

## LINGUA CULTURAL ASPECT OF AMERICAN REALIA INVESTIGATION

Each nation in the course of its historical development acquires a great number of features characteristic of the nation only and not pertained to any other, even to a genealogically related nation. The distinguishing features find their reflection in different aspects of material and spiritual life and are materialized in separate words and word-groups designating national customs, traditions, folk rites and feasts, administrative or political systems, etc. The need for students to develop sociocultural competence derives from the close relationship between culture and language.

The purpose of our work is the establishment of direct relationship between the historical past of American language and lingua-cultural aspect of modern American realia as well as the necessity of teaching American culture to the learners of English.

American English shows many influences from the different cultures and languages of the people who settled in North America. The nature of the influence depends on the time and the circumstances of contact between cultures.

As regards the interactions between British and American English, such scholars as Strevens and McArthur name three periods, or phases, the dates of which correspond to political and social events with important consequences for the language:

**1** The Colonial Period (1607-1776). During this period Americans generally supported the linguistic bond between their language and prestigious British English, and felt a loyalty toward Britain for cultural, humanistic and literary reasons; above all, they wanted to maintain language solidarity. The direction of influence was from British to American English.

**2** *The National Period (1776-1898). From the War of Independence American English underwent consolidation.* Noah Webster's writings on the language of America kept up the idea of a national language and led to a vision of a Standard American English. American English gained a reputation for creating new expressions while still being regarded a junior partner beside British English.

**3** The International Period (from 1898). With the Spanish-American War the USA became internationally significant. American English has emerged as being of equal status and value with British English. At present British English is greatly influenced by American variant. [4; 87]

Although all Americans do not speak the same way, their speech has enough in common that American English can be recognized as a variety of English distinct from British English, Australian English, and other national varieties. It is understandable that when a group of people leaves their native country, the language they speak evolves differently than the one of their homeland, and this happens because of lack of contact between the tongues. The less contact is, the more different is the evolution, because the home dialect also continues to evolve. Thus, the language of the settlers developed into American English and gained some features which are found in it only. On the whole, differences between the two varieties reflect differences between British culture and American culture.

Most linguists note three phenomena which have contributed to the divergence of the two varieties. First, British English itself changed as a result of time and social changes in the British Isles. Second, the English used in America developed a character of its own, reflecting the growth of the American nation. Third, the interactions between Britain and America themselves changed, which also affected English.

All speakers of English share a common linguistic system and a basic set of words. Because British English and American English are the foremost varieties of the English language and serve as reference norms for other varieties, they have often been compared and contrasted in terms of spelling, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. [2; 213]

The vocabulary of all the variants is characterized by a high percentage of borrowings from the language of the people who inhabited the land before the English colonizers came. Many of them denote some specific realia of the new country. Realia are concepts specific to a certain culture or language area and the terms used for these concepts. Such linguists as Vlahov and Florin distinguish ethnographic realia as words signifying notions of the discipline that studies everyday life and culture of peoples, forms of material and spiritual culture, customs, religion, art, folklore and so on. They are

further divided into:

everyday life: shchi, paprika, pie, spaghetti, empanadas, knedli, kumys, cider, trattoria, sauna, bistrot, drugstore; kimono, sari, sarong, toga, mocassin, lapti, jeans; izbà, yurt, igloo, wigwam, bungalow, fiacre, troika, cab, lando, gondola;

work: brigadeer, farmer, fellah; machete, rancho, latifundium, brigade, guild;

art and culture: kazachok, tarantella, coro, canzonetta, blues; balalaika, tam-tam, castanets, banjo; saga, bylina, chastushki; commedia dell'arte, petrushka; ikebana; bard, minstrel, geisha, carnival, Ramadan, May Day, Easter, Passover, Hanukah, Thanksgiving, taroc, pitcher; Santa Claus, Valkyrie, werewolf, vampire, baba yagà, flying carpet, lama, shaman, bonze; Mormon, Quaker, dervish, pagoda, synagogue, ides;

ethnic objects and slams: Bantu, Coptic, Cossack, totonaki, basque; cockney, Fritz, gringo, gorilla, yankee; carioca, kanaka; nip, gook, Jap; wetback, greaser, beaner.

measures and money: arshin, foot, mile, yard, li, pud, hectar, pertica, acre, quarter; dollar, kopek, lira, dinar, peseta, talent, grand, green. [1;118]

No less peculiar may also be the cultural or religious traditions of a nation often expressed through certain proper names or names of saints(cf. Ukrainian *Івана Купала*, *Маковія*, or Ireland's *St. Patrick*, Scottish *tartan*, American *Uncle Sam* or the British *John Bull*, the British *Lion*).

Nationally specific are often elements in governmental or election systems of a country (cf. the administration, secretaries and undersecretaries or primary elections in the U.S.A.).

Culturally biased are mostly the titles of address and the ways of conduct, and, at last but not at least, some articles of clothing / footwear (cf. the Scottish *kilt*, *tartan*, the Ukrainian *вишиванка*, *кенмар* or the American Indians' *moccasins*).

An Americanism may be defined as a word or phrase, old or new, employed by general or respectable usage in America in a way not sanctioned by the best standards of the English language. The most scientific and laborious of all collections of Americanisms is Thornton's. It presents an enormous mass of quotations, and they are all very carefully dated, and it corrects most of the more obvious errors in the work of earlier inquirers. He substituted the following:

Forms of speech now obsolete or provincial in England, which survive in the United States, such as *allow*, *bureau*, *fall*, *gotten*, *guess*, *likely*, *professor*, *shoat*.

