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## THE AWARENESS OF SOCIAL FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH BOTH IN LANGUAGE STUDIES AND TRANSLATION

The article is purported to enhance the awareness of the teacher and student involved in language studies and translation affected by the social changes both in the mother country and beyond when boundaries between standard speech and unorthodox usage are becoming increasingly fuzzy. Such trends remain high on the agenda by a professional teacher of English or interpreter involved in teaching English in professional terms.

Any person involved in mastering or teaching English is well aware of the new challenges associated with its changes both at home in Britain proper due to multiethnic factors of the present composition of the population as well as the continuing spread of English both in Europe and far afield. Recent statistics suggest that among the over 65 million people living in the UK more than 9 million constitute the visible minority affecting all segments of British life.

Besides the traditional existing varieties of British English the accepted standard is also changing rapidly due to enhanced globalization and unheard of intensity of political, social and cross-cultural links. Moreover, the younger generation is more prone to these changes which gradually affect all the other age groups of British society.

Definitely such shifts in the meaning of words and expressions are most obvious in conversational speech. Tony Thorne, the reputed researcher of English slang was correct to observe that “perceived boundaries between “standard” and “unorthodox” speech are becoming increasingly fuzzy” [3] which is interpreted as something “unclear”.

These changes occur on all stylistic levels and in every sphere of language usage. Such shifts in the meaning of words are especially obvious both in conversational speech, and in verbal addresses of politicians on various conflicting and challenging issues of both home and foreign policy involving the interests of large groups of people nationally and internationally.

Lynn Visson [1] analyzing the given problem uses the term weasel words accepted in American lexicology referring in comparison to the animal which changes the colour of its skin to the changing environment. In this sense ambiguity and polysemy are of special interest. Thus besides the traditional *divine* apostle of God, we come across she looked *divine*, a *divine* evening. One should bear in mind that the process of lexical diffusion starts with several lexemes which involves other words.

According to Google daily the English language is replenished by 50 words which become widely used. They enter mainly from slang, then they are circulated by the mass media, thus eventually entering the mainstream of verbal communication: *generation XL* referring to the McDonald generation of obese children, *office ghost* – a sly office employee who is formally at work but whose duties are done by others. In this context another interesting reference with the word *staycation* meaning vacation spent at home: “Resorts in the Caribbean are so expensive that this winter we’ll have a staycation – we’ll stay at home and go to movies and the theatre [2, p. 8]

The adjective *edgy* which recently denoted a state of nervousness and stress has acquired a new predominant meaning of being in vogue: e.g. She was a hit in her edgy dress.

Such examples which saturate the language of the mass media and every day speech should be treated seriously both by the learner and the teacher of English. Thus a meaningful scholar mastering English as a foreign language should concentrate one’s efforts both on the traditional basics of language acquisition and on intercultural issues which affect the incessant changes in language usage.

The meanings of words of people of one generation change their meanings by young people of the other generation. The younger people are more prone to change than their predecessors. The word *staycation* may serve as an example. E.g. Resorts in the Caribbean are so expensive that this winter we’ll have a *staycation* – we’ll stay home and go to movies and the park. (vacation at home)

Ambiguity and polysemy also promote the usage of words with another meaning when a well-known lexeme acquires a new meaning. Hence the traditional *edgy* feeling (напряженный) we observe a new meaning in an *edgy* dress (the latest most fashionable dress).

Jargon words may be both of positive and negative meaning.

Today “*gay*” is mainly associated with homosexuality, though in traditional spirituals of the recent past it never had such associations (the Black Spiritual and country song “Old Black Joe”: “Gone are the days when I was young and *gay*” (meaning a very merry person).

An interesting example of a neologism concerning “*Hello!*” “What? You expect me to work from 8 to 8 for 100 dollars? *Hello!*” (Are you crazy or mad?) The title of an article in New York Times “Subways and Manners? *Hello!*” (meaning good manners in the Metro are absolutely incredible).

The term “*slam-dunk*” widespread in basketball acquires a new meaning when it is used in every day speech: “His method of surgery is a *slam-dunk* in preventing tuberculosis”.

Many new words which were used by small groups of people – Afro-Americans, feminist groups, gays entered general speech: “Women need to be *empowered* to make full use of their rights” (meaning their rights should be extended).

Ex. He *embraced* his wife meeting her at the airport. He *embraced* Buddhism living in Burma.

Another interesting tendency observed in language use is observed with parasite words: He was *like* 50 (perhaps). We had *like* four hours of discussion. It's now *like* 5:30 p.m. (not sure).

Due to new ways of life words like *grab*, *nab* acquire new meaning which were associated with “get” and “take”.

E.g.: 1) On the way to work I go to the shop to *grab* a sandwich. 2) When hungry *grab* some grapes.

To *nab* in the past was used to catch, to detain, arrest a criminal. Today we observe a change of meaning: “I need to *nab* him before he leaves which means to clarify some issues of major importance”.

Parallel to such tendencies one should also be aware of the tendencies which occur when English words and expressions easily enter other languages acquiring new meanings. Duden commented on the word “*shitstorm*” and German language experts voted it “Anglicism of the year” as a word used in German to denote a public outcry.

Parasite words enter the language and then become widely used: like – being not sure. E.g.: He was *like* 50 (perhaps). We had *like* four hours of discussion.

Such usage may cause confusion if treated independently of the context. Logically a scholar mastering English should always be aware of ensuing challenges.

#### REFERENCES

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