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LEXICOGRAPHY OF RUSSIANISMS IN ENGLISH

E. V. Beloglazova

Abstract. The lexicographic practice to filter out peripheral words, including those that fail to meet the criterion of Anglicity, resulted in a biased approach to lexicographic coverage of foreignisms and xenonyms.

The comparison of lexicographic practices underlying the compilation of various general dictionaries of English and a dictionary of xenonymic terms makes it possible (1) to trace evolution of xenonymic lexis belonging to external cultures as well as (2) to identify the principles of its adequate description.

We attempt to demonstrate that words which originate from external cultures play a crucial role in making English the global language, and as such deserve to be fairly represented in dictionaries.

Keywords: Russianism, xenonym, culturonym, lexicography, Russian-culture-oriented English, dictionary

ПРОБЛЕМЫ ЛЕКСИКОГРАФИИ РУСИЗМОВ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

Е. В. Белоглазова

Аннотация. Лексикографическая практика отфильтровывания периферийной лексики, определяемой по критерию «исконности», приводит к несбалансированному и искажающему описанию языка, от которого отсекаются заимствованная и ксенонимическая лексика.

Результаты: Сравнение лексикографической практики, лежащей в основе составления общих словарей английского языка и специальных ксенонимических словарей позволило (1) проследить эволюцию в отношении к заимствованной и ксенонимической лексике, а также (2) определить принципы ее адекватного описания.

Заключение: Статья призвана показать, что лексика внешнекультурного происхождения играет важную роль в функционировании английского языка как языка международного общения и заслуживает адекватного лексикографического отображения.

Ключевые слова: русизм, ксеноним, культуроним, лексикография, английский язык вторичной культурной ориентации, словарь

Introduction

Sometimes lexicography is guided by xenophobia [5]. It may sound harsh, but it is an objective necessity for a lexicographer to draw borderlines and filter words in and out, and "foreignness" has traditionally been one of the evident filters. The pillar of English lexicography J. Murray stated that "Anglicity" was what he looked for when outlining the "nucleus" of the English vocabulary [9].

The striving towards comprehensiveness and inclusivity was never meant to encompass borrowings, which were considered under-naturalized. Yet, this aspect of English lexicography

grew problematic as English evolved into a global language. It was lexicographic coverage of foreignisms that the "dictionary scandal" following the publication of S. Ogilvie's *Words of the World* (2012) was about.

The solution for this biased approach to foreignisms is of course to cover them by specialized dictionaries. Yet, this task has its own challenges, since even isolated from the rest of the word stock, this segment is still unembraceable. This paper deals with lexicographic challenges related to Russian xenonyms (Russian-culture-bound terms), focusing on their fair treatment to prevent xenophobia.

The research follows complex **methodology**, combining:

(1) registration of all Russianisms occurrences in the original Russian-culture-oriented texts of different genres in the course of long-term continuous discourse monitoring;

(2) analysis of lexicographic reference sources aimed at identifying the status of the registered Russianisms and the preferred variants for them;

(3) corpora analysis aimed at locating the identified Russianisms within particular varieties and/or discourses of the English language; identifying their collocates and typical contexts as well as frequency and its dynamics.

Discussion

Despite the fact that Russian-English political and economic ties were established in the mid-16th century and immediately generated a flow of Russian borrowings into English, numbering at least 50 for the first two centuries of contact, lexicography was more than cautious in reflecting these additions to the lexicon.

To illustrate, S. Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) [7] wordlist includes only "czar" and "czarina". At that the Russian theme is present through the Dictionary in various citations illustrating other entries (for instance, there are mentions of "Muscovy", "Russia" and "Astracan").

According to V. Kabakchi's [2] calculation, the latest edition of the Oxford English Dictio-

nary (OED) [10] — the most respected, reliable and large-scale dictionary of the English language — lists around 400 words of the Russian origin, yet, this list is problematic for a variety of reasons:

(1) words borrowed from Russian fall under the category, yet, they may not be related to the Russian culture (e. g. "Adyghe");

(2) the list of Russian-origin words does not include some Russianisms to be found on the OED pages (e. g. "Kremlin", "Spartakiad");

(3) the OED lacks details on variation in form, common for such words, which can enter as borrowings proper (including mistransliterated ones), calque translations, hybrid forms, etc.;

(4) the given list is far from exhaustive, due to the general lexicographic policy and other ideological considerations.

The latter fact is a mere credit to tradition, since the space constraints, so painful for the compilers of the first editions of the OED and their supplements, are no longer crucial for modern e-lexicography. Yet, there persists a bias against the discussed strand of vocabulary treated as peripheral and an unwillingness to overemphasize it in the Dictionary.

This policy might appear justified in reference to English as a national language. Yet, English has already been a language of global communication for some decades, serving as a universal mediator and a means of international and intercultural dialogue.

