

Russian loanwords in English

We all know that there are a lot of English borrowings in the Russian language and we use them very often but it is interesting and important to know whether English has Russian borrowings or not and how these words are used in speech if they exist in language.

The actuality of this work determines the necessity of examining the English and Russian languages in the sphere of loans. The aim of this paper is to study the ways of borrowing and the influence of Russian borrowings on English.

A borrowed word or a borrowing is a word, a phrase or an idea taken by the speakers of one language from a different language. A borrowing can also be called a loanword. Borrowing is a consequence of cultural contact between two language communities.

There are different reasons for language borrowings. The first reason can be connected with a new object or event which doesn't have the name in the nation's language. Second, if people are not satisfied with some word in their native language which is the name of some object or event a loan word can replace it and give its necessary stylistic effect for more appropriate usage of a new word in the recipient language. Third, the borrowing can be explained by the absence of such word in the receiving language.

The process of adaptation of borrowed words is called assimilation. According to the degree of assimilation all borrowed words can be divided into two groups:

1. completely assimilated;
2. partly assimilated.

Completely assimilated borrowings follow all morphological, phonetic and orthographic standards. They take an active part in word-formation. Completely assimilated words can be found in all the layers older borrowings, for example, the word "to talk" is borrowed into English from Russian "толк" and is close in the meaning.

Partly assimilated borrowings are often called neologisms. They may be divided into 3 groups:

- a) borrowings not completely assimilated phonetically: kibitka [kibitkə] (an example of a Russian borrowing in the English language);
- b) borrowings not completely assimilated grammatically: apparatchik (s) – apparatchiki (pl) (an example of a Russian borrowing in the English language);
- c) borrowings not assimilated semantically because they denote objects and notions peculiar to the country from which they come. They may denote foreign clothing, for example, shuba; foreign professions, e. g. tsar; foreign food and drinks, e. g. vodka, borsch, blini etc.

When the words are borrowed we observe phenomena which can lead to some language problems:

1. the word can lose its basic meaning, e. g. babushka – a kerchief on the head (this word has lost its first meaning and is used in different meaning);
2. a mistake in grammatical features of the word, e. g. blini – singular, blin or blinis – for plural;
3. the word can change grammatical peculiarities of receiving language, e. g. muzhik – muzhiki, but not muzhiks as it is necessary for the English grammar;
4. the word are not accepted by the language and have disappeared;
5. the word can exist in the language for some period of time and then goes to the class of historicism, e. g. tsar, boyar.

According to many sources modern English language has many neologisms from different world languages. As for Russian influence on the English language, it is not so global now. However, the Russian language made its own contribution into the development of the English language in different historical periods.

It was known that direct borrowing first began with the contact between England and Russia in the 16th century. These words were probably borrowed before the reign of Peter the Great. Since that time the word "sable" has been known as a borrowing from Russian. It's known that sable was used as an important exchange product at that time. Besides, this word can mean 'black' in English language now. There are many other borrowed words of that period: 'beluga', 'starlet', 'rouble' ('ruble'), 'pood', 'moujik', 'kvass', 'shuba', 'vodka', 'samovar', 'troika', 'babushka', 'pirozhi' and others.

Секция 22. Современные проблемы межкультурной коммуникации

The second period of Russian borrowings into English is considered to be connected with the words borrowed from the period of the reign of Peter the Great to pre-Revolutionary time. Most part of those borrowed words meant items connected with trade because it was time when there were active political and economical relationships between England and Russia. In the period of 18-19th centuries there were some borrowings ('obrok', 'barshina' etc.) which are historical terms both in Russian and in English now. Many Russian words exist in English and are used according to grammar rules of the English language, e.g. 'steppes', 'sables' and others.

The third period is associated with the words borrowed in the Soviet period. Many of them ('Bolshevik', 'udarnik') reflect the ideas of the new system, the Soviet Union. During the 20th century we can witness the obvious interest of the West to the political life of Russia. That has led to some more loanwords from the Russian language ('komsomol', 'sovkhoz', 'kolkhoz', etc.)

Words borrowed during the post-Soviet period belong to the fourth period of borrowing from Russian into English. Mostly these words ('perestroika', 'presidium' and others) show political, economical and social processes which took place at that time.

Russian words like 'samovar', 'ushanka', 'telega', 'matryoshka' are national words and they give special pictures of the Russian life. All of them are from the Russian culture and Russian history and can tell a foreigner about our nation in the past, about the Russian people's life in the history of our country.

Linguists say, that compared to other source languages very few of the words borrowed into English come from the Russian language. So, we see the influence of the Russian language on the development of English only in the history.

On the contrary the influence of the English language on Russian is under way right now.

To sum up, Russian borrowings into English belong to the Renaissance and later period. Most part of Russian borrowings in English is not completely assimilated. That means that the influence of the Russian language is not so big and the contact between Great Britain and Russia is not so strong.