


<p><b>THE RESEMBLANCE AMONG LATIN, FRENCH AND ENGLISH VOCABULARY</b></p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Humanities</b></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> resemblance, vocabulary, English, influence, literature.</p>
<p><b>Arianit Dodaj</b></p>	<p><b>University of Innsbruck. Department of English and American Studies. (Master's student)</b></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>The purpose of this paper is to reflect the resemblance among Latin, French and English vocabulary. The structure of this study consists of language derivation theories and vocabulary similarities which have been encountered during university studies. In general, the French influence in the English vocabulary will be explained through the Norman Conquest of England and the indirect influence of Latin through the ecclesiastical literature. Regarding the methodology used in the conduction of this research paper, the phenomenon has been treated using the descriptive and historical-comparative approach. Although being similar in spelling and equivalent in meaning, the words deriving from the vocabulary of the three languages resulted different concerning with pronunciation. Nevertheless, the integration of personal experience in the structure of the study has been made in order to support the framework of the study and to ensure the accuracy and the originality of the research. The paper is expected to be useful for future linguists or students of English language, helping them in understanding the relation and similarity of the vocabulary between these languages.</p>		

**1. Introduction**

Having settled in Britain, the Anglo-Saxon tribe derived English from the West Germanic group of languages, apparently as a new mean of communication. Taking into consideration the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, the influence of French in the English language was obviously inevitable. It is clear that being conquered means coping with a new living manner whether it is imposed or embraced on purpose. After the Norman Conquest, French became the language of communication in institutions, public areas and even in the local trade.

The application of French language in the English commune, made an impact to the English vocabulary which inherited many words from this Romance language. Nevertheless, there was also the indirect influence of Latin through the French language and through the ecclesiastical literature. This paper includes the reserved space consisting of English vocabulary followed by Latin and French words which are identical in spelling and represent the equivalent meaning.

The employment of personal experience in languages during university studies in this paper has been done in an attempt to show the resemblance among Latin, French and English vocabulary.

The methodology used for the conduction of this research paper consists of descriptive and historical-comparative approach. Using the comparative approach, a distinction of few characteristics and similarities has been made concerning the vocabulary of these languages. The phenomenon has been approached historically in order to understand the derivation of the languages and the development of the vocabulary.

## 1.1 Derivation of Latin

As we all know in general, the Latin language is not used anymore in the context of daily communication. Nevertheless, the terminology of the Latin language is still applicable in historical, archaeological, architectural, medical, linguistics studies and research.

Latin (Latin: *lingua latīna*, IPA: [ˈliŋɡwa laˈtiːna]) is a classical language belonging to the Italic branch of the Indo-European languages. The Latin alphabet is derived from the Etruscan and Greek alphabets and ultimately from the Phoenician alphabet.<sup>1</sup> It was originally spoken by small groups of people living along the lower Tiber River, Latin spread with the increase of Roman political power, first throughout Italy and then throughout most of western and southern Europe and the central and western Mediterranean coastal regions of Africa. The modern Romance languages developed from the spoken Latin of various parts of the Roman Empire. During the Middle Ages and until comparatively recent times, Latin was the language most widely used in the West for scholarly and literary purposes. Until the latter part of the 20th century its use was required in the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 Derivation of French

French (*le français*, pronounced [lə fʁɑ̃sɛ] or [lə fʁɑ̃sɛ] or *la langue française* [la lɑ̃ɡ fʁɑ̃sɛːz]) is a Romance language of the Indo-European family. It descended from the Vulgar Latin of the Roman Empire, as did all Romance languages. French evolved from Gallo-Romance, the spoken Latin in Gaul, and more specifically in Northern Gaul. Its closest relatives are the other langues d'oïl—languages historically spoken in northern France and in southern Belgium, which French (Francien) has largely supplanted. French was also influenced by native Celtic languages of Northern Roman Gaul like Gallia Belgica and by the (Germanic) Frankish language of the post-Roman Frankish invaders.<sup>3</sup> The French language is the official language of many world countries, mainly spread through the French colonization. It is spoken in 60 countries of the world according to the statistics.<sup>4</sup> Two thirds of the French vocabulary derived from Latin. The basic words are inherited from Vulgar Latin and are often marked by some slang bias as compared with Classical Latin. In the 16th century, when French replaced the Latin in the official documents, there was a strong tendency not only to borrow new words from Latin, but also to remake the words of the spoken language on Latin pattern. French was the language in which were fixed the notions of the Western culture and for centuries it was used by the educated people all over Europe, gradually replacing Latin in the live international communications. As a result thousands of French words were absorbed into European languages, both in the western and in the eastern part of the

