

## Re: Japanese learning, is anybody as frustrated as me?

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**From:** James Rose (*ceo\_at\_fat24.com*)

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in article 31uj7oF3fvlaqU1@individual.net, jim\_breen@hotmail.com at jim\_breen@hotmail.com wrote on 12/10/04 4:36 PM:

> James Rose <ceo@fat24.com> dixit:  
>> in article 31sfiiF3ep2m7U1@individual.net, jim\_breen@hotmail.com at jim\_breen@hotmail.com wrote on 12/9/04 9:22 PM:  
>>> Travers Naran <tnaran@direct.ca> dixit:  
>>>> I've often said English is the finest version of French ever invented.  
>>>> From what I learned of English's history, French & English grammar  
>>>> began melding from the beginning of the Norman conquest and continued  
>>>> to do so for quite some time (up until at least the 1700s).  
>>>>  
>>>> Another view is that while there is quite a bit of French vocabulary  
>>>> in English, the grammar is still largely the original fusion of  
>>>> two Germanic languages. After all we don't go saying "I never of it to  
>>>> him gave".  
>  
>> Ahh, but the Normans came to France by way of Denmark...  
>  
> Well, the Normans were originally Vikings who settled in Normandy...

The Vikings who colonized France were almost entirely from Denmark... Just like the Vikings who founded Kiev were mostly from Sweden, and the Vikings who founded Moscow (Rurik – 1st Tzar) I believe were from Norway. The Viking era began around 400 as Rome was just starting to dismember itself (got to bring it back into that Japanese perspective), Roman Emperors were even born in London and Spain in those days. The Viking era peaks around 800, as did the colonization of France, and only much later did they take over England 1066 and write the Book of Doom, and eventually settle in Scotland (1250 or so) when their era finally wound down to its end. You can't separate early Norman culture from either the Vikings or from Rome. They sucked up lots of Roman culture and in the earliest days in Normandy and elsewhere even fought for and against them, and even adopted some of their battle formations – which is why as Norsemen go, they were the most powerful. They are in fact the "civilized" Norsemen, excelling in accounting (Book of Doom from which you likely know about 1066) agriculture,

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and because of their use of ancient Roman war making tactics, even better at waging war than the Norsmen of Norway (which is why they were invited into Scotland to keep Old Man Norway at bay).

>> *picking up the*  
>> *remnants of Roman culture which was just then disintegrating,*  
>  
> *"just then"? The Roman bits had disintegrated quite a while before.*

Like the American jauggernaut (PLEASE KEEP SENDING THOSE CHECKS MY FOREIGN FRIENDS – WE LOVE IT WHEN YOU GROVEL WITH DIRECT CASH PAYMENTS) , it took a very long time. Rome's official end is several hundred years into the Viking era by some historical opinions.

>> *and imparting*  
>> *their Viking/Roman to their less sophisticated Franco–Germanic conquerers...*  
>  
> *Franco–Germanic conquerers? Who were they?*

The non–Norman French were largely an ancient Germanic people from Gaul.

>> *who now claim credit for the those same words in English.*  
>  
> *Er, no. By the time of 1066 the Normans had pretty much thrown off*  
> *their Viking roots and become thoroughly Gallicized. The language*  
> *they spoke was pretty much the French then prevailing all over*  
> *northern France.*

By 1066 they were no such thing. They didn't become French, they set up camp in Normandy to make sacking Paris easier... and as I said, even as late as 1250, the Scots were asking them to move to the Highlands to pit Norseman against Norseman... Not Frenchman against Norwegian. They certainly didn't see themselves as Frenchmen... though they did speak a bastardized Roman that these days we call Old or Middle French – that I believe is repleat with old Norse words.

> *The French spoken by the Normans never really took hold in England.*  
> *After all, they made up an aristocratic elite while the the townspeople*  
> *and farmers went on speaking their northern/southern English. The*  
> *northen English of the Danelaw was pretty much Danish anyway. Eventually*  
> *the French usage just faded away. I am not aware of any "Viking" words*  
> *that came to English via the Normans.*

I think you are quite wrong about the "French" never taking hold in English. Not only just linguistically, but also in how we create "bad" words by intermingling them with class concepts. Both before and after the Roman's ran England, it was overrun by ignorant Germanic farmers. And when the Normans took over, they certainly didn't think too much of that pig farming underclass. In fact every foul word in English is a foul and "dirty" word, precisely because it is of guttural Germanic origin and not from the Norman dialect. Picture some young Norman kid coming home and using a germanic

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word to the shock and horror of his family. For example, shit vs feces, fuck vs intercourse, dick vs penis. I'm being flippant, but for every 4 letter word that you're supposed to get slapped for when said in mixed company, there is a word of Norman origin that means exactly the same thing that is perfectly acceptable to say. Its kind of like the nice proper family from the good neighborhood... and little Johnny comes home and tells his mom over dinner about how he'd like to slap that bitches booty on the cheerleading squad. Mom goes into shock and has a heart attack. Had he used the parlance of his class, he could have nearly said anything and it would have been fine... but in choosing the words of people his family consider to be of "lower" status, he degrades himself in their eyes.