

Phenomenology of borrowing in modern linguistic research

By

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of the problem of borrowing and the activation of foreign language vocabulary in the national language. As the clear markers of linguistic contacts, foreign language elements of various etymologies function in the language in a wide variety of capacities. The article examines the main concepts of Russian and Foreign scientists, who had explained the process of borrowing of foreign language vocabulary. The role of linguistic and extralinguistic factors contributing to the activation and consolidation of borrowings to the national language is also specified in this article. A critical analysis of the main approaches towards the determination of the nature of borrowing is carried out.

Keywords: language; intercultural communication; language contacts; Russian; borrowing; foreign lexis; transfer

1. Introduction

The uniqueness of any language is determined by two opposite aspects: by its place in the genetic classification, i.e., its origin, and by specifics of interlanguage connections, i.e. its

interaction with other languages (Ageeva, 2018; Sabirova, 2015; Deputatova, 2019; Akhmetova, 2019).

Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, the founder of Kazan school considered the migration of linguistic elements to be the universal way of any national language growth and enrichment and believed in the impossibility of the existence of pure, unmixed language unit (Boduen de Kurtene, 1963). It is hard to disagree with the remarkable Russian linguist, especially since that very "mixing" provides specifics of a language, its century-long formed deep essence.

Nonetheless, E.V. Marinova in her "Foreign vocabulary in the modern Russian language" draws our attention to the fact that despite the absolute familiarity of the borrowing process to the pupils even there is no explicit approach that would explain the nature of this phenomenon. And the reason may be in the constant necessity for researches to fight against various puristic trends and defend borrowings rather than delve deeply into the core of the concept (Marinova, 2012).

In this work, we tried to critically comprehend and systematically describe the main concepts of Russian and foreign lexicology devoted to general issues of the phenomenology of borrowing..

2. Methods

The methods used in the present paper include linguistic description methods (examination, description, classification, comparison), as well as lexical-semantic and comparative methods and the method of synchronic description of language which are considered to be traditional for lexical-historical research.

The method of detailed and stepwise analysis of the existing scientific concepts in modern linguistic contactology and theory of borrowing was highly important for this study and allowed the authors to come to some universal conclusions.

3. Results and Discussion

The term "borrowing" as any other word in linguistics is dualistic by its nature as it defines the process of language migration and its result: the way foreign language units' function in a new linguistic environment.

The process of borrowing contains mechanisms of integration of language units into another language system and their adaptation there: peculiarities of their activation and functioning, phonetic, grammatical and lexical assimilation, as well as psychological assimilation proposed by N.V. Gabdreeva. This term - psychological assimilation - designates whether a native speaker recognises unit as borrowing or comprehends it as a native element (Gabdreeva, 2011).

The process of borrowing is universal: referring once again to the thesis of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, we shall note that all living languages are in one way or another no strangers to its influence, except only for dead languages. Even more guarded languages borrow some terms necessary to name new culture-specific concepts or experience a rapid surge of foreignisms in their language due to some external causes. Here come the

picturesque examples of Sanskrit, which was considered as a divine and ideal language for centuries, or the Japanese language, which stayed unchanged by the virtue of well-known extralinguistic forces.

Language transfer is typical for different language level units which leads us to the second criterion of borrowing universality. It was Jan Baudouin de Courtenay who first in Russian linguistics stated that "...one language may borrow from another: 1) an autonomous word; 2) a syntactic unit; 3) a morphological unit or a morpheme; 4) particles; 5) sound or phonemes" (Boduen de Kurtene, 1963). The process of borrowing is different on different language levels. the most rigid level is morphology since national specificity and uniqueness are stored in the grammatical categories of the language (Ageeva, 2016).

