speakers is the one in which one of the speakers says *How nice!*, even though he/she is notably angry. The real meaning of the sentence is not the one of something being pleasant, but rather the opposite.

We finally come to *litotes*. This consists in expressing an emotion or thought by negating the opposite position. In other words, as Raimo Anttila says, “negation of the contrary: *not a few*, that is, *many*, *in no small measure*” (Anttila, 1989: 141). Other examples can be the expressions *not bad* referred to something good, *not big* for something small or medium or *not small* for something that is big. In summary, speakers use the antonym to express what they want to say.

4. Lexical change

Lexical change refers to the change in the use or the meaning of words, or, in general, the use of one word instead of another one. It is studied from a diachronic point of view.

4.1. Definition

Superficially it is easy to confuse the concepts of semantic and lexical change. In the section 3, devoted to semantic change, semantics was defined as the branch of Lexical change refers to the change in the use or the meaning of words, or, in general, the use of one word instead of another one. Diachronic semantics is the study of the changes in the meaning of words along the history of the language, from cases from Old English to Present day English.

However, as regards the lexis of the language, we need to refer to the language only in a diachronic level, taking into account the history of the language. Lexical change is studied in a specific period of time. The lexical branch also tries to set the etymological origin of words and other aspects different from the grammatical and phonological ones.

The definition of *lexicology* in the dictionary is “that branch of knowledge which treats of words, their form, history, and meaning.” (*OED*, s.v. *lexicology*, 1). The word was first defined in the 19th century, in the American Dictionary of Language and it was not until 1990 that medium-sized dictionaries introduced it. In the last three decades the meaning of *lexicology* has become the following:

“The study of the *lexicon* or *lexis* (specified as the vocabulary or total stock of words of a language) [...]. In lexicology the stock of words or lexical items is not simply regarded as a list of isolated elements. Lexicologists try to find out generalizations and regularities and especially consider relations between elements”. (Lipka, 2002: 9)

Words are human creations. Francisco Fernández uses a comparison of how words change in a language like plants. This idea was original from an essay by P. Guiraud:

“A man chooses species, selects the seed, plant, pruning, crosses, carefully cultivated all the garden ...; but plants also live by themselves, some grow and fully develop, others are weakened and they even fade away, some others will be drowned out by their neighbours too vigorous ...; after some time, it will appear even certain types of hybrids, results from the natural simple coexistence or mutual interaction”. (Guiraud, 1965: 37, in Fernández, 1982: 512)

This quote summarizes perfectly how a word appears in a language and starts being used by speakers that adopt it as a common word. However, these new words of the language start to change. These changes include their development into new words or even their disappearance. No words preserve exactly the same meaning they had in their origins. They have all suffered some kind of change. Guiraud at the end of this quotation mentions the creation of hybrid plants due to interaction and mutual coexistence. The same happens with loanwords from other languages or with changes in a specific word as a result of the influence of another word whether from the same language or from another.

4.2. Causes

The English lexicon is mainly formed by words proceeding from the Proto-West Germanic dialect. The Germanic dialects in turn come from the Indo-European language (IE henceforward). IE was the language spoken in Europe and part of India from 5000 to 1000 B.C and it was the mother tongue of the majority of languages spoken in this part of the world nowadays as the map of figure I reflects.

