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DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE FORMATION OF AMERICAN ENGLISH

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ORCID: 0000-0002-1719-1670

Putayeva Elnara Eldar, teacher of the English language, Ph.D. Student,
Chair of Linguoculturology
Azerbaijan University of Languages

(1014, Azerbaijan, Baku, street R.Behbudov 134, e-mail: pedaqoji.ing.fr@mail.ru)

Abstract. This article outlines some considerations for historical research on American English (AE) from the seventeenth through the nineteenth century, a period of great changes, a time of multilateral contact with other languages and between varieties of English. In recent decades researchers have shown that quantitative variation within synchronic data sets often indicates ongoing change, even when that change does not proceed to completion, and in this regard, variation in AE over the past three to four generations is still actual. This article also explores the history and origins of American English, with a relevant focus on its linguistic diversity. English speaking community migrating to the Newland and the Caribbean beginning from the seventeenth century on had close contacts with Native American languages, and observed influences from Native American languages on American English vocabulary. They include words like gorilla, canoe, chimpanzee, chocolate and others, which have survived to the present day, and words like mangummenauk (an acorn which is edible) and netop (a reliable friend), which have not survived. This article surveys the linguistic development of American English, repeatedly acknowledging the inputs from its various ethnic variants: for example, bogus (African), juke-box (African American), cookie (Dutch), bayou (French), macaroni (Italian), geisha (Japanese), vigilante (Spanish), lutefish (Swedish), and bagel (Yiddish). Therefore, American English is more than the totality of inheritances from its “neighbor” languages. In the seventeenth century, for example, pidgin-like varieties of English were simple examples among both Amerindian and African speakers, and there was open respect for linguistic diversity and substantial interest in it.

Keywords: american version of english, literary american variant of english, native americans, afro americans, linguistic influence, emigrants.

РАЗЛИЧНЫЕ ПОДХОДЫ К ФОРМИРОВАНИЮ АМЕРИКАНСКОГО ВАРИАНТА АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

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Путоваева Эльнара Эльдаровна, преподаватель английского языка,
диссертант кафедры лингвокультурологии
Азербайджанский университет языков

(1014, Азербайджан, Баку, ул. Р.Бехбудова 134, e-mail: pedaqoji.ing.fr@mail.ru)

Аннотация. В этой статье излагаются некоторые соображения по поводу исторического исследования американского варианта английского языка с XVII по XIX века, период больших изменений, время многосторонних контактов с другими языками и между разновидностями английского языка. В последние десятилетия исследователи показали, что количественные вариации в наборах синхронных данных часто указывают на продолжающиеся изменения, даже если эти изменения не продолжаются до завершения, и в этом отношении вариации в американском варианте английского языка за последние три-четыре поколения все еще актуальны. В статье также исследуется история и происхождение американского варианта английского языка, уделяется особое внимание его языковому словарному разнообразию. Англоязычное сообщество, мигрировавшее в Ньюленд, начиная с XVII века, имело тесные контакты с языками коренных американцев и наблюдало влияние языков коренных народов на лексику американского варианта английского языка. Они включают в язык такие слова, как gorilla, canoe, chimpanzee, chocolate и другие, которые сохранились до наших дней, а также такие слова, как mangummenauk (съедобный желудь), netop (надежный друг), которые не сохранились. В этой статье рассматривается лингвистическое развитие американского английского языка, подчеркивая вклад различных этнических групп: например, bogus (африканский), juke-box (афроамериканский), cookie (голландский), bayou (французский), macaroni (итальянский), geisha (японский), vigilante (испанский), lute fish (шведский), and bagel (идиш). Следовательно, американский вариант английского языка – это нечто большее, чем совокупность унаследованных слов от «соседних» языков.

Ключевые слова: американский вариант английского языка, литературный американский вариант английского языка, коренные американцы, афроамериканцы, лингвистическое влияние, эмигранты.

INTRODUCTION

“Americanism” means a word or expression that originated in the United States. The term includes outright coinages and foreign borrowings which first became “English” in the United States, as well as older terms used in new senses first given them in American usage” as Milford M. Matthews indicated in his preface to A Dictionary of Americanisms in 1951 (Matthews, 1951).

The study of the history of American English in the Northern part of the American continent has become one of the most captivating fields of linguistic research recently. One of the publications by J.L. Dillard [1], for the first time, tried to give a complete appearance of the origins and development of what has come to be known as American English. The book “A History of American English” by Dillard J.L. (1994) which examines various influences on American English is supposed to be important not only for managing a variety of English, but also for the challenge holding hypothesis about the development of American English. In the first chapter Dillard looks at the possible

influences by the American Indians in the colonial period, and the influences of other languages in America on American English. To show the development of American English Dillard (1994) discusses the historical use of pidgins and creoles, and their relevance to Black English, mentioning also the possibility that American Indians had an influence on the variety of English spoken by the slaves [1, pp. 62-77]. Furthermore, another consequence interest in the study of early American English among researchers is the compilation of the “Helsinki Corpus of early American English”, which is based on the famous “Helsinki Corpus of English texts”, focusing on English texts written in the North-American colonies in the seventeenth century.

