

Etymology of "Happy" and "Lucky" in various languages

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This is an amateurish attempt at extending Nassim Taleb's observation that some languages have the same or similar words to describe "Happy," "Lucky," and "Random." I thought it was interesting (it connects utility and probability[1], and also offers a window into older perspectives on the concept of success and happiness) and decided to dig deeper when I learnt in my French lessons that "heureusement" means both "Happily" and "Luckily."

I'll continue to add to this list as I learn more.

Please point out errors if you're familiar with any of these languages.

Germanic Languages:

Polish

Glück : Means "Happiness" and "Randomness" [1]

English

Happy: From the middle English "Hap + y" as in "Lucky." The "Hap" is the same root as in *mishap* and *happenstance*.

Romance Languages:

Latin

Felix: "Happy" or "Lucky" [1] [2]

French

Heureusement: "Happily" and "Luckily"

Scandinavian ("Old Norse")

Finnish

onnekas: "Lucky"

onnellinen: "Happy"

Other classical

Sanskrit

ayavat: Happy

ayanvita: Lucky, Fortunate [3]

Hindi

भाग्यवान् : "Happy" and "Lucky"

सफल - : "Successful" and "Lucky"

References

[1] Nassim Taleb's notebook: <http://www.fooledbyrandomness.com/notebook.htm>

[2] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felix>

[3] <http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/>