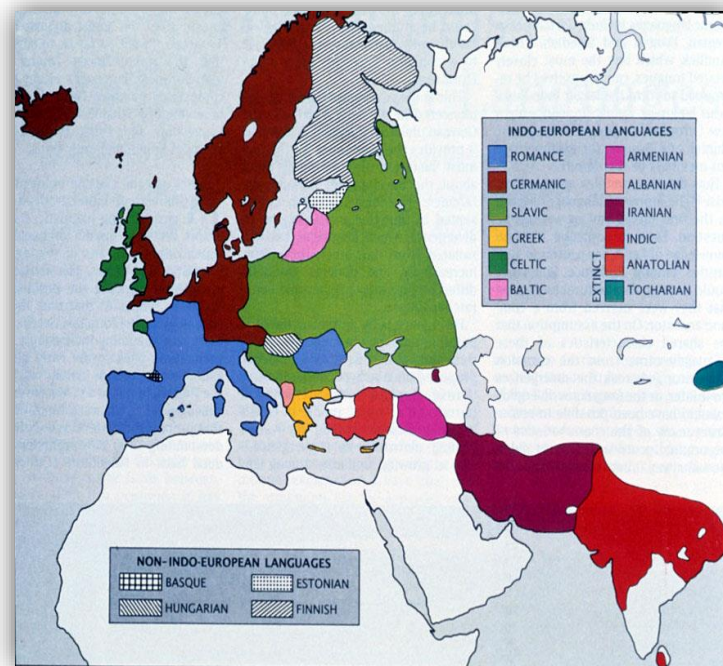


Figure 1. Indo-European languages in Europe and India (Damen, 2015).

Because they have a common ancestor, Germanic languages share part of their vocabulary. For example, English and German share words because they have a common origin, the same mother language. Words sharing the same root are called cognate words (more on cognate words in S.4.3.1). Cognate is a word from the Latin form cognatus: co-

together + gnātus born (*OED*, s.v. *cognate*, etymology). There are plenty of examples of them: “*back, bless, blood, body, bone, bride, broad, child, dear, earl, eel, game, gate, ground, oar, rat, rise, sea, soul, theft and womb*” (Millward, 2012: 74). All these words are similar in English and German due to their common origin. For linguists and scholars these shared features in vocabulary help to study how and when languages started to become independent from one another, and how wordstock of the different languages started to change throughout ages.

The causes of lexical change are mainly from the interaction of English with other languages since its separation from the West Gmc language. As a result of the migratory movements of peoples in England, in other words, lexical change is closely connected to history.

The external history of English is a complex issue. At first, English was not the original language in Great Britain, but came from the first settlements of Germanic tribes (449-850). In the British islands, the language spoken was a mix of different dialects due to the irruption of Celts in the islands approximately in the year 500 B.C. These dialects are mainly divided in two big groups: those from Gaelic, that still survive nowadays in Ireland, Scotland and Man island; and those languages form Brythonic, with their current evolution: Welsh.

However, in 43 A.C. a new culture arrived to the country: Romans. They brought with them their language, Latin. Celts adopted more than 600 words from this language, the most famous being the Latin word *castra* “camp”. Nowadays, it survives in the name of cities such as *Manchester* or *Leicester*.

By year 410 A.C. Romans left Britain. But in the 5th C. Anglos, Saxons and Jutes arrived to England bringing with them their own dialects. Again, languages living there took elements from other dialects. From the Anglo-Saxon language, speakers from England started to use some aspects from their lexical and phonological systems, but both languages were mainly the same, the change was not notorious.



Figure 2. England under the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms in the 7th century (Andow, 2012).

The Anglo-Saxons kingdoms into which the territory was divided as we can see in figure 2, gave as a result the creation of different dialects, four being the main ones: Northumbrian, Mercian, Kentian and occidental Saxon. As a result of the evolution of these dialects, the English language started to take shape.

“The English language was born, precisely, when the dialects of the three Germanic tribes started to become clearly different from the other common dialects of Western Germanic.”² (Fernández, 1982: 40)

For the study of the first English settlements, linguists and researchers work with texts from the origin of the English language, the earliest ones dating from the 7th century A.D. However, this primitive English is difficult to study and from this period, linguists can only make conjectures.

Nevertheless, the first great influence upon English was brought about by the Christianization England, which started in the year 597 by the missionary Augustine from Rome. This entrance in the country brought new words to England to give name to things never seen before there.

“English adopt plenty of Latin words, related to the church and the religion: *apostle, cell, cloister, creed, demon, idol, history, term, title*... Christian ideals are introduced in old texts. Original poems with didactic character are introduced, in special Christian ones,

² Original text: *La lengua inglesa nace, precisamente, cuando los dialectos de estas tres tribus germánicas comienzan a diferenciarse claramente de los demás dialectos comunes al germánico occidental. Los documentos antiguos son el único punto de partida para apreciar tales diferencias.*

and in addition to the cultural, religious and literate repercussion, the roman alphabet is definitely introduced.”³ (Fernández, 1982: 42)

With the introduction of the roman alphabet, English started to be more fixed in written texts.



