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Changeability within the lexical level of Latvian under the impact of Global English

Given the state of flux in various fields of life, it is inevitable that change affects also language in general and specific languages in particular.

Linguistic innovation is felt on different levels, however, the vocabulary expansion at present is a trait characteristic of a great number of languages. An important factor in the process is the impact of globalization developments that result in the predominance of English as a global lingua franca. English as the main direct, indirect and intermediary contact language massively affects the lexical level of languages in the whole Baltic area and beyond. This is evidenced by a variety of linguistic research, including *A Dictionary of European Anglicisms* (Gorlach, 2005). Borrowing is considered one of the easiest ways of expanding the vocabulary. On the whole, the general impression concerning the influence of English cannot be ascribed to either British or American English, or any other variety in particular.

A significant aspect of language is expressing cultural reality. Language, being a sensitive instrument, registers transitory phenomena, including the ever changing lexical level. Over the last decades a feature that has become characteristic of Latvian is the blurring of boundaries between the spoken and written form of language, and to a certain extent, between genres. The whole picture is even more complicated since language users quite frequently ignore the choice of linguistic means in relation to the speech situation. It concerns also excessive borrowing from English when Latvian speakers often replace well established words in their native language with loan words.

Concerning changeability within the Latvian vocabulary one can notice semantic loans, changes in meaning, ousting of earlier borrowings, spreading of less usual word formation patterns, enhanced use of idiom transformation and word-play elements (Veisbergs et al., 2009).

The material of the present analysis is a set of publications in the Latvian press on cultural and entertainment issues (film, theatre, concert reviews, sport event reports and interviews with popular people related to some cultural sphere) from "TV Izklaide", "Kultūras Diena", "Rīgas Viļņi" (2014-2015). Publications of the type are read by people belonging to different social groups, and presumably they provide suitable source material for research into borrowing. Emphasis is going to be placed on cases when loanwords from English appear either as already adapted, or they still preserve their original form. Loanwords are registered as representing different parts of speech - nouns, verbs, adjectives and interjections.

The main preliminary findings of the analysis indicate that:

latvianized forms are fully integrated in the text (declinable parts of speech are declined and verbs are conjugated in different grammatical mood forms)

among different parts of speech noun loanwords predominate in all kinds of texts.

Fully accepting the idea of a beneficial effect of borrowing upon language thereby enriching the vocabulary, one has to admit that unnecessary borrowing and indiscriminate playing with foreign linguistic elements, especially in print, substantially affects the quality of language.

References

- Gorlach, M. (ed.) (2005) *A Dictionary of European Anglicisms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Veisbergs, A. et al. (2009) Jaundarinājumi latviešu valodā 21.gadsimtā. *Letonikas trešā kongresa zinātniskie raksti*. Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmija. 211-223.