

LANGUAGE CONTACTS IN AMERICAN ENGLISH: ASSIMILATIVE ASPECT

Фонологічна та граматична асиміляція іншомовних запозичень в американському варіанті англійської мови зумовлюється типологічною та генеалогічною спорідненістю мови-джерела та мови-реципієнта. Лексико-семантична асиміляція ранніх запозичень базується, переважно, на метонімії, пізніх запозичень – на метафорі.

Borrowing words from one language to others is conditioned both by cultural imperatives and need for inner linguistic changes per se. It is semantic shift that is the centerpiece in language contacts, since phonological and grammar levels are relatively rigid to undergo foreign influence. General principles of language contacts, taxonomy of loans, cultural inferences, and reasons for borrowing have been studied by L. Campbell [3], C. Watkins [7], U. Weinreich [9], W. Labov [4], etc. Still, the elaboration on the actual mechanism of this process along with assessment of assimilation both in synchrony and diachrony has been sketchy and needs further research, so far.

The objective of this paper is bringing to light the signatures of loanwords in modern American English (AE) in terms of their phonological, grammar, and semantic assimilation. Since language contacts in this variety have been prodigious due to the melting pot of American society, some fruits of this study may be valid as linguistic universals, as well. About 2 000 loan-words in AE from Indian languages, Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Hebrew and Yiddish, Italian, and Latin have been the material for this paper. The lexical items were gleaned from Oxford English Dictionary (OED) [6], Webster-Merriam Dictionary (W) [8], The American Heritage Dictionary (H) [5], and A Dictionary of Americanisms (DA) [5]. This paper is a part of the author's broader research on AE.

Phonological assimilation of Indian loans in AE is conspicuous, since source tongues and the recipient are far apart in their genealogy and typology. Only very few of items had no or little alteration, as *papoose* «Indian child» from *papoose*. In 20 % of the Indian loans the whole word is apparently changed, as *tupelo* «a tree of the genus *Nyssa*» from Creek Indian *ito opilwa*. In 50 % of the stock, it is a part of the word that underwent changes, as *wahoo* «the cork elm» from *uhawhu* (aphaeresis), *busk* «annual feast of first fruits» from *puskita* (apocope), *mohawk* «Indian tribe» from *mohowauuck* (contraction), *Kentucky* from Iroquoian *kenta* (lengthening), *Mississippi* from the Ojibwa language *misisipi*, *high muck-a-muck* «important person» from *hickmickety muck* (doubling, loss of consonants and vowels). It goes without saying, that such adaptation fits the regular English phonological patterns.

There are a few loan-translations, as *seapoose* «creek» from Delaware *sepus*, *firewater* «alcohol» from Algonquian *scuotioabou*. Sometimes, folk etymology is the tool of assimilation: *muskrat* «aquatic rodent» from *musquash*. In 10 % of the Indian loans the assimilation goes in several stages. First, there appears an interim form with partially adapted unit, and only then the change is completed, e.g.: *atchitamo* first became *chitmunk*, then *chipmunk* «American squirrel», or *merecuya* > *maracaw* > *maracock* > *maypop* «vine *Passiflora* and its fruit». Captain John Smith uses many such interim forms in his *A Map of Virginia* (1612):

“During Somer there are either strawberries which ripen in April...or a fruit that the Inhabitants call *Maracocks*, which is a pleasant wholesome fruit much like a lemon.” [1, p. 542].

More than 60 % of Spanish loans have kept their original form in AE, much higher in comparison to the Indian group, since the languages are relatively closer. Still, folk etymology, ellipsis, and alteration may accompany the assimilation, as *buckaroo* «cowboy» (from *vaquero*), *Navajo* «Indian people» (*Apache de Navajo*), *Chicano* «US citizen who was born in Mexico» (from *Mexicano*). Combinations are borrowed sometimes, as *chili con carne* «a stew with meat, beans, and chili».

French borrowings in AE follow the same trend: 75 % of them do not show any apparent changes, the rest are marked by folk etymology, alteration, and clipping, as *shivaree* «a noisy mock serenade» (from *charivari*), *to nap* «spread with sauce» (from *napper*), *zydeco* «popular music in Louisiana» (*les haricot* «beans»), etc.