Figure 3. Routes taken across the North Sea by Germanic tribes in the 5th century (Hickey, 2005)

Finally, the last peoples that causes changes in the English word-hoard during the OE period were the Scandinavians. They started to attack the land in the year 787 from the modern Denmark as we can see in figure 3. They exerted upon English a great influence noticeable in more than 600 names of towns and cities: *Derby*, *Whitby*, *Rugby*, *Linthorpe*... Also, from this Scandinavian influence the suffix -son still remains in proper nouns: *Paterson*, *Stevenson*, etc.

The Scandinavian dialects, in spite of the fact that they come from the same mother language as English, give plenty of examples of new vocabulary to the OE language: *skin* (Scandinavian skinn), *sky* (Old Norse ský), etc.

³Original text: a) *El inglés adopta multitud de palabras Latinas, relacionadas con la Iglesia y la Religión: apostle, cell, cloister, creed, demon, idol, history, term, title...*

b) *Se introducen ideales cristianos en textos antiguos [...]*

c) *Se introducen o comienzan a escribirse poemas originales de carácter didáctico, esencialmente cristianos.*

d) *Y junto a esa repercusión cultural, religiosa y literaria, la adopción definitiva del alfabeto romano.*

In 1066, William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy conquered England, as we can see in figure 4. The period of OE started to have an end giving space to a new period in English: Middle English (1100-1500). This Norman power in England remains until year 1215 when the Magna Carta was signed. However, French language did not disappear in the country until Edward I reign (1272-1307).



Figure 4. William the Conqueror invasion map in the 11th century (Bos, 2013).

This period, OE disappear giving place to ME, is marked by changes in morphology and vocabulary:

“During the Middle English period a number of very significant changes become more and more visible in the English language. The major changes from Old to Middle English are the loss of inflections, and with it the development of more fixed word order. As in the Old English period, language contact led to borrowing, but its scale as far greater during this period that it had been before”. (Fennell, 2001: 97)

However, foreign influence is not the only reason why the English lexicon changed. Added to that, there are two main processes within the language that caused the creation of new vocabulary: composition and derivation.

4.3. Types

4.3.1. Borrowing

Before we move into the question of borrowings from other languages, it is important to remember the root of the English language, the Indo-European language. This is the mother language of the majority of languages in our continent. For this reason, many English words also survive in a number of other IE languages, in spite of the fact that sometimes they are difficult to associate. This is because they have evolved differently even though they are cognate words. As Algeo says “words that come from the same source are said to be cognate (Latin *co-* and *gnatus* “born together”)(Algeo, 2004: 63).

For example, the verb roots meaning “bear, carry” in Sanskrit (*bhar-*), Greek (*pher-*), Latin (*fer-*), Gothic (*bair-*), and Old English (*ber-*) are cognate, all being developments of Indo-European **bher-*. Cognate words do not necessarily look similar because their relationship may be disguised by sound changes that have affected their forms differently. Examples of these types of words are presented in Table 1:

English nouns of Proto-Gmc descent	Verbs of Proto-Gmc descent	Adjectives of Proto-Gmc descent
<i>father, mother, sun, moon, foot, head, back, blood, body, bone, bride, broad, child, earl, eel, game, gate, ground, oar, rat, sea, soul, theft, womb and the numerals.</i>	<i>be, lie, eat, bless and rise.</i>	<i>long, red and dear.</i>

Table 1. Words of Proto-Gmc descent. OED

In addition, suffixes as **iskaz* (>PDE *-ish*) were introduced in Proto-Germanic from IE to create new vocabulary. This example gives the meaning of nationality to the word.

These words and many more constituted the basis of what we nowadays know as English. In subsequent periods, English enriched its lexicon by adding new words from many languages.

4.3.1.1. From Latin and Celtic

In terms of linguistic borrowing, it is confusing to determine whether the origin of certain words comes from Latin or Celtic. Both languages are a good example of two languages coexisting together, but without exerting much influence one upon the other. During the period of Roman occupation (43-449 A.D) one of them, Celtic, was the language used by speakers for everyday social life, whereas Latin was the language of the administration and it was used for military purposes. The Celts did not learn Latin as a language for daily use, so that it was an artificial second language for them when they use it, as Fennell (2001:89) explains.

