

Semantic Analysis of the French Word “Pistol” and its Origin in Russian Literary Language

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Abstract

The present article deals with studies and analyzes the lexical innovations of French origin in the Russian literary language on materials of fiction, opinion journalism, as well as etymological, defining, and foreign dictionaries under well-defined criteria of foreign word extraction. Various investigations dedicated to the study of language contacts offer variety of criteria describing the functioning of foreign vocabulary in the Russian lexical system as the result of interaction of various manifestation of language contacts. The authors discuss peculiarities of semantic adaptation of the Gallicisms in the context of convergent-divergent features of the French prototype's semantics and correlative borrowing in the Russian language. On a material of works of Russian authors of 19 - early 20 century, dictionaries of foreign words of the Russian language, explanatory and etymological dictionaries of the French language and French written monuments of 17 - 18 centuries the complex component and semantic analysis of lexical structures of French words and Gallicisms has been realized to identify the most productive models of the reception and adaptation of the values of the foreign word in lexical system of the receiving language, as well as the description of the phenomena that occur in the process of language contact and directly or indirectly affect the choice of a particular model.

Keywords: Language; Linguistic; Borrowing; French; Russian; Semantic.



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1. Introduction

For several ages a problem of foreign lexis activation and function in Russian language remains as one of the most urgent not only for Linguistics and Literature Studies, but for the other spheres of society besides. A single person, who interested in history of his country, its Present and Future, will not remain indifferent in terms of the mentioned problem. As a complicated diachronic process, foreign lexis adaptation takes time. According to a number of scientists (Abavasiani and Sanchool, 2018); (Ageeva *et al.*, 2015); (Akhpanov *et al.*, 2018); (Craig, 2017) the semantic reception of foreign lexis takes the central place in this study, in comparison with formal-grammatical adaptation of it. This is because reception is connected with the process when lexical item's semantic structure conforms to new lexical-grammatical system. In the recent time a number of research, which are describing borrowing process, analyzing adaptation of lexical unit to the system of reception language appeared. As a rule, scientists divide the process of lexical unit transfer from one system into another into stages, by determining the sequence and formal characteristics, which are inherent to the unit on each stage.

Despite a number of research on the problem of borrowings (Cubberley, 1993); (Dekeyser, 2015); (Dumas, 1975); (Epishkin, 2010) modern Linguistic science is characterized by disordered definitions, insufficiently rigorous approach to typology of foreign lexis, and unduly high level of emotions, what embarrasses a scientific analysis of borrowings' adaptive characteristics in comparison with phonetics and semantics of prototypes. In this manner, the current research is dedicated to identification and description of some consistent patterns of borrowings' semantic adaptation in diachronic prospect taking into account allo- and isomorph characteristics of contacting languages.

2. Methodology

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 diachronic description of language. These are all considered to be traditional for lexical-historical research. In addition, a statistical method of quantitative description was used when studying some aspects of the problem (Abavasiani and Sanchool, 2018)

3. Results

Semantic adaptation is a complex process, and as such is represented by many scientists as a sequence of several stages, each of which has its specificity and characteristic features. In terms of synchronic approach all the various ways of foreign vocabulary semantic evolution are generally reduced to four types of prototypes' lexical meaning modification:

1. Narrowing or reduction of semantic volume, where both prototypes' semantic structure simplify and narrow, with a specification of a particular meaning which remain after borrowing.
2. Conservation of semantic volume, as a rule, typical for specific vocabulary without additional connotations. Monosem from the source language remains the same in the receptor language, which suggests one particular concept.
3. Expansion of semantic volume. In terms of foreign lexical units' semantic volume expansion, we understand complexity of the structure, i.e. semantic derivative formation. Due to specifics of the material, generalization of lexical meaning is not currently important. On the contrary, semantic volume expansion may be a consequence of either: semantic innovations develop on the base of the host semantic system or they are borrowed.
4. Semantic shift, characterized by lexical meaning change due to some or other reasons.

Large time interval of research rarely allow so called clear types to be distinguished, on the contrary, our objective is to study the dynamics of Russian languages' Gallicism reception. For this purpose we will try to illustrate significant time elements as accurately as possible: fixation in a new meaning, the formation of innovations (both on the base of the host language and through secondary semantic borrowing), revitalization of occasional and/or individual-author's meaning etc.

