

Література

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U.A. SKARLUPINA

Ukrainian Academy of Banking of National Bank of Ukraine, Sumy

FRENCH BORROWINGS IN THE LEGAL ENGLISH

It goes without saying that the development of a body of legal ideas is inseparable from the creation of special legal language, which in the case of English, has three sources: English language itself, Latin and French. In particular, French borrowings have been adopted into English throughout the centuries since before the Norman Conquest. The status of French as the language of law was significant. In fact, as it is mentioned by J. H. Baker, «medieval English lawyers spoke French in court».

French has long been the source of borrowings in the history of English (as well as English was and is the source of borrowings for French). The French influence on the English lexicon represents the focus of linguistic concern in a considerable number of investigations of the language and its development. French borrowings can be found in different subject fields starting from cuisine and ending with diplomacy.

As many researchers notice, French has had a great influence on

lessee, merger, merger, negligence, nuisance, ouster, proof, remainder, tender, tort, trespass etc.

French also had a limited impact on various features of English syntax. Peter Tiersma mentions an example of French influence: in that language, unlike English, adjectives normally follow the noun (there are some exceptions, but they are not the peculiarity of the legal language). Several such combinations are common in legal English, including *attorney general* (originally *procureur general*), *court martial* (originally *cour martiale*), *fee simple absolute* (*droit de propriété simple absolu*), *letters testamentary* (*lettres testamentaires*), and *solicitor general* (*solliciteur general*). Also, legal French allowed the creation of words ending in -ee to indicate the person who was the recipient or object of an action (*lessee*: "the person leased to", *employee*: *the person employed etc.*). New words are created according to this pattern, including *asylee*, *condemnee*, *detainee*, *expellee* and *tippee*.

The semantic impact of language contact with French also led to the coexistence of native and foreign terms. This can be seen, for instance, in the differences between the written (e.g. legal contracts) and spoken language, when, for example, the verb to *start* can be used during the negotiations while the borrowed term *commence* is used in the text of a written agreement.

References

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