It is apparent that the Romans and Celts intermarried relatively little, and did not share a religion (the latter being a barrier to the former, of course). Furthermore, we know that the Romans were a highly centralized, culturally sophisticated and organized culture, possessing (at least for a considerable time) unprecedented military strength. The Celts, on the other hand, were dispersed by the Romans to the extreme areas of the country and lived in smaller clan structures.

This is why Latin had importance in Celts. However, it did not occur in the other direction. Furthermore, Latin has two periods in which it exerted great influence upon the English lexicon: during the Roman occupation and with the Christianisation of England in the 6th century. Latin became the first great influence of the language.

Examples of borrowings of both languages are:

Words of Latin origin	Words of Celtic origin
Continental borrowings: <i>street, wine, butter, pepper, cheese, silk, copper, pound, inch, mile, ceaster (town), bishop, candle, creed, font, mass, monk, priest, cloister, idol, demon, history, term, title, battle, banner, wall, road, cheap, monger, wine, flask, kettle, pillow, cup, dish, line, pea, seine, pipe, Saturday...</i> Christianisation borrowings: <i>church, candle, canon, cleric, priest, palm, disciple, relic, rule, shrine, stole, martyr, minster, anthem, angel, altar...</i>	<i>bannock, bin, brock, crag, loch, cumb, cross, clock, Kent (from Cantion), London; river names: Avon, Esk, Usk, Dover and Wye.</i> The first syllable of cities' names such as: <i>Winchester, Salisbury, Exeter, Gloucester, Worcester and Lichfield.</i>

Table 2. Words of Latin and Celtic origin (Baugh & Cable, 1951: 67-76; Fennell, 2001: 89)

In Latin, there is a predominance of words related to religion and the new instruments brought to England from the Roman Empire. As is said before, the Romans were a higher civilization that brought innovations and new ways of life to the country. These new items did not have a name in English, hence the necessity of borrowing the original Latin word for the object.

In addition, the Romans also brought with them their social and administrative organization. They created hundreds of cities along the country introducing new building methods, for which, again English, had no name.

Later during the Christianization of England the same happened. The new religious structure needed new vocabulary and this vocabulary was created through borrowing from Latin.

In the case of Celtic, it was not the same case. Even though the Celts stayed in the island for a long period of time, but there is no great mark in the English language. In current English just the names of certain cities and places have remained from the Celts and just a few number of words for some objects.

4.3.1.2. From Scandinavian

The Scandinavian tribes had also an influence in English in the also called Viking Era. As I mentioned above, in English it is possible to find proper names with a suffix from Scandinavian *-son* and some names of places and cities with an origin in this language: *Derby, Whitby, Moresby, Rugby, Linthorpe, Bishopthorpe, Gawthorpe, Applethwaite*.

However, the influence of Scandinavians is not only noticeable in names of cities and persons. There is also a huge number of words of Scandinavian origin, as seen in Table 3. For example:

Words with origin in Scandinavian
<i>egg, weak, bark, sky, skin, skill, give, get, niman, take, anger, scrub, bask, whisk, skirt, kid, dike, cog, cozy, flense, hug, lug, maelstrom, midden, mink, nudge, rig, skua, snug, spry, wicker and gild.</i>

Table 3. Words with origin in Scandinavian (Baugh & Cable, 1951: 87,88; *OED*; Fennell, 2001: 91)

The influence of the Scandinavian language can also be seen in other type of vocabulary, namely, pronouns, prepositions, infinitive marker and the verb *to be*.

Pronouns	<i>they, them, their</i> (OE <i>hie, him, hiera</i>)
Prepositions	<i>till, fro</i> (as in <i>to and fro</i>) (OE <i>tō</i> and <i>fram</i>)
Infinitive marker	<i>att</i> , survives (as a blend with “do”) in the word <i>ado</i> , as in the title <i>Much Ado about Nothing</i> (OE <i>tō</i>)
Be	<i>Are</i> (OE <i>sind, sindon, bēon</i>)

Table 4. Forms from Scandinavia (Fennell, 2001: 92)

4.3.1.3. From French

During the Norman period (<1066), French had great influence on English. England became a trilingual nation: Latin, English and French were spoken. Latin was the language of the intellectual circle (Church, literature); English, the language of the lower class of society; and French, the language of the high society, nobility and aristocracy.