Such linguists as Craig, Hulbert, and others have tried to define Americanisms by criteria based on historical or diachronic principles. They first recorded American words that acquired additional meanings in the United States, and secondly, Americanisms that were first recorded in American speech and later in British speech [2]. M. Matthews, the author of “A Dictionary of Americanisms on Historical



Principles”, defined “Americanisms” as new words created firstly in US, or words having gained new meanings in that region [3].

A. Schweitzer was one of the linguists who treated Americanisms as words some or all the new meanings of which were formed in the American version of the language English. His viewpoints in this field play a special role in the investigations. He divides the words of this kind into 3 main groups:

1. Americanisms
2. Britanisms
3. General English units [4, pp. 66 – 67].

METHODOLOGY

The goals of the article: The purpose of our article is to clarify the essence of the formation of American English and to concretize on conditions of this process under the influences of different nations and languages, especially of Native Americans, French, Afro-Americans, Spanish, Dutch, German, etc.

Statement of the task: In the process of research and preparation of the article, general scientific methods of studying information sources were used in order to clarify and concretize the process and conditions formatting American English, various approaches to the research of the term of “Americanisms”, influences under which the American English was to be formed and revolutionized. An important place was occupied by the structural and functional analysis, which made it possible to identify the essence and structure of the process of forming the American English, and on this basis, to concentrate on the various conditions of this process in the activities of different nations and languages existing in the US.

Methods: The first direction in the definition of Americanism is called the diachronic, historical or genetic approach, where any lexical unit of American origin, regardless of the area of modern development, can be called an Americanism. Applying this approach, W. Craigie, M. Matthews, K. Harwood, and other linguists considered all lexical units recorded in American speech for the first time to be Americanisms, regardless the version of which any of them is currently being developed. The second approach is called the synchronic or functional approach, which advocates the interpretation any lexical unit used by Americans, regardless of their origin, as Americanisms. E.O. Cheryukanova, A.D. Schweitzer, V.M. Pankin, A.V. Filippov and other linguists. are considered to be supporters of this direction. The third approach is a combination of the previous two approaches (diachronic and synchronic), which are supported by V. Visov. D. Algeo, G. Tomaxin, D. Crystal and others [5, pp. 55-59].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

How or when did a generalized version of AE develop? Such an extensive question requires the introduction of concepts and analytical tools from language contact and sociolinguistic research to variants of early AE. Dillard (1994) has argued that regional British English contributed next to nothing to early AE because emigrants spoke contact varieties like Maritime Pidgin English before departing. While Dillard’s stressing of the fluency of colonial life is a healthy modification to suppositions about transatlantic connections made by various linguists, leveling varieties of AE which developed throughout the eighteenth century. Some of the antagonistic factors would have sounded like the following:

(1) Americans were multilateral speakers from the beginning, and dialect rivalry and contact may have reinforced if not increased their range of styles. If newcomers learned a new variety, they did not necessarily discard their old one(s).

(2) New arrivals tended to seek their national or ethnic group and to reinforce existing communities.

(3) Rivalry between regions and colonies was common in the eighteenth century and has remained strong ever since.

(4) American colonies were autonomous from one

another—they were founded separately, had lives of their own, and were usually bound by commercial and cultural ties more closely to Britain than to one another. In short, the complexity of early American speech communities, which always involved contact and were often multilingual, needs much scholarly attention [6, pp. 17-18].

This chapter investigates the role of borrowings or loan words in the formation of American English. We would first like to talk about the factors influencing the emergence and formation of American English. Thus, the settlement of native speakers in these areas established the basis for the formation of a new national language, bringing together people who speak different dialects of English. This connection between dialectal variants has regularly led to the disappearance of differences as the time passed.

Although this variant was called North American English in the early days of the formation and adoption of American English as a term, or the term “Americanism” was first used in 1781. J. Pickering’s Dictionary, A Vocabulary, Or Collection of Words and Phrases, which was supposed to be peculiar to the United States of America, was published in 1816 and was the first collection of Americanisms [7, pp. 368-369]. In the second period of its formation, at the beginning of 1920s, the Professor of Columbia University G.P. Krapp proposed the language to be called “English in America.” Finally, in the third period of its development, W. Craigie and J.R. Hulber first used the term “American English” in the Dictionary of American English (1938-1944), and finally the well-known linguist N. Webster completed the formation of this term [8, p. 2411].

