

“Eat Your Words”

The Language of Food - Class #2



**Fromm Institute
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Wednesdays 1 PM**

Alice F. Freed, Ph.D.

**Painting by Maurice Freed
“Fish and Chips.” 1978.
Acrylic on masonite. 16 x 20.**

Language, food, and cultural exchange



Language, food, and dialects

The intersection of language, food, and culture

- **What happens when people from various cultures, who speak different languages, come into contact?**
- **Think about trade, travel, and immigration**

The intersection of language, food, and culture

- **Does cross-cultural contact affect our cultures?**
- **Does it affect our food?**
- **Does it affect our language?**

An example from the time of the Norman Conquest

- **1066: The Battle of Hastings: The Normans (who were Francophone) took over England**
- **Anglo-Saxon (same as Old English) was the primary language of England**
- **The conquerors ruled**
- **Norman French became the language of social status**

An example from the time of the Norman Conquest

- **Speakers of Old English raised the animals, cooked the food**
- **When they served the cooked food (to the upper classes,) they spoke French**

An example from the time of the Norman Conquest

- We inherited 2 different words:
 - One for the animal (from English)
 - One for the cooked food (from French)

The Animal

English word (German /OE word)

The Meat

English word (French word)

Cow	(Kuh)	Beef	(Boeuf)
Calf	(Kalb)	Veal	(Veau)
Swine /Pig	(Schweine)	Pork	(Porc)
Sheep	(Schaf)	Mutton	(Mouton)
Hen	(Huhn)	Poultry	(Poulet)
Deer	[deor]	Venison	(Venaison)

Some common American food names - and their origins:

- Hamburgers from Hamburg, Germany
- Dessert from French
- Frankfurters from Frankfurt, Germany
- Bok Choy from Chinese

Some common American food names - and their origins:

- Pizza from Italian
- Sherbet from Arabic
- Vanilla from Spanish
- Taco from Nahuatl /'nä_wätl/

More examples of English FOOD TERMS borrowed from other languages (and cultures)

bratwurst, Emmenthal, kirsch, lager, noodle, pretzel, pumpernickel, sauerkraut, schnapps, schnitzel, strudel, vermouth, delicatessen

German

apricot, coffee, couscous, falafel, orange, saffron, shawarma, spinach, syrup, tabbouleh, tahini, tajine

Arabic

beef, café au lait, casserole, cream, croissant, cuisine, custard, éclair, mayonnaise, meringue, mousse, mustard, omelette, pastry, quiche, sauce, soufflé

French

More examples of English food terms borrowed from other languages (and cultures)

avocado, barbecue, chorizo, daiquiri, empanada, fajita, gazpacho, guacamole, jalapeno, maize, maté, nacho, paella, quinoa, salsa, sangria, tapa, tortilla, vanilla

Spanish

amaretto, arugula, bergamot, broccoli, cauliflower, espresso, farfalle, lasagna, latte, macaroni, spaghetti, tiramisu, vermicelli, zucchini

Italian

baklava, bulgur, dolma, hummus, pilaf, raki, shish kebab, yogourt

Turkish

Italian food terms - Why so many?

- **al dente: firm and slightly chewy (particularly pasta)**
- **amaretto: almond-flavored liqueur**
- **antipasto: appetizer with olives, cured meat, artichokes and peppers**
- **arugula: a type of slightly peppery, leafy vegetable**
- **biscotti: a type of cookie**
- **bologna: a type of deli meat**
- **broccoli: a variety of green vegetable**
- **cappuccino: espresso with foamed milk**
- **carpaccio: thinly sliced meat**
- **ciabatta: type of Italian bread**
- **espresso: strong, small coffee**

Italian food terms

- **focaccia: round, flat bread with herbs**
- **fettuccine: ribbon style pasta**
- **gelato: frozen dessert similar to ice cream**
- **lasagna: a layered pasta dish**
- **latte: coffee with steamed milk**
- **linguine: a long, flat pasta**
- **macchiato: espresso with a small amount of foamy milk**
- **maraschino: a strong, sweet liqueur often used with cherries**
- **panini: Italian grilled sandwich**
- **parmesan: a type of dry cheese**
- **pasta: Italian style noodles**
- **pepperoni: originally referring to bell peppers, now also used for hard, cured sausage**

Italian food terms

- **pesto: a type of green sauce made with olive oil and pine nuts**
- **pizza: flat dough topped with tomato sauce, cheese, etc.**
- **polenta: a dough made with cornmeal**
- **prosciutto: salted, cured ham sliced very thin**
- **provolone: a type of cheese**
- **salami: salted Italian sausage**
- **scampi: large shrimp**
- **spumoni: variety of Italian ice cream**
- **tiramisu: Italian dessert with ladyfingers and coffee**
- **tortellini: type of filled pasta**
- **trattoria: Italian restaurant**
- **tortoni: variety of ice cream**