Until 1250 the country maintained this coexistence of the three language, but with Henry III (1216-1272) there was a movement of nationalism, as a result of which more importance was given to the autochthonous language: English. French became the language of the enemy. However, English was no longer the same language that was spoken before the arrival of the Normans. The language, due to the interaction of both languages, had changed and adopted a vast amount of new lexicon from French.

There was a huge enrichment in the vocabulary of ME. The contact between both linguistic groups, the French and the English, there is a massive transfer of French words into English.

“the majority of the new verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc. refer to the bourgeois class activities and the aristocratic society”⁴ as Fernández says (1982: 49). In this sense, French was seen by speakers as a more prestigious language. It was the language of the higher class. That is why literary authors started to use more words coming from French than from English and this created a kind of doublets of words meaning the same. For example: *ask/demand, begin/commence* or *happiness/felicity*. These loanwords were soon accepted by all speakers, and in some cases the old English word disappeared altogether. Examples of French borrowings are shown in table 5 divided thematically.

⁴ Original text: “La mayoría de estos nuevos verbos, nombres, adjetivos, etc. se refieren a las actividades de la clase burguesa y de la sociedad aristocrática”.

Government	<i>arms, assault, siege, power, minister, parliament...</i>
Novelty	<i>chase, falcon, scent, forest, quail, pheasant...</i>
Arts and culture	<i>art, colour, image, design, music melody, cathedral, palace, tower, poet, rime, romance...</i>
Education	<i>lessons, grammar, title, chapter, paper, study, noun...</i>
Commerce	<i>profytable, partener, travayl...</i>
Family relationships	<i>uncle, aunt, cousin, nephew, niece, grandmother, grandfather, grandson, granddaughter...</i>

Table 5. French borrowings (Fernández, 1982: 49, 50; Fennell, 2001: 107,108)

4.3.1.4. From Greek

The influence of Greek upon English is different from that of the other languages seen before. It was not a direct influence, as Carstairs-McCarthy explains:

“The possibility of direct Greek influence on English did not arise, however, until Western Europeans began to learn about Greek culture for themselves in the fifteenth century. (This revival of interest was stimulated partly by a westward migration of Greek scholars from Constantinople, later called Istanbul, after it was captured by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.)”. (Carstairs-McCarthy, 2002: 101)

The majority of the Greek loanwords belong to the scientific and technical vocabulary, but it is possible to find everyday words also, such as: *acme*, *acrobat*, *anthology*, *barometer*, *catarrh*, *catastrophe*, *chronology*, *elastic*, *magic*, *tactics* and *tantalize* (Baugh & Cable, 1951: 10).

Besides, as a result of the Greek influence on English there are many suffixes that have contributed to the formation of new words within the language.

