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ETYMOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY, NATIVE AND BORROWED WORDS.

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the etymology of the English word-stock, the approaches and the principles of English etymological vocabularies, which are done by various linguists. This article also assays to estimate borrowing words from other languages and historical circumstances.

Keywords: etymology, borrowed words, loan words, ancient borrowings, source language, principle, word roots, derivation, origins.

INTRODUCTION

Many linguists consider foreign influence, especially that of French, to be the most important factor in the history of English. This wide-spread viewpoint is supported only by the evidence of the English word-stock, as its grammar and phonetic system are very stable and not easily influenced by other languages. While it is altogether wrong to speak of the mixed character of the language as a whole, the composite nature of the English vocabulary cannot be denied. To comprehend the nature of the English vocabulary and its historical development it is necessary to examine the etymology of its different layers, the historical causes of their appearance, their volume and role and the comparative importance of native and borrowed elements in replenishing the English vocabulary.

METHODOLOGY

Words of native origin consist for the most part of very ancient elements Indo-European, Germanic and West Germanic cognates. The bulk of the Old English word-stock has been preserved, although some words have passed out of existence. When speaking about the role of the native element in the English language linguists usually confine themselves to the small Anglo-Saxon stock of words, which is estimated to make 25—30% of the English vocabulary. To assign the native element its true place it is not so important to count the number of Anglo-Saxon words that have survived up to our

days, as to study their semantic and stylistic character, their word-building ability, frequency value, collocability. Almost all words of Anglo-Saxon origin belong to very important semantic groups. They include most of the auxiliary and modal verbs (shall, will, must, can, may, etc.), pronouns (I, you, he, my, his, who, etc.), prepositions (in, out, on, under, etc.), numerals (one, two, three, four, etc.) and conjunctions (and, but, till, as, etc.). Most of the native words have undergone great changes in their semantic structure, and as a result are nowadays polysemantic, e.g. the word finger does not only denote a part of a hand as in Old English, but also 1) the part of a glove covering one of the fingers, 2) a finger-like part in various machines, 3) a hand of a clock, 4) an index, 5) a unit of measurement.

RESULTS

Most native words possess a wide range of lexical and grammatical valency. Many of them enter a number of phraseological units, e.g. the word heel enters the following units: heel over head or head over heels— 'upside down'; cool one's heel—'be kept waiting'; show a clean pair of heels, take to one's heels—'run away', turn on one's heels—'turn sharply round', etc. The great stability and semantic peculiarities of Anglo-Saxon words account for their great derivational potential. In linguistic literature the term *native* is conventionally used to denote words of Anglo-Saxon origin brought to the British Isles from the continent in the 5th century by the Germanic tribes — the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes. Practically, however, the term is often applied to words whose origin cannot be traced to any other language. Thus, the word path is classified as native just because its origin has not yet been established with any degree of certainty. It is for this reason that Professor A. I. Smirnitsky relying on the earliest manuscripts of the English language available suggested another interpretation of the term native — as words which may be presumed to have existed in the English word-stock of the 7th century. This interpretation may have somewhat more reliable criteria behind it, but it seems to have the same drawback — both viewpoints present the native element in English as static.

The term *borrowing* is used in linguistics to denote the process of adopting words from other languages and also the result of this process, the language material itself. It has already been stated that not only words, but also word-building affixes were borrowed into English (as is the case with -able, -ment, -ity, etc.).[1]

Semantic borrowing is the appearance of a new meaning due to the influence of a related word in another language (e.g. the word propaganda and reaction acquired their

political meanings under the influence of French, deviation and bureau entered political vocabulary, as in right and left deviations, Political bureau, under the influence of Russian).

Distinction should be made between true borrowings and words formed out of morphemes borrowed from Latin and Greek, e.g. telephone, phonogram. Such words were never part of Latin or Greek and they do not reflect any contacts with the peoples speaking those languages.

The English vocabulary is very rich. From the point of view of etymology, English vocabulary can be divided into 2 parts: 70% of borrowings in English language, 30% of native words. Borrowings usually take place under 2 circumstances: 1) when people have a direct contact with another people;

2) when there is a cultural need to borrow a word from another languages.

Borrowings enter the language in two ways: through oral speech (by immediate contact between the peoples) and through written speech (by indirect contact through books, etc.).

DISCUSSION

Oral borrowing took place chiefly in the early periods of history,whereas in recent times written borrowing gained importance. Words borrowed orally (e.g. L. inch, mill, street) are usually short and they undergo considerable changes in the act of adoption. Written borrowings (e.g. Fr. communiqué, belles-lettres, naïveté) preserve their spelling and some peculiarities of their sound-form, their assimilation is a long and laborious process.

Though borrowed words undergo changes in the adopting language they preserve some of their former peculiarities for a comparatively long period. This makes it possible to work out some criteria for determining whether the word belongs to the borrowed element.

Due to “the specific historical development of English, it has adopted many words from other languages, especially from Latin, French and Old Scandinavian, though the number and importance of these borrowings are usually overestimated. The number and character of borrowings in Modern English from various languages depend on the historical conditions and also on the degree of the genetic and structural proximity of the languages in question.

CONCLUSION

Borrowings enter the language through oral speech (mainly in early groundwork of Germanic words and grammar. Borrowing has never been the chief means of replenishing the English vocabulary. Word- formation and semantic development were throughout the entire history of the language much more productive. Besides most native words are marked by a higher frequency value. The great number of borrowings brought with them new phono morphological types, new phonetic, morphological and semantic features. On the other hand, under the influence of the borrowed element words already existing in English changed to some extent their semantic structure, collocability, frequency and derivational ability.

Borrowing also considerably enlarged the English vocabulary and brought about some changes in English synonymic groups, in the distribution of the English vocabulary through spheres of application and in the lexical divergence between the variants of the literary language and its dialects.

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