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# FUNCTIONAL-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF FRENCH-DERIVED LEXICON IN ENGLISH LITERARY TEXTS (Based on the Works of Oscar Wilde and William Somerset Maugham)

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**Abstract**. This article examines the functional-semantic characteristics of French-derived lexical units, commonly referred to as Gallicisms, in English literary texts, with particular reference to Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and selected works by William Somerset Maugham. The study focuses not merely on the presence of French-origin vocabulary in English, but also on its semantic distribution, functional potential, stylistic markedness, and contribution to the representation of cultural and social meanings in literary discourse. The analysis identifies several major thematic groups of Gallicisms, including vocabulary associated with culture and art, gastronomy, fashion, diplomacy, religion, and domestic life. Particular attention is devoted to the nominative, characterological, atmospheric, and stylistic-expressive functions performed by French-derived lexical items in literary contexts. The findings demonstrate that Gallicisms constitute an important historical and functional layer of the English lexicon and frequently acquire additional contextual meanings beyond their primary dictionary definitions. The study further demonstrates that French-derived vocabulary may contribute to the construction of characters’ social identities, the representation of particular cultural environments, the creation of an aesthetic atmosphere, and the expression of philosophical or moral concepts. Some Gallicisms have become fully integrated into English, whereas others retain recognizable French graphic or phonetic features. This variation provides valuable evidence for examining the processes of lexical borrowing, semantic assimilation, and functional adaptation in English.

**Keywords:** Gallicism, French-derived vocabulary, English literary texts, functional-semantic analysis, thematic group, semantic assimilation, lexical borrowing, Germanic-Romance doublets, Oscar Wilde, William Somerset Maugham.

**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu maqolada galisizmlar, ya’ni fransuz tilidan o‘zlashgan leksik birliklarning ingliz badiiy matnlaridagi funksional-semantik xususiyatlari, xususan, Oskar Uayldning *The Picture of Dorian Gray* romani hamda Uilyam Somerset Moemning tanlangan asarlari misolida tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqotda ingliz tilidagi fransuzcha kelib chiqishga ega

leksikaning mavjudligi bilangina cheklanib qolmay, balki uning semantik taqsimoti, funksional imkoniyatlari, uslubiy belgilanganligi hamda badiiy diskursda madaniy va ijtimoiy ma’nolarni ifodalashdagi o‘rni tahlil qilinadi. Tahlil natijasida galisizmlarning bir nechta asosiy tematik guruhlari, jumladan, madaniyat va san’at, gastronomiya, moda, diplomatiya, din hamda maishiy hayot bilan bog‘liq leksik birliklar aniqlanadi. Badiiy kontekstda fransuz tilidan o‘zlashgan leksik birliklarning nominativ, xarakterologik, atmosferik hamda uslubiy-ekspressiv funksiyalariga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari galisizmlar ingliz leksikasining muhim tarixiy va funksional qatlamini tashkil etishini hamda ko‘pincha lug‘aviy asosiy ma’nolaridan tashqari qo‘shimcha kontekstual ma’nolarni ham kasb etishini ko‘rsatadi. Shuningdek, tadqiqot fransuz tilidan o‘zlashgan leksika personajlarning ijtimoiy identifikatsiyasini shakllantirish, muayyan madaniy muhitni ifodalash, estetik atmosfera yaratish hamda falsafiy yoki axloqiy tushunchalarni ifodalashga xizmat qilishi mumkinligini ko‘rsatadi. Ayrim galisizmlar ingliz tiliga to‘liq singib ketgan bo‘lsa, boshqalarida fransuz tiliga xos grafik yoki fonetik xususiyatlar saqlanib qolgan. Mazkur farqlilik ingliz tilida leksik o‘zlashuv, semantik assimilatsiya va funksional moslashuv jarayonlarini o‘rganish uchun muhim daliliy material bo‘lib xizmat qiladi.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** galisizm, fransuz tilidan o‘zlashgan leksika, ingliz badiiy matnlari, funksional-semantik tahlil, tematik guruh, semantik assimilatsiya, leksik o‘zlashuv, german-romanik dubletlar, Oskar Uayld, Uilyam Somerset Moem.