From nouns	▪ anemo- (Gk. <i>ἄνεμος</i> “wind”): <i>anemograph</i>, <i>anemometer</i>, <i>anemoscope</i>. ▪ antho- (Gk. <i>ἄνθο-</i> “flower”): <i>anthology</i>, <i>anthoclorin</i>, <i>anthogenetic</i>, <i>anthophagous</i>. ▪ bio- (Gk. <i>βιο-</i> “way of life”): <i>biology</i>, <i>biograph</i>, <i>biochemistry</i>, <i>bioscope</i>. ▪ chrono- (Gk. <i>χρόνος</i> “time”): <i>chronogram</i>, <i>chronology</i>, <i>chronometer</i>.
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	▪ hydro- (Gk. ὕδρο- “water”): <i>hydrocarbon, hydrocephalic, hydrogen, hydrology, hydrophobia, hydrophobia</i>. ▪ logo- (Gk. λόγος “word”): <i>logocyclic, logodaedaly, logograph, logomancy, logonomy, logotype</i>.
From adjectives	▪ auto- (Gk. αὐτο- “same, self”): <i>autobiography, autochthon, autograph, automatic, autonomy, automobile, autotype</i>. ▪ eu- (Gk. εὖ- “well”): <i>eucalyptus, eudemonics, euhemerism, eulogy, euphuism, eurhythmics</i>. ▪ idio- (Gk. ἰδιώ “private, personal”): <i>idiomatic, idiomorphic, idiopathic, idiosyncrasy</i>. ▪ macro- (Gk. μακρο “long”): <i>macrobiosis, macrocosm, macrocephalic, macrocranial, macropetalous, macropod</i>. ▪ mono- (Gk. μικρο- “small”): <i>microbiology, microcephalic, microcosm, micrometer, microphone</i>. ▪ neo- (Gk. νεο- “new”): <i>Neolithic, neologism, neophyte</i>. ▪ poly- (Gk. Πολυ “much, many”): <i>polyanthus, polyarchy, polychrome, polygamy, polyglot, polygon, polyonomy</i>.
From prepositions, etc.	▪ amphi- (Gk. ἀμφί “on both sides”): <i>amphibrach, ampicentric, amphipod</i>. ▪ anti- (Gk. ἀντί- “against”): <i>antitoxin, antidote, antilogy, antipathy</i>. ▪ epi- (Gk. ἐπι- “on, over”): <i>epicentre, epicycle, epidemic, epidermis, epiglottis, epilepsy, epistrophe</i>. ▪ peri- (Gk. περι- “around”): <i>perianth, pericardium, periscope, peristyle, periscope</i>.

Table 6. Greek borrowings (Kavtaria, 2011: 261-263)

4.3.1.5. From other languages

Finally, English not only borrowed from languages that had historical contact with it. There are plenty of loanwords from other languages, as illustrated in table 7:

Spanish and Portuguese	<i>cargo, contraband, cork, hammock, mosquito, sherry, stampede, tornado, vanilla, alligator (el lagarto, the lizard), anchovy, apricot, armada, armadillo, banana, barricade (often barricado, as in Shakespeare), bastiment, bastinado, bilbo, bravado, brocade (often employed in the form brocado), cannibal, canoe, cedilla, cocoa, corral, desperado, embargo,</i>
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	<i>hammock, hurricane, maize, mosquito, mulatto, negro, peccadillo, potato, renegado (the original form of renegade), rusk, sarsaparilla, sombrero, tobacco, and yam</i>
Russian	<i>steppe, vodka, ruble, troika, glasnost and perestroika</i>
Persian	<i>caravan, dervish, divan, khaki, mogul, shawl, sherbet, jasmine, paradise, check, chess, lemon, lilac, turban, borax, and spinach.</i>
Italian	<i>balcony, canto, duet, granite, opera, piano, umbrella, volcano, algebra, argosy, balcony, cameo, capriccio (the common form of caprice until after the Restoration), cupola, design, granite, grotto, piazza, portico, stanza, stucco, trill, violin.</i> <i>Via French: battalion, bankrupt, bastion, brigade, brusque, carat, cavalcade, charlatan, frigate, gala, gazette, grotesque, infantry, parakeet, and rebuff.</i>
Dutch	<i>brandy, cruller, landscape, measles, uproar, and wagon.</i>
African languages	<i>banana, Boer, boorish, chimpanzee, gorilla, guinea, gumbo, Hottentot, palavar, voodoo, and zebra.</i>
Indian languages	<i>bandana, bangle, bengal, Brahman, bungalow, calico, cashmere, cheroot, china, chintz, coolie, cot, curry, dinghy, juggernaut, jungle, jute, loot, mandarin, nirvana, pariah, polo, punch (drink), pundit, rajah, rupee, sepoy, thug, toddy, tom-tom, and verandah.</i>

Table 7. Borrowings from other languages (Baugh & Cable, 1951: 10, 212, 274 and 285)

4.3.2. Composition

Following Fernández (1982: 514-517), composition is the combination of elements that already exist in the language to create new forms. This practice was very common in OE, particularly to create new nouns and adjectives.