Speaking about the origin and development of American English in her article “Английский язык в национальных вариантах”, M. Sattarova noted that in the early days of its formation, American English had a system of rights “equal” to the British variant, which led to the formation of the former as an invariant [9, p. 100]. According to V. Babayeva, although the language used in the United States is based on British English, there are such sharp and distinct features distinguishing the two variants of the language that sometimes the British have to look in the explanatory dictionary of Americanisms to understand any word in another variant [10, p.66].

B. Huseynov in his dissertation “Müasir ingilis dilində variantivlik (amerikanizmlər)” specifically touched upon the issue of interest to American English and gave a certain place in his dissertation to the explanation of this issue from the historical point of view. Emphasizing the role of G. Hempf, C. Grangent and O. Emerson in propaganda in this direction, the author praised the establishment of the American Dialect Society in the 19th century and the role of the journal they published. Touching upon the problem of publishing a large number of books and dictionaries in order to consolidate the American English Dictionary since the beginning of the 20th century, Huseynov also explained in details how Americans felt guilty about the insufficient recognition of American English all over the world [11, pp. 65-67].

In her article “Проблема межвариантного заимствования в свете общей теории заимствования” Е Ларцева took a completely different approach to this issue, arguing that such words should be called “inter-variant acquisitions” (American and British variants) rather than Americanisms [5, pp. 48-49].

Another Russian linguist, G. Tomakhin, who conducted an extensive research in this area, considered it necessary to combine two groups of basic lexical units under the denomination of Americanisms. The first is a lexical group that includes words and phrases used as synonyms for words that describe and define concepts existing in other versions of the language, like mail-box (Am) - letter-box (Br), etc. The second group includes words and phrases typical of the American area, combining local features, and gradually finding their way to other variants of the English language and even gaining international development status. For example: mulatto, mocassin, tornado, coyote, etc. [12, pp.



10-11].

Over the years, a number of words were borrowed from both Native Americans, and other immigrants from Africa, France, Germany, Spain, and other countries. The first “official” notes to the “American dialect” were made in 1756 by Samuel Johnson a year after he published his Dictionary of the English Language. Other words that became obsolete continued to be utilized in the tribes. Early examples of words that had become obsolete in England that continued to be used in the United States were:

allow, guess, reckon, meaning to think.

bureau, meaning a chest of drawers.

fall, meaning “autumn”

gotten, where “got” was being used as the past participle of “get.”

In other cases, new words had to be created in order to name the unfamiliar animals, plants, landscape and living conditions that these early newcomers encountered. These words that were simply “created” included such terms as groundhog, lightning rod, belittle, bamboozle, and hundreds of others.

There was a great deal of some other terms, the meaning of which was changed gradually, such as:

Bluff – instead of being used as a “river”, bluff began to be used to mean “bank” in the late 17th century.

Fork – although continued to be used as a name for an eating utensil, Americans began as well to use this word to mean a branch of a road. [13].

Throughout the history many colonies did not have their own literary language, some of them using dialects, while others speaking a literary language with dialectal hints. However, it should be noted that despite this dialectical diversity, the English language spread in the United States at the time of the establishment of the colonies almost fully meeting the norms of literary language adopted at that time.

Linguists point out that sometimes such a division is not completely accurate, noting that only knowing the origin of words will help to clarify the case. R.D. Mallory is one of those who considered American English as an independent language. According to one of his supporters, Г. Низкодубов, American English has undergone two main development paths:

1) From the beginning of the 17th century to the end of the 17th century. That is a short period which is characterized as the period of formation of American dialects.

2) The period of the emergence of Literary American English, covering the 19th-20th centuries [14, p. 97].

At the beginning of the 17th century, the inhabitants of various colonies decided to spread their language all over the continent. Different dialects began to “spread” to the West and to the South. The influx of immigrants from all over the world has led to the dialectal differences we still hear today in the language. As some linguists claim, if the colonies had existed two or three centuries ago, American English would have been completely different from the British version. It could have emerged as two different languages, not as two different variants of the same language.

We can say that the existing word stock has “tramped” into America in two ways:

1. Creating new words and phrases by revising existing words.

2. Creating new words and phrases by loaning new words from other languages.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, many words were created in American colonies by substantivizing the “adjective + noun” and “noun + noun” models. Such transformations are more common in the early development process. In the second period of the formation of American English, in addition to covering the 19th-20th centuries, we observe a change in the word stock. During this period, the process of increasing the number of “Americanisms” began to gain impact. At that time when the formation of a new political system, state institutions, political parties, civil society organizations and similar events were taking place, the emergence of a

new political terminology was inevitable. Examples of the many words and phrases that emerged during this period are: stunt, bootleg, nearby, raincoat, hangover, smooch, lengthy, blizzard, commuter, kick the bucket, face the music, bite the dust, barking up the wrong tree, pass the buck, go the whole hog, stake a claim and so on.