Our primary interest is with the peculiar function of English, which is routinely used to facilitate intercultural contact and promote various cultures on the global scale. In particular, we shall be looking at the Russian-culture-oriented English, which is a variety of international English characterized by standard grammar and by extensive additions and adjustments to the vocabulary. Since the language variety is focused on cultural mediation, its lexicon is supplemented with xenonyms, which are terms of a foreign culture introduced into the language of description for it to be able to adequately describe this culture.

Being a highly specific lexical category, xenonyms require a specific lexicographic approach and specialized dictionaries with clear inclusion criteria, system of markings and links, and definitive metalanguage.

Identification of xenonyms

In order to identify xenonyms, the first important distinction to be made is the one between xenonyms and words of foreign origin, which are not necessarily the same. Consider the following fragment, dealing with the Uzbek culture:

E. g. "In these neighbourhoods, the Uzbek *nouveaux riches* try to outdo one another in the grandeur of their houses, particularly in the design of the *mehmânxâna*, literally 'guest room,' where male guests (or women, if they are foreigners) are entertained" [8].

The cited fragment includes two cases of foreignisms (*"nouveaux riches" and "mehmânxâna");* yet, only the latter of the two is a xenonym, i. e. a term referring the reader to a unique element of a particular culture.

On the other hand, the terms "fellow traveler" and "shock worker" appear to be quite English despite their being xenonyms, since there is a variety of ways to introduce Englishization to the language of description.

The second distinction is between xenonyms proper and their naturalized homonyms, which penetrated the English language and underwent considerable reconceptualization as they came to be used in culturally neutral contexts. Thus, according to the Corpus of Contemporary American English [6], the Russianism "czar" collocates not only with "Russian" but also with "Colombian" and "Peruvian"; one can call that not only Nicolas or Alexandr but also Donald Trump and — most unexpectedly in terms of gender — Christina Romer. So, we have one and the same Russianism that functions differently in different varieties of English: in the American English it is a word of Russian origin adapted to fit the new discursive and cultural environment, having lost its link to the original culture along the way; in the Russian-culture-oriented English it functions as a xenonym.

There are more complicated and debatable cases when the connection between a xenonym and the source culture is too vague. For example, consider the recent addition of "muzhik-dom" to the OED, which listed this word among the 2003 updates. It means "muzhiks collectively"; however, it remains questionable what "muzhiks collectively" means for an English native speaker; and since it has no source-culture counterpart, its meaning in the Russian-culture-oriented English is also highly questionable. This is a word that emerged in the English language with very little relation to the Russian culture despite its being derived from a xenonymic term.

Thus, as we can see, it is impossible to rely on either general dictionaries like OED or numerous as they are dictionaries of foreign terms in dealing with xenonyms: there may be certain overlaps, but these dictionaries have objects of their own, and they are not terms of external cultures.

Criteria for xenonym inclusion

We can easily resolve the crucial question of whether to include a registered item into the dictionary or to keep it in cold storage if we identify the status of the item in question in the classification of xenonyms, which can fall into three types:

(1) basic xenonyms, which are relatively familiar to an average English speaker and registered in general dictionaries of English (e. g. "samovar", "Cossack", etc.);

(2) technical xenonyms are terms that are infrequent, highly specific and registered only by specialized thematic dictionaries (*"oblast'"*, *"starets", "Strel'tsy", etc.*);

(3) nonce xenonyms are terms that some authors have used occasionally, yet these words have not found their way into any dictionary; they are unfamiliar for most readers apart from experts in the field and tend towards formal variation, since their form has not been fixed anywhere [1].

A dictionary of foreign-culture-oriented variety of English should unfailingly include all the basic xenonyms and tend to cover technical

xenonyms, while nonce xenonyms might be included into a separate section or marked as neologisms.

Since the three named categories differ in their textual behavior — the basic xenonyms are self-sufficient, while technical and nonce ones require a commentary to clarify their cultural background — the dictionary should provide corresponding tags and instructions.

Apart from tags, the dictionaries should observe the established practice in graphic marking of xenonyms. Compare "boyar" vs. "*okol'nichiy*", which are both names for the Russian Duma ranks, but the former is a basic xenonym given in regular straight font, while the latter is a technical xenonym and marked in italics.

Lexicographic description of xenonyms

The principles of lexicographic description of xenonyms were developed by V. V. Kabakchi within the general theory of interlinguoculturology [1; 4] and implemented in *The Dictionary of Russia* [3]. In particular, they include:

1. clear indication of the xenonym status, i.e. it being a basic, technical or nonce xenonym;
2. rich illustrative material to guide the readers in their use of the xenonym in question;
3. careful defining strategy and vocabulary, aimed at avoiding any chance of cultural confusion. In the case of culturonyms, it is the unique cultural component of their meaning that needs to be rendered, so substitution by perhaps more familiar, yet not exactly equivalent terms of other cultures without distinct indication of the difference is to be avoided;
4. clear indication of the transliteration system adopted. The fact that English and Russian make use of different alphabets leads to the issue of systemic transliteration or rather choosing the system among a spectrum of possibilities (the dominant ones are the Library of Congress system and the British Standard, while the system suggested by the RF Academy of Science has failed to acquire any influence on the in-

ternational scale). The system of transliteration is of importance in order to provide for the next criterion, which is:

5. clear correspondence between the original culturonym and the xenonym, which requires a clear reference to the source culture in the dictionary. This would provide the readers with means for an extensive research in the source culture, in case they need it. The most precise way to define a xenonym is by establishing a correspondence to the original culturonym. *The Dictionary of Russia* is innovative in this respect: it introduces the transliterated version of all culturonyms, redirecting the reader to the preferred variants, in case they do not coincide with the transliterated one (e. g. *RASKULACHIVANIE* → DEKULAKIZATION). Thus, apart from the preferred "collective farm", the Dictionary includes the transliterated "kolkhoz"; apart from "Thaw"—'ottepel'', etc. There are more problematic cases, though, such as "Moguchaya kuchka". This leads us to another principle:
6. there may be a variety of ways to introduce a xenonym into the target language, each having a niche of its own, being adequate for a particular situation or addressee, and all of them need to be accounted for in the dictionary with restrictions and recommendations clearly marked. Thus, "Moguchaya kuchka" can be alternatively rendered as "the Five" / "the Mighty Handful / Band / Coterie", which does not mean that all of them are equally acceptable;
7. the OED, based on "historical principles", pays much attention to etymology, tracing the roots and evolution of the lexical items included. This information is relevant for a xenonymic dictionary; yet, a mere list of variants that used to be or are in use is not enough — it should be supplemented with tags, instructing the readers on applicability of the variants. Another important feature of xenonym evolution is the general trend towards restoring the form closest to the source culturonym ("xenonymic restora-

tion"), which lies behind such changes as "copec" → "kopek"; "Archangel" → "Archangel'sk", etc. As a reference source, the dictionary might be instrumental in guiding its users towards the more precise and correct variants;

8. xenonyms are a relatively dynamic lexical category, which is due to a number of factors: (1) the constant flow of new terms reflecting changes in the cultural situation, new perspectives and points of interest (e. g. "Novichok", which entered the English-language discourse only in 2018 following Skripals' poisoning, has already become so widely known that it now requires neither explanation nor graphic marking), parallel to older terms losing their relevance and turning into historical terms only known by cultural historians. Thus, in 1991 it seemed that "Perestroika and glasnost, glasnost and perestroika. They will still be secure in the vocabularies of all languages of the world long after the children of the Soviet Union and its satellites have begun to ask: 'Mummy, who was Lenin?' or for that matter: 'Mummy, who was Gorbachev?'" [11], yet now these terms are well past their days of glory and quite forgotten by the general reading public; (2) formal evolution of xenonyms, which may originally be introduced as competing variants, based on different transfer techniques, sometimes involving imprecisions and distortions (e. g. the case of "Nova Zembla" — the early variant of Russianism "Novaya Zemlya"), but gradually undergo the abovementioned process of restoration, with the most precise xenonymic variants getting established as the preferable ones; (3) semantic evolution of xenonyms, which,

like loans in general, are subject to assimilation and naturalization and lose their precision along the way. Therefore, the discourse requires continuous monitoring in order to trace the changes both in the composition of the stock of xenonyms in general and the formal and semantic features of individual items in it.

Lexicographic description of xenonyms should combine careful attention to details, deep analysis of each particular context and the strategy of introducing the term, taking into account the genre and general communicative situation underlying the Russianism introduction, which is only possible in the traditional hand-picking mode. On the other hand, the analysis of isolated usages does not provide sufficient grounds to judge the place of an item in the language in general. Deep focused analysis needs to be supplemented with corpus data.

Conclusion

Lexicography is not only a "never ending story" but also a "now or never" one. Lexicography is by no means an infant branch, yet, today we are facing a situation that allows us to start afresh in a way. On the one hand, we are witnessing a kind of linguistic revolution, when the world is finally acquiring a truly global means of communication, which naturally comes into contact with almost all the other languages of the world and absorbs consequences of these contacts. On the other hand, we finally get a chance to rid ourselves of all extralinguistic restrictions and compile a dictionary as large as we need. Not only does technological progress hugely facilitate the task but it also allows us to employ big data analysis to finally get a portrait of the language which is unbiased and artificial constraints-free.

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СВЕДЕНИЯ ОБ АВТОРЕ

БЕЛОГЛАЗОВА Елена Владимировна — *Elena V. Beloglazova*
Российский государственный педагогический университет им. А. И. Герцена, Санкт-Петербург, Россия.
Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Saint Petersburg, Russia.
E-mail: evbeloglazova@herzen.spb.ru
Доктор филологических наук, заведующий кафедрой английского языка для профессиональной коммуникации, доцент.