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DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE: ORIGIN AND INTERACTION. РАЗВИТИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА: ПРОИСХОЖДЕНИЕ И ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЕ

Исследование происхождения слов позволяет проследить связь между различными языками. Этимология слов свидетельствует о многочисленных контактах народов, говорящих на разных языках. Внимательное изучение этимологических слоев современного английского языка выступает достаточным доказательством сложной и долгой истории развития английского народа и его языка.

Examination of the origin of words helps to establish the interrelation between different languages. Word etymology throws light on the history of the speaking community and on its contacts with other people. Careful study of various etymological Strata in the Modern English vocabulary serves a sufficient testimony of a long and complicated history of the English nation and the English language.

Examination of the origin of words is of great interest in establishing the interrelation between languages and linguistic groups. Word etymology throws light on the history of the speaking community and on its contacts with other people.

The English vocabulary of today reflects as no other aspect of the language many changes in the history of the people and various contacts which the English speakers had with many nations and countries.

The long and controversial history of the people is reflected in its vocabulary and especially in the number of loan words in it. They are all different in origin and time of their entering the language and the circumstances under which the acquisition of the foreign element took place. A chronological investigation most obviously begins with the native tongue that was brought to these islands in the fifth century by the Germanic tribes who eventually overran the native Britons. The importance of this purely Germanic basis is often overlooked, largely because of the great number of foreign words incorporated in the present day vocabulary. But an examination of actual usage, as opposed to mere presence in a dictionary, shows how important the native words are. The next step will be to discuss the foreign words which have found a way into English from those early days, and see not only which words they have displaced, when the object of idea was already known, but also what effect they have had on the native element.

However, the functional role of the native element: the notions expressed by native words, their regularity and frequency of occurrence, lack of restrictions to their use in written and oral speech of different functional styles, proves that the Germanic element still holds a fundamental place, and the English vocabulary should be called Germanic.

People had thought that Latin, Greek and all European languages came from Sanskrit, but Jones disagreed. He believed that Sanskrit, Greek and Latin all came from a “common source”, which had perhaps disappeared. His idea caused a lot of interest and other people began to study these three languages. Their work supported his view. We now know that Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, English and many other languages all belong to one enormous “family” of related languages called the Indo- European family.

The common source- the language from which all these languages developed- is now known as Proto- Indo- European. It is thought that a group of people called the Kurgans spoke this language, or dialects of it, and lived in what is now southern Russia from some time after 5000 BC. In about 3500 BC the Kurgans probably began to spread west across Europe and east across Asia. As groups of Kurgans travelled further and further away from each other, they began to develop stronger difference in their dialects. With the passing of time, these dialects became different languages. When some of them (the Greek, Anatolian and Indo- Iranian languages) appeared in written form in about 2000 to 1000 BC they were clearly separate languages.

By studying languages as they are spoken today we can see some similarities which suggest that they probably have come from Proto- Indo- European. There are several semantic groups of them:

- Words denoting kinship: father (Vater, pater), mother (Mutter, mater), son (Sohn, сын), daughter (Tochter, дочь),
- Words denoting important objects and phenomena of nature: the sun (die Sonne, солнце), water (Wasser, вода)
- Names of animals and birds: cat (Katze, кот), goose (Gans, гусь), wolf (Wolf, волк)
- Names of parts of a human body: heart (Herz, сердце)
- Some of the most often used verbs: sit (sitzen, сидеть), stand (stehen, стоять)

From these and other shared words we can imagine something of the life of the Kurgans; they were partly agricultural, made clothes from wool, and used wheels.

There are also words inherited from Common Germanic. Common Germanic words originated in the common period of Germanic history. Semantically these words are connected with nature, with the sea and everyday life. Here we can find the nouns: summer, winter, storm, rain, ice, ground, bridge, house, life, shoe; the verbs: bake, burn, buy, drive, hear, keep, learn, make, meet, rise, see; the adjectives: broad, dead, deaf, deep.

There is one more etymological layer of native words, which can be defined as specifically Old English, that is words which do not occur in other Germanic or non- Germanic languages. These words are few, if we include here only the words whose roots have not been found outside English: OE clipian “call”, OE brid (NE bird) and several others.

Native words have a great word building capacity, form a lot of phraseological units, they are mostly polysemantic.

When people hear a foreign or unfamiliar word for the first time, they try to make sense of it by relating it to words they know well. They guess what it must mean- and often guess wrongly. However, if enough people make the same wrong guess, the error can become part of the languages. Such erroneous forms are called folk or popular etymologies.

Bridegroom provides a good example. What has a groom got to do with getting married? Is he going to groom the bride? Or perhaps he is responsible for horses to carry him and his bride off into the sunset? The true explanation is more prosaic. The Middle English form was bridgome, which goes back to Old English brydgyma, from "bride"+ guma "man". However gome died out during the Middle English period. By the 16th century its meaning was no longer apparent, and it came to be popularly replaced by a similar- sounding word, "grome" "seruig lad". This latter developed the sense of "servant having the care of horses", which is the dominant sense today. But bridegroom never meant anything more than "bride's man".

The examples of various etymological Strata in the Modern English vocabulary may serve as a sufficient testimony of a long and complicated history of the English nation and the English language. They prove that language changes can be understood only in relation to the life of the people speaking the language.

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