The most common combinations to create a new noun may be seen in table 8:

Noun + Noun	▪ <i>fingerprint: finger + print: “now with specific reference to the recording by the police of impressions taken from the finger-tips of criminals and suspects”. (OED, s.v. finger, c2).</i>
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	▪ <i>lipstick</i>: <i>lip</i> + <i>stick</i>: “a stick of cosmetic for colouring the lips, usu. a shade of pink or red; hence, cosmetic for the lips”. (OED, s.v. <i>Lipstick</i>, 1)
Adjective + Noun	▪ <i>greenhouse</i>: <i>green</i> + <i>house</i>: “A structure with walls and roof made chiefly of glass or translucent plastic in which plants requiring regulated climatic conditions are grown”. (OED, s.v. <i>greenhouse</i>, 1) ▪ <i>gospel</i>: <i>good</i> + <i>spell</i>: “the glad tidings (of the kingdom of God)’ announced to the world by Jesus Christ. Hence, the body of religious doctrine taught by Christ and His apostles; the Christian revelation, religion or dispensation”. (OED, s.v. <i>Gospel</i>, 1a)
Adverb + Noun	▪ <i>onlooker</i>: <i>on</i> + <i>looker</i>: “A person who looks on; an observer, a spectator”. (OED, s.v. <i>Onlooker</i>, 1) ▪ <i>bystander</i>: <i>by</i> + <i>stander</i>: “One who is standing by; one who is present without taking part in what is going on; a passive spectator”. (OED, s.v. <i>Bystander</i>, 1)

Table 8. Creation of new nouns (OED)

Those used to create new adjectives, are seen in table 9.

Noun + Adjective	▪ <i>skin-deep</i>: <i>skin</i> + <i>deep</i>: “Penetrating no deeper than the skin; on the surface only; superficial, shallow”. (OED, s.v. <i>Skin-deep</i>, A1a) ▪ <i>snow-white</i>: <i>snow</i> + <i>white</i>: “White as snow; pure white”. (OED, s.v. <i>Snow-white</i>, A1a)
Adjective + Adjective	▪ <i>blue-green</i>: <i>blue</i> + <i>green</i>: “A colour intermediate between blue and green; a pigment of this colour”. (OED, s.v. <i>Blue-green</i>, A1)
Adjective + Noun	▪ <i>red-head</i>: <i>red</i> + <i>head</i>: “That has red or reddish hair”. (OED, s.v. <i>Redhead</i>, 4B) ▪ <i>mild-hearted</i>: <i>mild</i> + <i>heart</i> + <i>ed</i>: “Tender-hearted, gentle, merciful”. (OED, s.v. <i>Mild-hearted</i>, 1)

Table 9. Creation of new adjectives (OED)

This compound words are made up by a determinant and a determiner, the second word being the one that predominate grammatically speaking.

4.3.3. Derivation

The process in which new words are formed by affixes it is called derivation. Affixes are added to create new words with a new meaning using as a base a word that already exists (Fernández, 1982: 517). However, with derivation affixes do not only change meaning of words, they also change their part-of-speech adscription, as Millward explains:

In English, most derivational prefixes simply change the meaning of the word to which they are attached (*uniform*, *transplant*, *microwave*, *unbelievable*, *desensitize*), though some change the part of speech; for example, the prefix *em-* changes the noun *power* to a verb, and the prefix *a-* changes the verb *float* to an adjective. Derivational suffixes normally change the part-of-speech category and may also change the meaning of the word to which they are attached. (Millward, 2012: 3)

The trigger of this change in meaning suffered by the word are the affixes that add different meanings to the word depending on which is added: “each derivational affix has a meaning. It can carry a single sense, or there may be a fair semantic range” (Dixon, 2014: 15). Derivational affixes can be prefixes, those added at the beginning of the word, or suffixes, they are added at the end of it.

The history of the use of affixes in English started during the OE period. During this period, prefixes as *ā-*, *an-/on-*, *and-/ond-*, *be-/bī-*, *for-*, *ge-*, *in-*, *of-*, *ofer-*, *tō-*, *un-*; and suffixes as *-dōm*, *-end*, *-ful(l)*, *-ig*, *-lēas*, *-lic*, *-nes(s)/-nis/-nys*, *-scīpe*, *-ung* were added to a word and they create a new word with a new meaning (Fernández, 1982: 517).