Phonetics are not also that far: no foreign phoneme was borrowed throughout the whole history of the Russian language development. Although there is an opinion about the foreign nature of the phoneme [f]. However, it is worth recalling that this phoneme exists in native words as in homophones [krov'] (blood) – [krov] (shelter), with [f'] / [f] differentiating the meaning of those two words albeit as a result of devocalisation of final [v]. It is rather the case of borrowing the characteristics of the phoneme implementation: in a strong position the phoneme [f] only appears in foreign words, as if before the vowel: анафема (anathema), кафе (cafe) - or as an initial letter: факел [fakel] (torch), флер [fler] (veil, shade), фтор [ftor] (fluorine). In recent years, linguists have intensified their debate about the presence of the English sound [dʒ] in the Modern English, which has entered its phonetic structure through the Anglicisms containing it (Volodarskaya, 2005). There are some examples: гаджет (gadget), джем (jam), менеджер (manager), etc. The situation is not that different in the context of other national languages too. Several French linguists reject the borrowing of the phoneme [ŋ] in words like parking, shopping, building, justifying their opinion with the fact that in French pronunciation it is interpreted by the sound with two phonemes [ng], either transformed into a palatal [ɲ], as in the words like "vigne" (vine), "signe" (sign), "ligne" (line). The phonological system of any language actively resists the appearance of any foreign elements, replaces them with the closest native units whenever possible, or with the most corresponding combination. There are examples in the Russian language: [hwelscher] - фельдшер [feldsher] (paramedic) or [hvonar'] – фонарь [fonar'] (lantern), etc.

On the condition of special intensity of interlanguage contacts morphemics, phraseology and syntax at certain stages of language development quite successfully borrow foreign structures: the very existence of suffixes of Greek and Latin origin in all European languages is eloquent evidence of this thesis. Phraseological expressions "take place" or "keep a place" in modern English as well as in other European languages and, accordingly, брать место [brat mesto] or держать место [derzhat mesto] in Russian are the essences of the clear and indisputable heritage of the French language with its set expressions "prendre place" or "garder la place", functioning in the lexico-phraseological system from the XV-XVI centuries (Littré, 1873-1877).

It is the lexical system of the language that is the most receptive to the borrowing process. This part of the language is the least resistant to the influence of external factors, has a direct connection with the people's life, sensitive to any changes in society and therefore develops with special dynamics.

By virtue of the interdependence described above, all the variety of reasons for borrowing can be reduced to two large classes: extralinguistic and linguistic or intra-linguistic reasons.

1. *Intra-linguistic reasons for borrowing are:*

1. To fill in the intralinguistic lexical gaps, if the native names of concepts, phenomena, objects, properties, characteristics are insufficient or absent altogether (V.M. Aristova, N.V. Gabdreeva, V.G. Gak, L.P. Krysin, E.V. Marinova, A.K. Reitsak, etc.).
2. To narrow, specify concepts, to differentiate and detail semantic nuances. In this case, two words - existing and borrowed - divide the semantic area. For example, there is a special vocabulary to classify hotel rooms by the degrees of comfort: люкс [luks] (apartments), сьют [syut] (suite), твин [tvín] (twin), etc. Their semantics may overlap, but never fully coincide.
3. To eliminate the polysemy of the native word, to simplify its semantic structure. Several scientists highlight this reason. In our opinion, correlating with the previous reason, this one explains the narrowing or specification of a term differently, from the inside: not only the concept needs clarification and differentiation of its nuances, but the semantic structure of the word itself. The semantic structure of the word is not dimensionless, so it is required to avoid unnecessary senses piling, which makes it heavier and blurs clear semantic frameworks. For example, ник [nick] (from the English nickname) is not just a name; it is an elaborate user title, another feature of personality as a signature or an avatar. It would not be sufficient enough or clear enough to simply insert into the polysemic structure of the word "name" all these senses.
4. To euphemize concepts. Many linguists have already covered this issue, so we shall simply note that the euphemizing aspect of borrowing is just a special case of specialization; for example, when in Russian a borrowed киллер is used instead of the native убийца [ubiytsa], or the drug dealer is called дилер [diler].
5. To satisfy the language's need for new stylistic (expressive) means. The problem of expressive units of foreign language vocabulary is rather a subject of literary studies, however, there is a vast field of activity for a lexicologist too. It is appropriate to mention here some lexical calques, such as Russian трогательный [trogatelny] from French touchant (touching) or змеиться [zmeitsa] from serpenter (glide), borrowed phraseological constructions, like the widely known in Russia быть не в своей тарелке [byt' ne v svoey tarelke] from French native "ne pas être dans son assiette" (to be not quite oneself), and direct borrowing, such as the exclamation вау "wow", which is gradually becoming international youth slang or the familiar to any youngster English-language abbreviations: LOL - "lots of laughs" or OMG - "Oh my God".
6. To replace the periphrasis with one word for the linguistic economy. E.V. Marinova gives as an example the Russian words пиар [piar] (PR) or вип [vip] (VIP), which have rooted in the language due to their brevity in comparison with their full variants "svyazi s obshchestvennostyu" (public relations) or "osobo vazhnaya persona" (very important person) (Marinova, 2012).
7. To unify the terminology. This reason has a lot in common with an independent tendency for vocabulary internationalisation which was identified by many researchers like E.V. Marinova, for example. We find such unification of domain-specific terminology through vocabulary internationalisation convenient for further professional dialogue in the world of scientific and technological globalization. For example, the Russian word "boks" as a storage unit or "biznes" as a business.