4. Discussion

4.1. Models of Phonological Interpretation of the Phonemes (y) and (u)

Let us consider this statement by example of Gallicisms *пистолет* – *pistolet* (*pistolet*) and *пистоль* – *pistohl* (*pistole*). According to Yanovskiy's dictionary, *пистолет* – *pistolet*– *pistol* lexical item borrowed into Russian with the meaning a rifle-like firearm, but with a very short trunk, used by cavalry, because it is much comfortable to shoot with one hand; also used on ships during boarding fight and powder saps with a great benefit. – The first pistols were invented in Pistole (Duchy of Tuscany), from what their name comes. Germans started using pistols before the French. Here we investigate semantic structure of the prototype, from Emile Littré's dictionary (Kramer, 2012). The first meaning is *Pistolet à rouet ou pistole*, nom d'une ancienne arme courte employée principalement par la cavalerie aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles; cette arme portait une platine à rouet, т.е. *pistol*, a name of ancient short weapon, mainly used by cavalry in XVI-XVII ages.

The second meaning, according to Kramer (2012) dictionary is *Aujourd'hui, la plus courte des armes à feu portatives ; fait partie de l'armement de la marine et des troupes à cheval*, т.е. the shortest of all the firearms, is in service with the fleet and cavalry – and all its numerous derived names (smoothbore pistol, rifled-bore pistol, cavalry pistol, pocket-pistol, to fire a gun and etc.): *pistolet lisse* ; *pistolet rayé* ; dans ce dernier, la surface intérieure de l'arme présente des rayures en hélice, destinées à communiquer à la balle un mouvement de rotation. M. de Nemours força presque M. de Beaufort à se battre ; il y périt sur-le-champ d'un coup de pistolet à la tête (Littré, 1873). Here we will compare the data with a dictionary of borrowing in Russian language: *pistolet* (*pistol*) – fr. *pistolet*. The shortest firearm, invented in XVI age in the city of Pistoia (Ojegov, 1973); *PISTOLET* (*pistol*) – short firearm, was displaced by revolver; *PISTOLET* (*pistol*) (fr. *pistolet*). Short firearm, used for one-hand shooting: named after the city of Pistoia in Italy, where was invented in XVI (Pavlenkov, 1911).

In literature given lexical unit functions only in one meaning: *Злобная мысль мелькнула в уме моем. Я опустил пистолет. «Вам, кажется, теперь не до смерти, — сказал я ему, — вы изволите завтракать; мне не хочется вам помешать».* *Zlobnaya mysl melknula v уме moyom. Ya opustil pistolet. Vam, kazhetsya, teper ne do smerti, - skazal ya emu, - vy izvolite zavtrakat; mne ne khochetsya vam pomeshat* (Pushkin. The Belkin tales / The Shot); *Висит у меня на стене турецкий пистолет: еще ни разу во всю жизнь не изменял он мне. Visit u menya na stene turetskiy pistolet. Eshe ni razu za vsyu zhizn ne izmenyal on mne* (Pennycook, 2016). Russian language definitions dictionaries of XX, as a rule, provide the only one meaning of the lexical unit. *PISTOLET* (*pistol*), -a, masculine. Stub-barelled weapon for short-range shooting (Pavlenkov, 1911); only «Ushakov's definition dictionary» provides one more sememe: *PISTOLET* (*pistol*), -a, masculine. (fr. *pistolet*). 1. Short firearm for hand-shooting. Single-shot pistol. Autopistol. «В руке не дрогнет пистолет». *V ruke ne drognet pistolet* (Lermontov). 2. Naughty boy, hooligan (slangy word) (Popescu, 2013). Here we are back to the first meaning of the French prototype and retrace how lexical item functions in both languages. In French language lexical unit's main meaning associated with finances:

1. *Pièce d'or qui n'était point battue au coin de France et qui valait onze livres et quelques sous* a golden coin that worth just over eleven livres.
2. En France, terme de compte qui se disait de dix livres tournois, et qui se dit aujourd'hui de dix francs accountant. Today is ten francs. Je jetai cinq cents pistoles par les fenêtres de l'hôtel de ville (Littré, 1873).
3. La pistole volante, pistole que la légende suppose toujours revenir à celui qui la dépense incommutable coin. Cet homme fait tant de dépense qu'on dirait qu'il a la pistole volante.

Yanovskiy's interpreter of words fixes the lexical unit in only one meaning, namely: *пистоль* (*pistol*) – Spanish coin that equal to 4 *pezodotto*, worth 380 our kopecks. In Portugal pistol worth 360 kopecks, more or less, depending on currency rate (Retz, 2017). Mikhelson states the same: *ПИСТОЛЬ* (*pistol*) – fr. *pistol*. A golden coin in Italy and Spain, worth approximately 5 rubles. Here it should be mentioned that in analyzed pieces of writing of the XIX в. pistol had not been registered in the coin meaning. The first case of such meaning comes from the beginning of the XX century (see above). Either we will note that modern French language definition dictionaries, in distinction from Littré, reflect the same meaning *nom qui fut donné en France à un écu d'or espagnol du début du XVI^e s*, what means Spanish golden coin from the beginning of the XVI century (Kramer, 2012). The only borrowing fixed in the

meaning of prototype, i.e. terme de compte qui se dit aujourd'hui de dix francs, refers to the end of the XX century: Эку равняется трем ливрам, а пистоль — десяти! Ekyu ravnyaetsya trem livram, a pistol – desyati!