New words in Old English due to derivation	
New verbs	<i>āræran</i> “exalt”, <i>bestripan</i> “divest”, <i>geascian</i> “discover”, <i>forbærnan</i> “burn completely”, <i>tōbreca</i> “break”, <i>onlūcan</i> “open”, <i>andswarian</i> “answer”
New nouns	<i>forhergung</i> “devastation”, <i>gesceaft</i> “creation”, <i>wilnung</i> “desire”, <i>crīstendōm</i> “Christianit”, <i>hælend</i> “rescuer”
New adjectives	<i>synnful(l)</i> “sinner”, <i>blōdiġ</i> “bloody”, <i>woruldlic</i> “mundane”, <i>āræd</i> “prepared/resolved”

Table 10. New words in Old English due to derivation (Fernández, 1982: 517-518)

Many of these affixes disappeared in the ME period, but new ones were added with the interaction of English with other languages made during the ME and ModE period. An example of that is the number of prefixes borrowed from Greek (S.4.3.1.d) by French or

Latin. Examples of these derivations resulting from the introduction of new affixes are shown in the table 11:

<i>ad-</i> “to, towards, near to” (OED, s.v. <i>ad-</i> prefix, 1).	<i>adapt, adduce, address, admix, adnumber.</i>
<i>ante-</i> “preceding in place or position” (OED, s.v. <i>ante-</i> prefix, 1a).	<i>ante-bath, antecedent, anticipate, ancestor</i> (ante-cessus).
<i>ob-</i> “in the direction of, towards, against, in the way of” (OED, s.v. <i>ob-</i> prefix, Etymology).	<i>obedience, obversion, obduce, obligation, oblong, obnoxious, obdurate.</i>
<i>-ly</i> “having the qualities appropriate to” (OED, s.v. <i>-ly</i> suffix, 1)	<i>manly, womanly, queenly, masterly, soldierly.</i>
<i>-some</i> “fecund in”	<i>lonesome, troublesome.</i>

Table 11. Derivation resulting from the introduction of new affixes (Fernández, 1982: 520-523)

4.3.4. Conversion

Finally, is also a process called *conversion*, or *zero-derivation*. It is the least productive lexical change process as far as the number of new words created is concerned. It consists in the use of a word that already exists for another word class, without changing its form (Nevalainen, 2006: 59). For example, the word *bottle*, originally a noun meaning “a container with a narrow neck and wider body, for holding or storing liquids, pills, etc., now usually made of glass or plastic, but formerly typically of leather, wood, earthenware, or metal” (OED, s.v. *bottle* ⁿ3, 1a), was first used as a noun in the 14th century, and then a verb in the 16th century: “to put (beer, wine, or other liquids) into bottles for the purpose of storing or keeping” (OED, s.v. *bottle* ^v1, 1a).

5. Conclusion

To sum up, there have been many changes affecting the semantic and lexical branches of the language over time. Concerning semantic change, there is not a clear reason such as why and when the vocabulary of a language changes although many scholars, as Bréal (1897) or Ullmann (1942), among others, tried to fix a set of rules to explain this change in language. One of the scholars that best summarized the possible reasons for this change is Aitchison, she summarized them in three main causes: fashion, foreign influence, and social need. However, as regards the types of change, there are clear phenomena that explain the semantic changes suffered by words overtime, namely, ellipsis, discrimination of synonyms, metonymy, degeneration, amelioration, taboo replacement, narrowing, widening, hyperbole, irony and litotes.

Secondly, regarding lexical change the situation is different. As is shown in this essay, the main reasons for lexical change in a language can be explained in a clear way since it is based mainly in history. The main type of lexical change, linguistic borrowing, is the result of the coexistence of different languages in the same area. That is what occurred during a big part of the British islands, where many different civilizations live together in a specific period of time, such as occurred with the Normans, the Romans or the Scandinavian tribes. However, there are other processes involved in the in the lexical change of English, namely, composition, derivation and conversion, which gave the language an important number of new words.

Therefore, semantic and lexical changes in English have been the way in which new vocabulary and meanings were included in the language when it was required, by its speakers.

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