2. *Extralinguistic reasons for borrowing are*

1. The cross-national long-term or short-term contacts throughout human history which explain the development of bilingualism. The number of borrowings themselves and

the number of covered linguistic areas depends on whether those contacts were long or short.

2. The necessity of naming new realia discovered thus exploring and understanding the world around. Some scientists identify this reason as a linguistic one, but we assume it has a social nature. The emergence of new realia as such is not a linguistic phenomenon; on the contrary, it is the phenomena of social nature like scientific and technical discoveries and cultural evolution that define the language further development.
3. National innovation in a certain area of activity. N.V. Gabdreeva highlights this precise reason which can be seen as a particular case, but we consider it appropriate to single it out as an independent one. Language can borrow not only the names of newly discovered or invented phenomena or objects but also some other catchy vocabulary which is not directly related to the borrowed name; this vocabulary of no genuine necessity roots into the technical language or into the system of this area terms in a fairly short time. In particular, earlier we examined the Russian vocabulary of developers and users of computer games: локация or лока [lokatsia or loka] for место [mesto] (place), геймер [geymer] for игрок [igrok] (gamer), спелл [spell] for заклинание [zaklinanie] (spell), нуб [nub] for новенький [noven'ky] (newcomer), лут [lut] for добыча [dobycha] (loot) (Ageeva, 2018).
4. Language snobbery and fashion. Earlier we highlighted this reason: youngsters consciously use English words in their speech to demonstrate their affiliation to a certain subculture and linguistic culture, for example, Russian шузы [shuzy] from English "shoes", лузер [luzer] from "loser", юзер [yuzer] from "user", etc. The issues of using language as a measure of fame and prestige are not new for linguistics; different periods in Russian history are marked with the cultural predominance of different languages. There were several of them from Dutch, to German and French. The situation today is no different: Anglicisms are the trend of the current era. But we should remember that thousand and a half of Dutch borrowings were lexicalized during the reign of Peter the Great, but only about three hundred of them survived this three-century-long journey. The Frenchisms like палья [palya] (straw), вертиж [vertizh] (dizziness), фраппировать [frappirovat'] (amaze) have also disappeared from the Russian language. Borrowed units are often only fashionable while their foreign source dominates over native language and culture, but every domination comes to an end. That process of the recession of foreign culture's influence could be slow: the gradual levelling of French influence on Russian society that smoothly turned to Anglomania at the end of the XIX century; or sudden: the abrupt end of almost any influx of foreign language vocabulary due to political reasons at the XX century (Ageyeva, 2015).
5. International partnership as a part of the intensive development of commercial relations, various scientific, cultural, educational exchanges.
6. Travel and tourism.
7. Specialization of social and professional activities, which causes the development of hypo-hyperonymic relations (Gabdreeva, 2011). This phenomenon is an external determinant of the phenomenon of vocabulary specialization described by V.G. Gak and gives rise to borrowings that have an additional denotative (or connotative) seme, which subsequently develops into an independent meaning: for example, консалтинг (consulting), мерчендайзер (merchandiser).
8. The faster rhythm of life. Today time saving becomes the dominant factor in the successful implementation of any professional or social achievements. This is the reason for the linguistic economy, for the replacement of native words or phrases with a shorter foreign language equivalent: for example, хэдхантер "headhunter" instead of "a