<sup>1</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin>

<sup>2</sup> Marius Sala, Rebecca Posner., *Latin language*: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Latin-language>, (2017)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language)

<sup>4</sup> Top 20 of the most widely spoken languages by "First language" speakers (2009)  
<https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/languages.htm>

continent. For the growth of the Western culture the French linguistic inheritance is maybe as important as that of the ancient Greek and Latin.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.3 Derivation of English

English has its roots in the Germanic languages, from which German and Dutch also developed, as well as having many influences from romance languages such as French. Romance languages are so called because they are derived from Latin which was the language spoken in ancient Rome. Presumably there are three periods of the evolution of the English language: Old English (500-1100 AD), Middle English (1100 – 1600 AD), Modern English (1600 – today).<sup>6</sup>

In order to demonstrate the derivation of English from the West Germanic group of languages, below you'll find few exemplified words that represent the equivalent meaning in the above-mentioned language pair.

	<b>German</b>	→	<b>English</b>
Noun.	<i>wasser</i>		<i>water</i>
Adj.	<i>kalt</i>		<i>cold</i>
Adj.	<i>warm</i>		<i>warm</i>
Noun.	<i>brot</i>		<i>bread</i>
Noun.	<i>vater</i>		<i>father</i>
Noun.	<i>mutter</i>		<i>mother</i>
Noun.	<i>bruder</i>		<i>brother</i>
Noun.	<i>schuh</i>		<i>shoe</i>
Noun.	<i>nase</i>		<i>nose</i>
Noun.	<i>das / wetter</i>		<i>weather</i>

## 2. The Influence of French in the English Language

The Norman invasion of England in 1066 had a major impact not only on the country, but also on the English language. William the Conqueror and his merry band of Normans brought with them the Norman French, which became the language of the court, government and the upper class for the next three centuries. English continued to be used by ordinary people, and Latin was the language of the church. During the period when Norman French was the dominant language, English was rarely used in writing, and started to change in many ways. Before the conquest English had a much more complex grammar, however 70 or 80 years later, the grammar had become much simpler. This change is known as the transformation from Old English to Middle English. At the same time Norman French became Anglo-Norman as it was itself affected by

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.orbilat.com/Languages/French/French.html>

<sup>6</sup> Where does the English language come from?

The Monthly webzine of the Macmillan English dictionaries, Issue 38, 2006.

<http://www.macmillandictionaries.com/MED-Magazine/May2006/38-UK-US-Culture.htm>

English. More than 10,000 French words found their way into English – words associated with government, law, art, literature, food, and many other aspects of life. About three quarters of these words are still used, and words derived directly or indirectly from French now account for more than a third of English vocabulary. In fact English speakers know around 15,000 French words, even before they start learning the language.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.1 The Resemblance among Latin, French and English Vocabulary

As explained in the previous paragraphs, French derives from the Romance group of languages and English is a derivation from the Germanic group of languages. However, these languages are linked together due to the fact of being part of the Indo-European language family. As I was studying in the Bachelor’s program of English language and American Studies, I engaged constantly in studies of early British and American civilization, literature and linguistics. After obtaining my Bachelor’s degree, my interest in studying language influence and similarity increased. During the exploration of a Latin prayer of the Catholic Church, my interest arose considering its consisting text and decided to translate it to Albanian. Regarding translation, I am experienced in professional translation of judicial and any other type of documents from English to Albanian language or vice versa. The Latin and Albanian language are quite similar regarding spelling, pronunciation and meaning of words. Nevertheless, during translation, numerous dissimilarities were spotted. These dissimilarities were words that when translated to Albanian, resulted different in spelling and pronunciation. In such a case, I would employ my English proficiency to help me perform the translation. In the following page, you’ll note Latin words that I have encountered during the translation that gave me an instant clue of equivalency in French and English regarding meaning and spelling.