**Аннотация.** В данной статье рассматриваются функционально-семантические характеристики лексических единиц французского происхождения, обычно называемых галлицизмами, в английских литературных текстах, с особым акцентом на романе Оскара Уайльда «Портрет Дориана Грея» и избранных произведениях Уильяма Сомерсета Моэма. Исследование фокусируется не только на наличии лексики французского происхождения в английском языке, но и на её семантическом распределении, функциональном потенциале, стилистической маркированности и вкладе в представление культурных и социальных смыслов в литературном дискурсе. Анализ выявляет несколько основных тематических групп галлицизмов, включая лексику, связанную с культурой и искусством, гастрономией, модой, дипломатией, религией и домашней жизнью. Особое внимание уделяется номинативной, характерологической, атмосферной и стилистико-выразительной функциям, выполняемым лексическими единицами французского происхождения в литературном контексте. Результаты показывают, что галлицизмы составляют важный исторический и функциональный слой английского лексикона и часто приобретают дополнительные контекстуальные значения, выходящие за рамки их основных словарных определений. Исследование также демонстрирует, что заимствованная из французского языка лексика может способствовать формированию социальной идентичности персонажей, представлению конкретных культурных сред, созданию эстетической атмосферы и выражению философских или моральных концепций. Некоторые галлицизмы полностью интегрировались в английский язык, в то время как другие сохраняют узнаваемые французские графические или фонетические особенности. Это разнообразие

предоставляет ценные данные для изучения процессов лексического заимствования, семантической ассимиляции и функциональной адаптации в английском языке.

**Ключевые слова:** галлицизм, заимствованная из французского языка лексика, английские литературные тексты, функционально-семантический анализ, тематическая группа, семантическая ассимиляция, лексическое заимствование, германо-романские дублеты, Оскар Уайльд, Уильям Сомерсет Моэм.

## INTRODUCTION

The lexical system of the English language is one of the linguistic systems that has been exposed to extensive external influence throughout its historical development. Over many centuries, political, economic, social, and cultural contacts between the English-speaking population and other peoples have contributed to the continuous expansion and restructuring of English vocabulary. Among the languages that have exerted a particularly significant influence on English, French occupies a prominent position.

French-derived lexical units have played an important role not only in expanding the quantitative resources of the English vocabulary but also in enriching its semantic structure, stylistic differentiation, and functional potential. The historical impact of French became especially significant following the Norman Conquest of England in 1066. As a result of prolonged contact between French and English, numerous lexical items entered English and subsequently became established in a wide range of semantic fields.

The significance of French-derived vocabulary is particularly evident in literary discourse, where lexical choices are rarely limited to simple nomination. A borrowed lexical item may simultaneously perform nominative, stylistic, expressive, characterological, cultural, and pragmatic functions. Consequently, the analysis of Gallicisms in literary texts requires consideration not only of their etymological origins but also of their contextual meanings and discourse functions.

The relevance of the present study is determined by the fact that the functional-semantic properties of Gallicisms in specific English literary texts, particularly in the works of Oscar Wilde and William Somerset Maugham, have not been sufficiently examined as a comprehensive research object. Although the French contribution to English vocabulary has been extensively discussed from historical and etymological perspectives, the contextual functions of French-derived words within literary discourse require further systematic analysis.

The purpose of this study is therefore to identify the thematic distribution of French-derived lexical units in selected English literary texts and to determine their principal nominative, characterological, atmospheric, stylistic, and expressive functions.

The study is also intended to demonstrate that lexical borrowing should not be viewed solely as a historical process of vocabulary expansion. Once incorporated into the recipient language, borrowed words may develop new semantic associations, acquire stylistic values, and become productive elements of literary representation.

## METHODS

The research material consists primarily of Oscar Wilde’s novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and selected works by William Somerset Maugham. These literary texts provide a particularly productive basis for examining French-derived vocabulary because they contain lexical items associated with social life, art, fashion, gastronomy, religion, domestic culture, and other spheres in which French cultural influence has historically been prominent.

Several complementary analytical methods were employed.

First, the **contextual-semantic method** was used to determine the specific meaning and communicative function of each Gallicism within its immediate textual environment. This approach makes it possible to distinguish between the basic lexical meaning of a borrowed word and its contextual or figurative meaning.

Second, the **etymological-comparative method** was applied to identify the French and, where relevant, Latin origins of the lexical units under investigation. This method is particularly important for distinguishing genuinely French borrowings from words that entered English through French but ultimately derive from Latin or other source languages.

Third, the **thematic classification method** was used to organize Gallicisms into major semantic and thematic groups. Such classification makes it possible to identify the areas of social and cultural life in which French lexical influence has been particularly strong.

Fourth, the **stylistic analysis method** was employed to determine the literary and expressive functions of individual lexical units. Particular attention was paid to cases in which a Gallicism contributes to characterization, creates a specific atmosphere, marks social or cultural identity, or acquires a metaphorical and philosophical significance.

Each example is considered in relation to its original literary context, followed by an explanation of its meaning and linguistic function. This combination of contextual, etymological, thematic, and stylistic analysis provides a multidimensional framework for examining French-derived vocabulary in English literary discourse.

**RESULTS**

The analysis reveals several major thematic groups of Gallicisms in the selected literary texts.

Gallicisms in the Sphere of Culture and Art

The first major group consists of lexical units associated with culture and art, including **art, beauty, romance, music, literature, painting, poet, tragedy, dance, conversation, portrait,** and **genre**.