On the other hand, touching upon the role of derived words in the emergence of variability, B. Huseynov claimed that these words passed mostly through Spanish, German, French and Hindi. The author gave a number of examples of words derived from each of the above-mentioned languages into American English and considered it necessary to divide them into several groups of meanings [11, pp. 178-186].

In her dissertation “Müasir ingilis dilində leksik-semantik variativlik”, F. Gurbanova noted that while studying language contacts in all spheres of public life during intercultural communication, along with cultural values, new linguistic units can be undoubtedly acquired into any word stock. As a result of the intensity of contacts in the language, there is an active acquisition of lexical units that reflect different objects and cultural concepts of different nations speaking this or that language [15, p. 14].

On this point, linguistic analysis suggests that nearly 4,500-5,000 words and phrases have currently the same meaning in the United States and in the United Kingdom:

In the United Kingdom	in the United States
elevator	lift
tap	faucet
bath	tub
guard	conductor
interval	intermission
curtains	drapes
biscuits	cookies
jumper	sweater
book	trunkare [16, pp. 12-13].

Let’s give examples to clarify how a number of new loan-words entered and enriched gradually the word-stock of the American English. The process of coining new lexical elements coincided with the time when the colonists began to borrow names for unfamiliar flora, fauna, and landscapes from the Native American languages. Examples of such names are moose, opossum, raccoon, squash, etc. The languages of the other colonizing nations also added to the American word stock; for example, barbecue, barrens, branch, bottomland, bluff, cookie, cruller, cutoff, gulch, interval, pit, levee, portage, gopher, stevedore, snag, notch, knob, riffle, rapids, watergap, trail, timberli etc. [17]. Other notable farm related vocabulary additions were the new meanings assumed by barn (not only a building for hay and grain storage, but also for housing livestock) and team (not just the horses, but also the vehicle along with them), as well as, in various periods, the terms range, (corn) crib, lay by (a crop), truck, elevator, sharecropping, and feedlot.

Later on trades of various kinds have enriched American English with household words describing different occupations, such as bartender, longshoreman, patrolman, hobo, bouncer, bellhop, roustabout, white collar, blue collar, employee, boss ; businesses and workplaces – department store, supermarket, thrift store, gift shop, drugstore, motel, main street, gas station, hardware store, savings and loan, hock; as well as general concepts and innovations – mail-letters, automated teller machine, smart card, cash register, dishwasher, envelope, movie, mileage, shortage, outage. A number of Americanisms describing material innovations remained largely confined to North America: elevator, power cord, ground, gasoline, hatchback, compact car, SUV, station wagon, tailgate, motor home, truck, pickup truck, etc. [17].

Finally, a great deal of common English colloquialisms from various periods are American in origin, for instance OK, cool, darn, gnarly, hot, lame, doing great, hang out, no-



brainer, hip, fifty-fifty, gross, doofus, diddly-squat, screw up, fool around, nerd, jerk, nuke, 24/7, heads-up, thusly, way back, and so are many other English idioms – get the hang of, take for a ride, bark up the wrong tree, keep tabs, run scared, take a backseat, have an edge over, stake a claim, bite off more than one can chew, for the birds, inside track, stiff upper lip, bad hair day, throw a monkey wrench; some English words now in general use, such as hijacking, disc jockey, boost, bulldoze, and jazz also originated as American slang [17].

CONCLUSIONS

In our opinion, the formation of literary American English is carried out primarily through the realization of the social communicative function. Although the language used by immigrants is more limited, Literary American English is a language option for all ethnic groups. National languages gradually lost their place in the “war” against English and gave way to the literary language. According to J.Haugen, words used in large cities may sound incomprehensible to the rural population; at the same time, some words and phrases that are common in rural areas may be “foreign, or strange” to the urban population [18]. Widespread internal migration and high mobility among the population led to some dialectal differences in most languages. Thus, due to the large number of synonyms in the general vocabulary of the British and American variants, some dialectal variants were increasingly assimilated to the Literary American English. One of the main creators of this confrontation was the mass media. For example, in radio and television advertisements, in newspapers, “cottage cheese” excluded its competitors - sour milk cheese, Dutch cheese, pot cheese, smearcase and others from the literary language.

As mentioned above, we would like to emphasize that the main reasons for the introduction of new words into any language are due to a number of innovations in the lexicon of the language and many changes in language systems. Although the language itself has a rich internal capacity to own the concepts other people use, in some cases it is preferable to take a word from another language. It is easier to adapt a ready-made material from another language in accordance with the laws of a definite language than to create a new word in the recipient language.

For future research it is suggested to take into consideration that language is a kind of phenomena that is always under ongoing process of development. To this regard, we can say that, the formation process of any language can be considered to be fulfilled any time, therefore new words and expressions related to innovations are always “obliged” to enrich the word stock of languages.

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