Italian immigration

- **1880 to 1924 - more than 4,000,000 Italians immigrated to the United States**
- **50% arrived between 1900 and 1910**
- **Most from Southern Italy and Sicily**
- **Italian-Americans are the 5th largest ethnic group in the US**

<https://www.pbs.org> › destinationamerica › usim_wn_noflash_5

Borrowed word vs loan translation (calque)

- **A borrowed word: a word (or expression) taken from one language to another that keeps the word form from the origin language**
- **A loan translation (also known as a calque): a word or phrase taken from one language, translated into the borrowing language**

Borrowed word versus loan translation (calque)

- “Flea market” (From French *marche au puces*)
- “That goes without saying” (From French *cela va sans dire*)
- “Pot + sticker” (From Mandarin 鍋貼 / 锅贴 (guōtiē))

▶ https://dictionary.hantrainerpro.com/chinese-english/translation-jiaozi_dumpling.htm

The history and origin of a few common English food terms



Did you ever notice that this sauce is called “**Tomato Ketchup?**”

Did you ever wonder why?

An “old” borrowed food term

- Dan Jurafsky and the story of “ketchup” - a Chinese word [http://
languageoffood.blogspot.com/2009/09/](http://languageoffood.blogspot.com/2009/09/)
- In China the sauce (was) a **fish** sauce, not made with **tomatoes**
- In the Southern Min dialect (18th century), the sauce was called something like “ke-tchup”, “ge-tchup”, or “kue-chiap”, depending on the dialect

A summary of the history of Ketchup

- **In China, the use of fish sauce died out in the 1300s**
- **BUT, between 1300-1800 Southern Min speakers sailed between China and Southeast Asia**
- **They traded and settled in Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Burma, and the Philippines - the regions that today use fish sauce**
- **These traders also took the sauce to Indonesia**

Ketchup - an “old” borrowed term

- **Word in Indonesia for fish sauce is: *kecap* (= soy sauce, sweetened soy sauce, fish sauce, etc.)**
- **In the 17th and 18th centuries, fish sauce re-entered China through migration**
- **The British acquired the word (and the sauce) either from the Indonesians or the Chinese in Indonesia or the Chinese traders and settlers who lived in parts of southeast Asia**

Ketchup - an “old” borrowed term

Q. How did that become today’s ketchup?

A. They buy this fish sauce and bring it home. It’s really expensive and exotic, an imported luxury used by the rich. When you have an exotic product, you immediately have knock-offs. Jane Austen’s family has a recipe for ketchup made with walnuts. Around 1800, the tomato comes from the New World and people begin to experiment. Anchovies and fish begin to die out of the sauce by 1850, then sugar starts getting added, especially in America. And we end up with our modern tomato chutney. The fact that we still use this Chinese word for this food tells you about the relationship of the East and West over nearly 500 years, which is amazing.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/food-dining/2014/10/07/how-got-ketchup-and-other-food-mysteries/7twya5EoS5c1TgnFqxK5nO/story.html>

Another surprise: First course or main course? *entrée*

- In French, an “*entrée*” is the first course (an appetizer or starter)
- In American English, an “*entrée*” is the main course

Meaning of *entrée*

- ***entrée*** (borrowed from French) means “entrance” -> entering the meal
- **Borrowed term whose meaning changed from the language it was borrowed from**

Meaning of *entrée*

- ***entrée* originally referred to a hot meat dish (usually with a sauce) that was the opening course of a meal**
- **Its meaning evolved to a hot meat dish served as a 3rd course after soup and fish but before roasted fowl**

Jurafsky on *entrée*

- Use of term in American English is close to earlier French meaning (but not meat in contrast to fish or roast dishes)
- In American English *entrée* is the single main course
- In French, by the 1930s, the word changed its meaning: a light course of eggs or seafood (like hors d'oeuvres)