For example, in Wilde’s novel, the statement:

“To reveal art and conceal the artist is art’s aim”

contains the lexical item **art**, which entered English from Old French *art*, ultimately derived from Latin ***ars*.** In the given context, the word denotes artistic creation and creative skill. However, its function extends beyond simple nomination: it participates in the formulation of one of the novel’s central aesthetic ideas concerning the relationship between artistic creation and the artist.

Similarly, in a work by Maugham, the sentence:

“…his taste for music and literature gave depth and variety to his comprehension of painting”

contains three French-derived lexical items–**music, literature,** and **painting**–which occur together in a cultural-aesthetic context. Their simultaneous use contributes to the representation of an intellectually cultivated environment and emphasizes the character’s familiarity with several forms of artistic expression.

The words **portrait** and **genre** likewise carry considerable semantic weight. In the expression:

“This was a new genre of art”

the term **genre** not only identifies a category of artistic production but also signals the speaker’s or character’s familiarity with artistic terminology. Thus, Gallicisms in this thematic group contribute both to the nomination of artistic concepts and to the construction of an aesthetically sophisticated discourse.

Gallicisms in the Sphere of Gastronomy

The second group includes lexical units associated with food, dining, and culinary culture, such as **restaurant, cuisine, chef, omelette, champagne, appetite, dinner, supper, feast, taste,** and **plate**.

A representative example is:

“He brought his excellent chef down from Paris and it was soon acknowledged that he had the best cuisine on the Riviera.”

The words **chef** and **cuisine** are directly associated with French culinary terminology. The French noun *chef*, originally meaning “head” or “chief,” has become firmly established in English as a designation for a professional cook, particularly one responsible for a kitchen or culinary establishment. **Cuisine**, meanwhile, retains a strong association with a particular culinary tradition or style.

The lexical item **champagne** provides a particularly interesting example of an onomastic Gallicism because it derives from the name of the French region of Champagne. Its use in English therefore preserves a direct cultural and geographical association with France.

In literary discourse, such gastronomic Gallicisms may serve not only to identify food-related objects and activities but also to suggest refinement, social status, cultural sophistication, or a particular lifestyle.

Gallicisms in the Sphere of Fashion

The third thematic group includes **fur, frock, diamond, chemise, gown, collar, satin, cape, lace, dress,** and **pearl**.

One particularly notable example is **chemise**:

“she wore nothing but a chemise”

The word entered English from French and has preserved a recognizable French form. Its continued use as a marked lexical item can contribute to the stylistic representation of clothing, elegance, femininity, and a particular cultural environment.

The words **gown** and **collar** likewise demonstrate the historical influence of French vocabulary in the terminology of clothing and dress. Their presence in literary descriptions may

have a purely nominative function, but depending on context, they may also contribute to the characterization of a person and the representation of social status or aesthetic taste.

Gallicisms in Diplomacy and Political Culture

Another important thematic group is represented by vocabulary associated with diplomacy and political life. The lexical item **ambassador**, derived through Old French ***embassateur***, is a representative example.

In literary discourse, **ambassador** denotes more than a formal state representative. Depending on context, it may evoke ideas of political prestige, diplomatic culture, discretion, negotiation, and international relations.

Consequently, its function may extend beyond simple nomination. It can contribute to the creation of a formal political atmosphere and to the characterization of individuals associated with diplomatic or aristocratic environments.

Religious Gallicisms

Religious vocabulary constitutes one of the largest and theoretically most significant thematic groups identified in the study. It includes such lexical items as **prayer, temptation, sin, repentance, mercy, sacrament, religious, saintly, salvation, charity, communion, confess, convent, crucifix, divine, faith, religion,** and **virtue**.

For example:

“Lead us not into temptation. Forgive us our sins. Wash away our iniquities.”

The word **temptation**, derived from Old French *temptacion* and ultimately from Latin *temptatio*, represents one of the central concepts of Christian moral teaching.

In another example:

“…love would always be a sacrament to him now”

the word **sacrament** is used metaphorically rather than exclusively in its conventional religious sense. This represents an important instance of semantic extension, in which a religious Gallicism is transferred into an aesthetic and emotional context.

Similarly, **mercy**, **religion**, and **virtue** contribute to the moral and philosophical vocabulary of the literary text. Their function therefore extends beyond religious nomination and participates in the construction of broader ethical and philosophical meanings.

Gallicisms Related to Domestic Life and the Home

The final major group concerns domestic life and household objects. It includes **basin, chair, chamber, chandelier, chimney, couch, curtain, lamp, lantern, pantry, parlour, cellar, counterpane, lattice, pillar, towel,** and **tower**.

One particularly significant example is **chair**. The historical development of this lexical item illustrates the important role of French in filling particular semantic gaps in English vocabulary. The word derives from Old French *chaiere*, ultimately from Latin *cathedra*.