German words support the tendency: the closer source-language and recipient are, the fewer changes are observable in assimilation. Only 13 % of words underwent alteration, as *nix* «nothing» (*nichts*), *bummer* «vagrant» (*Bummler*), *nut-breaker* (loan translation from *Nussbrecher*).

The Dutch loans, on the contrary, show considerable changes in the process of assimilation. It may be accounted for by absence of some specific Dutch diphthongs in English and therefore, the need for replacement, as *boedel* into *boodle* «swag, caboodle», *stoep* into *stoop* «porch», *pinkje* > *pinkie* «small finger»,

baas > *boss*, *doop* > *dope*, *schrood* > *scrod* “young cod”, etc. Another reason for abundance of phonological change lies in the time of borrowing: Dutch loans, along with Indian, belong to early groups that penetrated AE from the 17th c. through the early 19th c.

One third of Yiddish and Hebrew words show assimilative changes, with clipping and alteration as their ground: *mazuma* “money” (*mezumen* “cash”), *schmoose* “talk” (*shmuesn*). While most of the Italian loans, a recent group, are taken as they were, *patsy* “strange” from *pazzo* is among few exceptions.

But it is semantic shift in assimilation that is quite acute for comparative study. Thus, within Indian group only 20 % of words do not reveal any visible semantic changes, as *skunk* “weasel-like mammal”. In 10 % of the group the semantic shift is based on narrowing of notion, as *squaw* “Indian woman” from *squa* “woman”. Metaphor triggers around 5 % of all changes, as *chumpa* from Choctaw “to buy for cash” into “a faggot of pine kindling”. Mostly, metonymy causes the semantic shift with its various kinds – contiguity of forms, colors, instrument, location, part of the whole and vice versa, quality for referent, etc. The word *opossum*, for example, was borrowed from *apasum* “white animal”, and *caucus* “party convention” came from *caucauas* “elder, counselor, leader”.

A striking signature of Indian assimilation is mixture of semantic and grammar changes. The latter include not only part-of-speech shift but change from sentence structure into notion of word, as well. The loan *tuckahoe* “plant arrow arum”, e.g., is from the form *tockawhough* “it is round”, and *squeteauge* “the weakfish” goes back to a Narraganset term *pesuquiteaug* “they make glue” in allusion to the practice of making glue from the swimming bladders of these fish. Such nominations often refer to human and animal habits, as *raccoon* from *arahkunem* “he scratches with his hand” in allusion to the creature’s scratching for crabs, etc., along streams and shores.

Semantically, approximately 16 % of Spanish loans have undergone shift in AE. Narrowing of notion is a rare occurrence, as *barrio* “quarter” into “Spanish quarter”. Metonymy as the cause of such change is more current and accounts for 30 % of all changes, as *Dago* “Spanish name” into “general name for Spaniards”, *bosque* “wood” into “grove”. Metaphor is prevailing as a factor in the shift: *panatela* “long biscuit” into “long cigar”, *forastero* “alien” into “cacao”. Changes of grammar markers of Spanish loans are much less pronounced than Indian. Examples like *mesteco* “wild” into *mustang* “wild horse”, *dale vuelta!* “give it a twist!” into *dally welta* “a roaper who wraps the end of his lasso around the saddle horn” are quite few.

As for the French borrowings, it is mostly metonymy that causes semantic shift in assimilation, as *vendue* “sold” into “auction”, along with permutation (unintentional metonymy), as *a-go-go* “disco” from *Whisky a Gogo* (in Paris). Metaphor follows it: *hoopla* “exclamation” into “excitement”, *mack* “mackerel” into “pimp”. Narrowing of notion is very rare: *butte* “hill” into “isolated hill”.

The German loans in AE have not undergone complex transformations, as Spanish and Indian words. There are some grammar changes, as *dingus* “forgotten thing” (from plural form). Semantic shift took place in 20 % of all items. Narrowing of notion is very rare, as *katzenjammer* “unpleasant consequence” into “hangover”. Metaphor as vehicle of the change accounts for 25 % of the changes, as *Fritz* “German name” into “out of order” (*to be on the Fritz*). In the half of all cases, it is metonymy that triggers the shift. This trend is clear-cut in Indian, French, and German groups. The following examples reveal the different types of contiguity: *sapsago* “a hard green cheese” (from *scrape* + *whey*, as a way of making), *Heinie* “German soldier” (from *Heinreich* proper name).