A. Chudinov's foreign vocabulary dictionary, published in 1910, encapsulates a sememe firearm, what is more, without an archaic mark: ПИСТОЛЬ (pistol) – (fr. pistol). 1) A golden coin in several European countries = 5 rubles. c. 2) Pistol. In this meaning, which is analogous to the French one, Ancienne arme, dite aussi pistolet à rouet, employée principalement par la cavalerie (XVIe et XVIIe siècles). Dans la forêt on avait vu cinq hommes avec des pistoles (Kramer, 2012). Lexical unit functions in literary works from the middle of the XIX century, generally for creating a slangy connotation of the text (speech), for example: Глядь: а он на полу лежит, ве-есь в крови, и пистоль подле брошена. Glyad: a on na polu lezhit, ves' v krovi, I pistol' podle broshena; Смотрю: у Радды в руке пистоль, и она в лоб Зобару целит. Smotryu: u Raddy v ruke pistol, i ona v lob Zobaru tselit; Радда заткнула за пояс пистоль и говорит Зобару: — Я не убить тебя пришла, а мириться, бросай нож! Radda zatknula za poyas pistol i govorit Zobaru: - Ya ne ubit prishla, a mirit'sya, brosay nosh! (Pennycook, 2016). After the analysis we may state that пистоль (pistol) word's function connected with known difficulties in gender identification (despite the unequivocal statements of definition dictionaries, relating the lexical unit to the masculine gender, the extracts mentioned above, convince us of the opposite), as distinct from entirely stable phonetic-morphological image of the word пистоле (pistolet) (french prototype's last aphonic consonant becomes pronounceable in Russian, what automatically identifies the lexical unit as a masculine one); and its more or less smooth semantics (we deliberately did not take special meanings which entered the Russian language only in the middle or the end of the XX century and still almost not represented in fiction). From our point of view, uncertainty in the question of gender identification is closely connected to the semantics: when it comes to weapons, feminine gender is more frequent; when it comes to coin – masculine gender prevails (both in Russian fiction, and in translated one, for example The Three Musketeers by Schmidt (1986). The only found exclusion for the pattern described above is M. Tsvetaeva's quotation, which relates «гишпанскую пистоль» (gishpanskuyu pistol) to feminine gender. However, it should be mentioned that M. Tsvetaeva had classical education, what could make the borrowing's gender identification reflectively for her, because in French pistole functions only as a feminine noun.

Consequently, despite the common seme in source language, both, coin and weapon were named after an Italian region Pistoia, where initially pistols were produced. Currency unit got its name through a metaphorical transfer: the smallest weapon – the smallest coin. (Pistolet a été ainsi nommé premièrement pour une petite dague ou poignard qu'on souloit faire à Pistoye, petite ville distant deux lieues de Florence, et furent à ceste raison nommez premièrement pistoyers, depuis pistoliers et enfin pistolets ; quelque temps après, l'invention des petites arquebuses estant venue, on leur transporta le nom de ces petits poignards ; depuis encore on a appelé les escus d'Espagne pistolets, pour ce qu'ils sont plus petits que les autres ; et, comme dit Henry Estienne, quelque temps viendra qu'on appellera les petits hommes pistolets et les petites femmes pistolettes' (Kramer, 2012), here it may be stated that that polysemy was decomposed into two different homonymous lexical units, not connected with each other (additionally, we will mention that word pistolet, contrary to the historical truth did not save the coin meaning, what made two lexical units even more different).

5. Summary

Influence of source language's semantic and its inherent semantic processes on borrowing's adaptation process are quite a bit spontaneous in nature. Only detailed seme-sememic analysis of borrowing's meaning components, which takes into account a number of attributes: semantic structure peculiarities, phonetic-morphological characteristics and lexical unit's etymology in source language, what sets a borrowing's prototype, and linguistic situation (for example, Russian-French bilingualism of Russian aristocratic society of the end of the XVIII – beginning of the XX centuries) allows not only to describe the process of the entry and adaptation of foreign vocabulary into the structure of the receiving language as completely and fully as possible, but also to predict many further tendencies conditioned by the systematic development of the language (Ushakov, 1993).

6. Conclusions

Through the analysis of sememic structure of French prototypes and foreign words in the recipient language, the authors of this study came to conclusion that foreign vocabulary of French origin is being comprehensively and actively assimilated by the Russian language and incorporated into the Russian language system. During this process foreign words lose their original characteristics and get new ones common for a recipient language.

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