In literary texts, domestic Gallicisms can perform an important atmospheric function. Words such as **chandelier, parlour, chamber,** and **curtain** may contribute to the depiction of an interior space while simultaneously suggesting a particular historical period, social class, or cultural environment.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings lead to several important theoretical conclusions.

First, the thematic distribution of Gallicisms is not accidental but is closely related to historical and socio-cultural factors. The substantial presence of French-derived vocabulary in religious, domestic, artistic, gastronomic, and social domains reflects the depth of French influence on English-speaking society following the Norman Conquest.

The distribution of lexical borrowings therefore provides linguistic evidence of historical contact between communities. Vocabulary may preserve traces of social hierarchy, institutional structures, cultural prestige, and patterns of everyday interaction.

Second, Gallicisms in literary texts perform considerably more than a purely nominative function. Their functions may be classified into several major categories.

The **characterological function** is realized when a French-derived lexical item contributes to the representation of a character’s personality, education, social identity, or psychological state. Lexical choices such as **vanity** and **nonchalance**, for example, may participate in the construction of a particular type of personality.

The **atmosphere-creating function** is particularly evident in domestic and material-cultural vocabulary. Words such as **chandelier** and **boudoir** may help construct a specific historical, social, or aesthetic environment.

The **stylistic-expressive function** emerges when Gallicisms contribute aesthetic, philosophical, emotional, or metaphorical depth to the text. The use of religious words such as **sacrament** and **divine** outside strictly religious contexts is especially significant in this regard.

The use of such lexical items demonstrates that the semantic potential of a borrowed word may extend considerably beyond its original dictionary meaning. Once integrated into the recipient language, a borrowing can become a productive element of literary expression.

Third, the relationship between Germanic and Romance vocabulary in English deserves particular attention. English contains numerous semantic fields in which Germanic and Romance lexical items coexist. Traditional examples include pairs such as *cow/beef* and *sheep/mutton*, which reflect the historical division between the language of the English-speaking population and the French-speaking ruling class.

However, the present analysis also reveals another pattern: in certain semantic fields, French-derived vocabulary became established without a direct native English competitor. The development of **chair** represents an example of such lexical integration. This suggests that lexical borrowing cannot always be explained through a simple model of semantic duplication or competition between Germanic and Romance vocabulary.

Fourth, the findings have implications for translation studies. Certain Gallicisms, including **chemise** and **omelette**, have retained a form that remains recognizably close to their French originals. Such lexical items may present specific challenges for translators because their cultural and stylistic associations may not be fully reproduced through a simple lexical equivalent.

Depending on the target text and readership, translators may therefore employ transliteration, direct borrowing, explanatory translation, or contextual adaptation. The choice

of strategy should take into account not only denotational meaning but also stylistic, cultural, and pragmatic information.

**CONCLUSION**

The study demonstrates that French-derived vocabulary in English literary texts should not be regarded merely as a historical residue of language contact. Gallicisms constitute an active lexical layer that contributes to semantic precision, stylistic richness, cultural representation, and communicative effectiveness.

The analysis of Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and selected works by William Somerset Maugham demonstrates that Gallicisms perform a wide range of functions. In addition to their basic nominative role, they may contribute to characterization, atmosphere creation, stylistic expression, cultural representation, and the articulation of philosophical and aesthetic meanings.

The thematic classification of Gallicisms reveals their particularly strong presence in the domains of culture and art, gastronomy, fashion, diplomacy, religion, and domestic life. This distribution reflects the historical and socio-cultural dimensions of French influence on English.

The semantic development of individual borrowings further demonstrates that lexical assimilation is not a purely formal process. French-derived words may undergo semantic extension, specialization, metaphorization, stylistic differentiation, and contextual reinterpretation after entering English.

The findings also demonstrate the importance of distinguishing between etymological origin and contemporary linguistic function. Although a lexical unit may historically originate in French, its modern English usage may be fully assimilated and may no longer be perceived by ordinary speakers as foreign.

From the perspective of literary linguistics, the study confirms that the functional value of a Gallicism depends substantially on its textual environment. The same lexical unit may have a neutral nominative function in one context and a strongly expressive, characterological, or metaphorical function in another.

From the perspective of translation studies, Gallicisms with relatively unchanged French forms require particular attention because their semantic and cultural associations may not have direct equivalents in the target language. Consequently, successful translation requires consideration of both lexical meaning and the broader cultural and stylistic function of the borrowed expression.

Overall, the research provides a basis for further investigation of French-English lexical interaction from the perspectives of comparative linguistics, historical lexicology, semantic change, literary stylistics, corpus linguistics, and translation studies. The systematic study of Gallicisms in English literary discourse can contribute to a deeper understanding of how historical language contact continues to shape contemporary vocabulary and literary expression.

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