Changes in grammar are considerable among Hebrew and Yiddish loans in AE, due to remoteness of the sources and the recipient. Thus, *shlak* “blow” has become *schlock* “inferior”, and *nebach* “exclamation of commiseration” turned into *nebbish* “timid, weak-willed person”. Some words are borrowed in their plural forms, as *farfel* “noodles shaped like pellets”, *meshugaas* “junk”. The words *stetle* “small town” and *landsman* “compatriot” kept their irregular plural (*stetlach*, *landleit*).

A quarter of all loans underwent semantic assimilation. The shift is 60 % of all cases is caused by metaphor, as *schtick* “piece” into “gimmick”, *shamus* “the keeper in synagogue” into “policeman”, *schnozzle* “animal muzzle” into “human nose”, *schmaltz* “animal fat” into “sentimentality”, etc. Metonymy, as the means of shift, is noticeable, as well: *smack* “smell” into “heroin”, *schnorrer* “to beg” into “beggar”.

A third of Dutch loans had semantic shift. Metonymy plays the crucial role in these changes, as *boss* “master” into “chief” (contiguity of function), *stoop* “step” into “porch” (part of the whole), *Bowery* “farm” into “entertainment district” (permutation). Metaphor as instrument of change is current, as well: *hunk* “cache” > “excellent”, *logy* “heavy” > “dull”, *boodle* “property” > “collection of things”, etc.

In 40 % of Italian words in AE semantic shift took place. Metaphor and metonymy cause these changes, as *wop* “brave” into “Italian”, *calzone* “trousers” > “cookies” (by similarity of form), *cacciatore* “hunter” > “spiced” (all – metaphor); *spiedino* “small skewer” > “meat cooked on it”, *patsy* “fool” > “strange person”.

Summing up the considered material, the conclusions to be drawn are following: semantic assimilation in the early loan groups in AE (Indian, German, and French) is caused by metonymy, while in the later loan groups (Spanish, Italian, Hebrew and Yiddish) is triggered by metaphor. Grammar and phonological changes depend on proximity of language-source and language-recipient and diachrony of borrowing.

The prospects of further research lie in the study of language contacts on comparative material to single out complex characteristics of borrowed rules, valid as some linguistic universals.

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AN OVERVIEW OF TRANSLATION EVALUATION ISSUES

У статті розглядаються питання функцій перекладу у сучасному світі, увага акцентується на головних аспектах навчання перекладу та формах контролю.

Translation, being a craft on the one hand, requires training, i.e. practice under supervision, and being a science on the other hand, has to be based on language theories. Therefore, any sound approach to translation teaching has to draw on proper training methodologies. Training focuses on the improvement of the knowledge, skills and abilities of the individual, and it is functional and relevant only when it is evaluated

Having navigated translation sites and perusing latest publications on the issue of translation evaluation I can come to the conclusion that it is rather problematic and intangible. It is often difficult to differentiate between, e.g., “translation evaluation”, “translation criticism”, “translation assessment”, and “translation quality assessment”. I fully understand that I undertake just an overview in this direction.

Notably, a great deal of attention has been given to the issue of how a translation course participant should be evaluated and how the quality of a translation can be rated whereas the evaluation of the course itself has hardly received any attention despite its importance. Training evaluation is defined as the systematic collection of descriptive and judgement information necessary to make effective training decisions related to the selection, adoption, value, and modification of various instructional activities. Descriptive information on the one hand provides an idea about what is happening or has happened, while judgement information reflects some opinion or belief about what has happened. For instance, a student may comment that “the instructor encouraged questions”. This comment contains descriptive information; it simply states a fact. The student's other comment “the instructor did not answer the questions adequately” provides judgement information – the student's opinion based on the fact. Both descriptive and judgement information are required for effective evaluation of the translation course.

One of the most challenging terms for professional educators is “test”. Even seasoned instructors may not always feel at ease with putting a grade or a mark on a student's final paper. If an entire class does well, the instructor feels proud that work has been accomplished; however, if a large number of students do not perform well, instructors are disappointed and sometimes need to reevaluate the objectives of the entire course. Certainly, students show signs of stress and anxiety before exam periods. Most of us may recall the