person, who is looking for people with the necessary professional experience for this vacancy", лизинг "leasing" instead of "long-term lease of equipment with the possibility of transferring it to the lessee at the end of the contract", etc.

The phenomenology of borrowing as a whole - and in each specific case in particular - cannot be determined by one of the reasons alone, but by a whole complex of interrelated phenomena of both linguistic and psychosocial types. Nevertheless, each epoch demands different reasons which would come to the fore and variously affect the process of borrowing foreign units.

The other question connected to the borrowing process is the concepts of actualization of foreign units in the new language environment. There are now two contradicting theories in Russian and foreign lexicology:

1. *Transfer theory*

According to this concept, borrowing is the transition of units from one language (the source language or, in another terminology, the donor language) to another (the receptor language or the recipient language). After the transfer, the borrowed unit gradually adapts to the receiving system, "adjusts" its phonetic and graphic appearance, finds grammatical categories, makes several word-forms and, of course, develops its semantic structure. L. Bloomfield, G. Paul, E. Haugen, L.P. Krysin, Yu.S. Sorokin and others supported this concept. As a result, there simultaneously exist foreign units that become almost native through the course of assimilation and those that stay unchanged. The first type of borrowings perfectly hides in the new language environment while the second ones remain alien for the recipient language (Marinova, 2012).

2. *Analogy theory*

According to this concept borrowing is not a mechanical transfer of units, but the creation of new elements according to foreign language samples: the reproduction of the phonetic, morphological and semantic structure of a foreign word by the means of the language itself, the realization of its potential capabilities triggered from outside. Y.A. Zhluktenko, L.A. Ilyina supported this concept (Marinova, 2012).

Nonetheless, these opposing theories equally highlight the creative, transforming activity of the receiving language during the borrowing process: adaptation and adjustment of the foreign unit or creation of the reconstruction of internal units by foreign pattern. Y.S. Sorokin describes borrowing as "a creative, active act, accessible for languages with a high degree of originality and development" (Sorokin, 1965).

4. Summary

In our works (Ageeva, 2018; Ageeva, 2016; Ageyeva, 2015; Ageeva, 2015; Ageeva, 2019) we adhere to the most common point of view, based on the theory of transition. It allows, in our opinion, to explain as accurately and reliably as possible the features of reception and adaptation of foreign language vocabulary in the system of the Russian language. This theory is based not only on the laws of the receiving system but on the direct influence of the source language, which importance is practically levelled in the works on the theory of analogy.

5. Conclusions

The lexical composition of any language is the result of a long history of formation and development and has a complex heterogeneous structure. Two factors determine the uniqueness of the lexical system's evolution: the first is the place of the language in the genealogical classification; the second is the specifics of interlanguage connections through a diachronic perspective. These connections are expressed via the existence of foreign units in the national language vocabulary.

It is the vocabulary of the language that is the most receptive to any social changes and the borrowing process. But it is not the only part of the language with foreign units. As we have mentioned above, this process is universal and affects other parts of the language like Phonetics, Morphemics, Morphology, Phraseology and Syntax. The results of this influence are not that transparent, but with some additional attention, it is quite possible to record and classify them.

Traditionally we distinguish extralinguistic and intralinguistic reasons for borrowing. But they do not operate separately; it is always a whole complex of interrelated phenomena of all linguistic, socio-psychological and pragmatic types.

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