Jurafsky on *entrée*

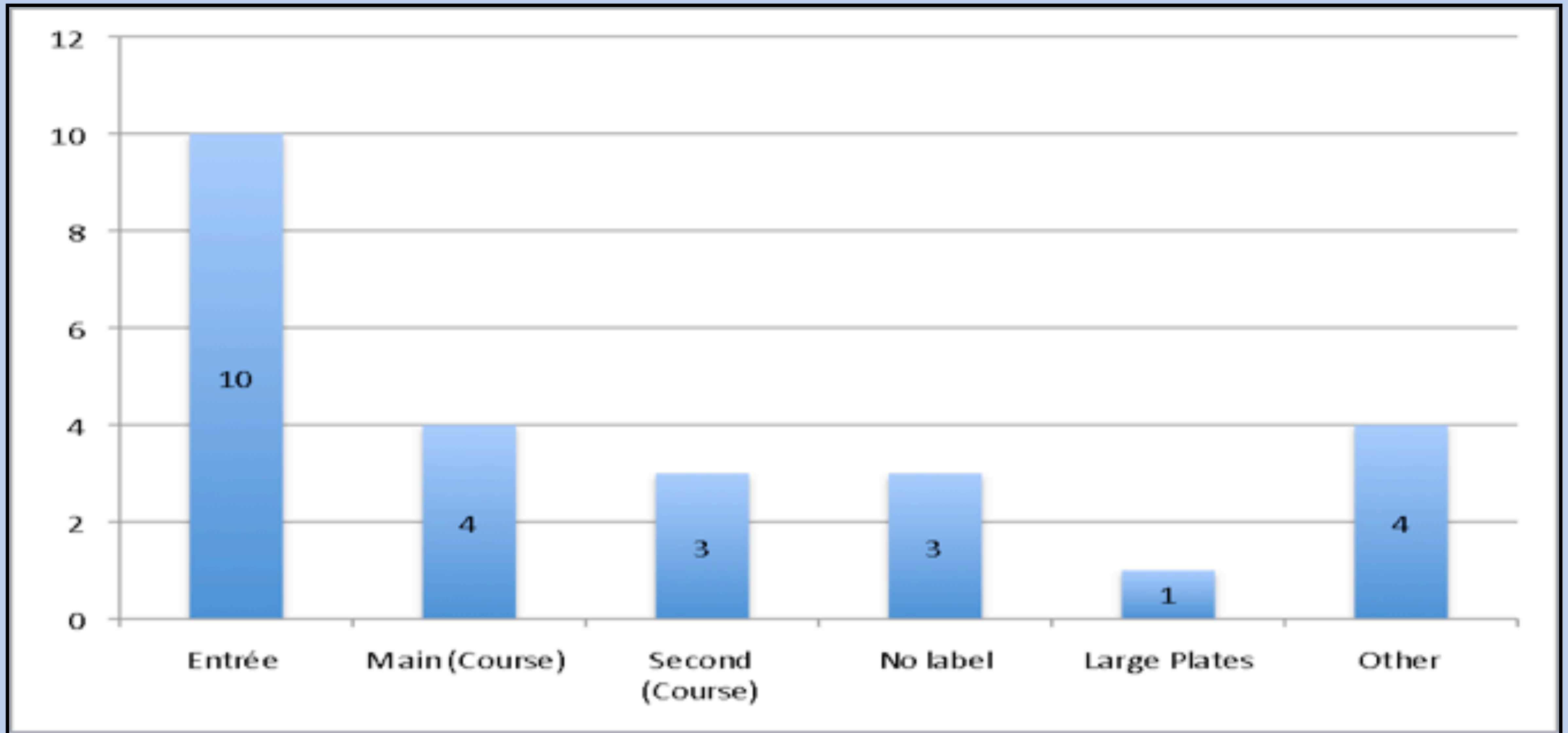
- Both French and American English kept some parts of the original meaning
- French the "first course" keeping the meaning of "entering" the meal
- American kept the "main meat course" aspect of the meaning

Jurafsky on *entrée*

- **Jurafsky studied menus from approx. 40 restaurant in his SF neighborhood – mostly Asian, Central or South American**
- **He also looked at 25 menus of upscale SF European American restaurants**

Jurafsky on *entrée*

- The word *entrée* was used on less than 10% of the Asian, Central or South American menus
- *entrée* was the most common way to refer to the main course in the 25 SF European American restaurants' menus (but used only 40% of the time) Jurafsky 2009



Origin and meaning of *toast*

- **Eat *toast***
- **Give a *toast***
- **He's the *toast* of the town**

Origin and meaning of *toast*

- In the Middle Ages, wine was spiced with toasted spiced bread and heated
- When people drank, they raised a glass (with toast in it) to each other

Origin and meaning of *toast*

- When the spicing custom stopped, people still *toasted* but then to the host who “spiced” up the evening
- “Let’s *toast* the host of the party” which became “the *toast* of the evening”

Language, food, and culture in a single language: dialects

- **Despite the overall systematic nature of all languages**
- **We don't all use our language (English) the same way**
- **Variations are called DIALECTS**

Language and dialects

- **Varieties of a language that are mutually intelligible are considered dialects of the same language**

Why study language and dialects?

- **Linguists document dialects to uncover the diversity that exists within languages and among people who use the same language**
- **Dialects are part of our identities and diversity**

Language and dialects

- **Variation is present at all levels of language**
- **Sound variation = ACCENT**
- **Vocabulary variation**
- **Grammatical variation**
- **Meaning variation**

Types of dialects

- **Regional dialects**
- **Social dialects**
- **Occupational dialects**
- **Socio-Political aspect of dialects**
 - **By national borders**
 - **By social and political power**

Language, food and regional dialects

- **Sound variation**
 - **chAHcolate vs chAWcolate**
 - **EYEce-cream vs AH:scream**
- **Vocabulary/ word variation**
 - ***seltzer vs sparkling water***
 - ***supper vs dinner***