

# OLD WORDS AND LOAN WORDS

- A word can be seen as:
  - An element in a text
  - An entry in a dictionary
- A dictionary can be seen as an inventory of lexemes:
  - Lexemes are listed (e.g. *happy* (adj.) and *happiness* (noun))
  - No lexeme is repeated (e.g. *happier* (comparative) and *happiest* (superlative) not listed)
- Neologisms are harder to count than word-forms and lexemes due to lack of sources from the eME period.
- The common core of English consists of frequent everyday vocabulary (all registers, both written and spoken):
  - Names of everyday objects and actions
  - Terms for family and social relationships
  - Commoner verbs, adjectives and adverbs
  - Central grammatical or function words
    - Articles, pronouns, conjunctions & auxiliary verbs
- The common core has absorbed many loan words, but an estimated 50% of it is still of Germanic origin.
- In a large corpus of Present-Day BrE and AmE speech and writing, top ten most frequent lexical/content verbs are:
  - *say, get, go, know, think, see, make, come, take, want*
- In many cases: complex history → not clear whether straightly borrowed or created by word-formation patterns
- 1575-1675: more than 13,000 new words from Latin
- 16<sup>th</sup> century: 35% of the new lexis = loan words (of those 60% Latinate)
- 17<sup>th</sup> century: even 40% loan words
- Examples for Loan Words:
  - Nouns often unaltered in nominative case (*circus, interior, medium*)
  - Technical terms keep their original plurals (*fungus-fungi, formula-formulae*)
  - Sometimes even the ablative (*folio, via*) and verbs as nouns (*exit, veto*)
  - Some French loan words: *colonel, trophy, esprit, class, vogue, ballet, denim, soup*
- Often: morphological anglicization: dropping endings, or e.g. *contre – counter*
- French identifiable by word endings (*-ity, -ence, -able, ...*)
- From Greek → nouns (as in Latin): *crisis, catastrophe, cosmos*
- In science: no English equivalents & native words = ambiguous, but borrowed technical term = one meaning
- French (unlike Latin): living language
  - reflecting of cultural and political links and French immigrants, many loans in administration and law, later on: fashionable and prestigious, educated

## Important terms:

**word-form token:** a word, where all repeats of the word in a text are counted individually

**word-form type:** a word, where the word only counts once, regardless of how many times it appears in a text

**lexeme:** the smallest of minimal unit of lexicon in a language that bears some "meaning"

**neologism:** a new word

**the common core:** the "backbone" of the language

**Latinate:** Latin, Greek and French loan words