The Latin prayer which I have translated is called The Litany of the Saints or (*Litaniae Sanctorum*) and the translation can be accessed on Scribd (*for individuals who have an interest in studying similarities between Latin and Albanian*).<sup>8</sup>

<b>Latin</b>	<b>French</b>	→	<b>English</b>
<i>litaniae</i>	<i>litanie</i>		<i>litany</i>
<i>resurrexisti</i>	<i>résurrection</i>		<i>resurrection</i>
<i>trinitas</i>	<i>trinité</i>		<i>trinity</i>
<i>perpetua</i>	<i>perpétuel</i>		<i>perpetual</i>
<i>santa</i>	<i>esaint</i>		<i>saint</i>
<i>martyris</i>	<i>martyr</i>		<i>martyr</i>
<i>incarnation/em</i>	<i>incarnation</i>		<i>incarnation</i>
<i>discipuli</i>	<i>disciple</i>		<i>disciple</i>

<sup>7</sup> Simon Ager, *The Influence of French on the English Language*, 2012.  
<http://www.cactusworldwide.com/blog/2012/11/15/the-influence-of-french-on-the-englishlanguage/>  
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/401735978/Litany-of-the-Saints-Lutja-e-Shenjtoreve>

Taking into consideration the words given above, one may understand the similarity of the Latin, French and English vocabulary. It is worth mentioning that even being similar in spelling and equivalent in meaning, French words are pronounced differently in comparison with the English pronunciation. Few Latin words originating from the Nicene Creed (*lat. Credo*<sup>9</sup>) have also been studied which resulted similar in French and English. In the following example, we can understand the indirect influence of Latin into the English vocabulary through the ecclesiastical literature:

<b>Latin</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>credo</i>	<i>credo</i>	<i>creed</i>
<i>crucifixium</i>	<i>crucifixion</i>	<i>crucifixion</i>
<i>visibilium</i>	<i>visible</i>	<i>visible</i>
<i>invisibilium</i>	<i>invisible</i>	<i>invisible</i>
<i>descendis</i>	<i>descendre</i>	<i>to descend</i>
<i>virgo</i>	<i>vierge</i>	<i>virgin</i>
<i>angeli/us</i>	<i>ange</i>	<i>angel</i>
<i>aeternum</i>	<i>éternel</i>	<i>eternal</i>

Additionally, the following words have been encountered during various translations which might be useful in understanding the resemblance among Latin, French and English vocabulary.

<b>Latin</b>	<b>French</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>fratris</i>	<i>frièr</i>	<i>friar</i>
<i>speculator</i>	<i>spéculateur</i>	<i>speculator</i>
<i>interpretes</i>	<i>interprète</i>	<i>interpreter</i>
<i>linguam</i>	<i>langue</i>	<i>language</i>
<i>reference</i>	<i>réfèrence</i>	<i>reference</i>
<i>proportionalem</i>	<i>proportionnel</i>	<i>proportional</i>
<i>conclusio</i>	<i>conclusion</i>	<i>conclusion</i>
<i>missionem</i>	<i>mission</i>	<i>mission</i>
<i>translatio/ne</i>	<i>traduction</i>	<i>translation</i>
<i>militaris/re</i>	<i>militaire</i>	<i>military</i>
<i>universitas</i>	<i>université</i>	<i>university</i>
<i>libero/are</i>	<i>libérer</i>	<i>to liberate</i>
<i>nasus</i>	<i>nez</i>	<i>nose</i>
<i>scientia</i>	<i>science</i>	<i>science</i>
<i>vocabularium</i>	<i>vocabulaire</i>	<i>vocabulary</i>
<i>thesaurum</i>	<i>trésor</i>	<i>treasure</i>
<i>accusatio</i>	<i>accusation</i>	<i>accusation</i>
<i>societas/tis</i>	<i>société</i>	<i>society</i>

<sup>9</sup> <https://viechretienne.catholique.org/prieres/en-latin/949-credo>

### 3. Conclusion

In accordance with the presented theory, Latin results to be a base language for French and English language. English has absorbed many words from the French vocabulary which can be detected during the analysis of the exemplified words.

From my perspective, the resemblance among Latin, French and English vocabulary is apparently easy to detect because all of these languages belong in the Indo-European language family and the blending of Latin and French words in the English vocabulary is attributable to the French influence during the Norman Conquest and to the usage of ecclesiastical literature produced in Latin.

Most of the words in Latin, French and English language share a similar spelling and have an equivalent meaning. It is worth mentioning that the pronunciation of the words differs due to the diversity of French accent in regard to Latin and English and there are also cases when spelling of words is different. In most of the cases, the prefixes of Latin and English words are identical but the suffixes are different.

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