Words and phrases of distinctly American origin, such as *belittle*, *lengthy*, *lightning-rod*, *to darken one's doors*, *to bark up the wrong tree*, *to come out at the little end of the horn*, *blind tiger*, *cold snap*, *gay Quaker*, *gone coon*, *long sauce*, *pay dirt*, *small potatoes*, *some pumpkins*.

Nouns which indicate quadrupeds, birds, trees, articles of food, etc., that are distinctively American, such as *ground-hog*, *hang-bird*, *hominy*, *live-oak*, *locust*, *opossum*, *persimmon*, *pone*, *succotash*, *wampum*, *wigwam*.

Names of persons and classes of persons, and of places, such as *Buckeye*, *Cracker*, *Greaser*, *Hoosier*, *Old Bullion*, *Old Hickory*, the *Little Giant*, *Dixie*, *Gotham*, the *Bay State*, the *Monumental City*.

Words which have assumed a new meaning, such as *card*, *clever*, *fork*, *help*, *penny*, *plunder*, *raise*, *rock*, *sack*, *ticket*, *windfall*. [5;92]

It is obvious that relationships, sometimes the balance of power between cultures, have an influence also on the translation strategy chosen for realia.

American English has grown up with the country. It began to diverge from British English during its colonial beginnings and acquired regional differences and ethnic flavor during the settlement of the continent. Today it influences other languages and other varieties of English because it is the medium by which the attractions of American culture – its literature, motion pictures, and television programs – are transmitted to the world. Most people around the world who learn English as a second language learn either American English or British English. The worldwide use of English began when Britain created a worldwide empire. Today, most people who learn English as a foreign language still learn British English. This happens because Britain has had a longstanding interest in teaching English and has publishers and institutions in place to promote it. American English is taught more and more, however, because of the worldwide success of American business and technology. This success also leads speakers of British English – even in England – to adopt many Americanisms. English has truly become a world language in science and business, and over time it will come to have more of an American English sound.

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## **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: INBORN OR SOCIALLY FOSTERED CAPACITY OF HUMANS**

One of the most distinguishing human characteristics is that only humans use language to interact with each other. We use it as a tool, and a process to obtain something, a desirable result. If to dig deeper into where human language comes from and how it happens that humans possess such advantageous capacity, we come to the matter of language acquisition. There are various definitions of language, many of them either specify or expand on the general rule that language is a means of communication. However, there is no definition of language being explained through its acquisition, that is why we consider it to be of a great importance.

Language acquisition and the proportions of inborn and social input components in it is a complicated issue. For centuries there was an argument whether a language is a social product or not. Many socio-linguists state that language is a maturationally controlled behaviour. Therefore, children learn the language being in a positive adequate environment. There are various proofs of children learning proper language due to being in well-educated families, being taught well in kindergartens, schools, etc. Also depending on which society a child lives in, he/she will imitate the language of the surrounding he/she is exposed to: being born to a Ukrainian speaking family, but living in the US would make English his/her first language too.

On the contrary to the social approach there are nativist theories that reveal the innate prerequisites to language acquisition. In 1965 Noam Chomsky revolutionized all the studies about language acquisition, saying that children learn through their natural ability to organize the laws of language. He introduced his theory about Language Acquisition Device (LAD), an inborn mechanism that enables all children to guide their language learning [4, 57]. Chomsky has got a lot of adherents: – M. Baker, C. Snow, E. Lomberg and others,- who investigate some specific aspects of the theory: LAD, inborn capabilities or Universal Grammar idea (the idea proposed by Chomsky, stating that all languages have the same basic underlying structure that builds up each specific language's rule pattern [3, 6]). One thing all psycholinguists agree on is that the children are not only imitating language as if they were parrots, but the learning processes are much more complex. They became aware that language is rule-governed. Child language is never a haphazard conglomeration of random words. Instead every child at each stage possesses a grammar with rules of its own, of course, simpler of those of an adult [2, 127]. One of the most vivid studies proves that conclusion in the sphere of English grammar. This is the field where many norm-based rules and generalizations can be realized. A 1,5-4 year old age group of children can serve to be exemplary in our argument. Our own study that included observations and recording of children's language includes various cases of the following use of Past Simple Tense formation: " I had this game and I *losed* my batteries, so I *goed* to the store and *buyed* another one...", " I am crying because Nick *taked* my doll...", " ... don't know how it *breaked*...". Children know that people add *-ed* and thus form past relations. They don't care whether it is an ending or suffix, what lexico – grammatical role it plays or whether it is correct to use it in all contexts or not. Their own observations and imitations serve as assumptive rules for their own language and not until they are corrected on each example basis do they learn to speak properly. So children appear to be "small linguists" that rule-guide their own speech.

Even though it is not a question of innateness any more, but there is a discussion on what exactly is innate. *Content approach* supporters believe that children inherently contain a blueprint for language, that is they have a universal framework imprinted in their brains. *Process approach* followers think that children are geared to processing linguistic data, having a special cognitive ability to analyze and utilize it.

All of the scientific studies done in the recent decade prove about the innate component in language composition and we definitely agree on it being a core stem of the language acquisition process. Unlike some scholars, we don't want to diminish or deny the social influence in that process