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Chuvash Loans in Inner Translation

Abstract

This article is an overview investigating the forms and functioning of loans in the context of cross-cultural communication. We studied the case of English-language description of the Chuvash culture. The data were collected from the analysis of books and newspaper articles, as well as texts from the internet in English. The results of our study reveal that the Chuvash-English communication process gains some specific features as soon as in most cases the contact is not direct but through Russian. These features are prevailing number of indirect borrowings, varying spelling and penury of word-building paradigms of Chuvash loans.

1 Introduction

Nowadays we can note significant changes in ways of creation and translation of various texts therefore our attention was attracted by the peculiarities of so-called "inner translation" (term of Kabakchi 2000).

One of the characteristics of inner translation is direct inter-cultural dialogue and absence of interpreter, when the author creates texts devoted to the native culture in non-native language. Thus, the author serves as the interpreter at the same time. The other characteristic of this type of translation is absence of any original text provided for traditional translation.

For our study we have chosen the Chuvash-English contacts. Chuvashia is one of the republics within the Russian Federation with two official languages — Chuvash (native language) and Russian (second language). The territory of Chuvashia was annexed by Russia in 1550 proving that Chuvash-Russian contacts have rather long history reflected on the linguistic situation.

The choice the Chuvash Republic is determined by such factors as Chuvash-Russian bilingualism, federal official status of Russian and more intensive Russian-English rather than Chuvash-English contacts. The texts devoted to the Chuvash culture in English mostly belong to the touristic and commercial type of publications. They are chosen neither by topic or scientific degree, nor by the author, as the interest of our research lies in working out the means of non-English elements nomination in general.

As soon as one of the main peculiarities of "inner translation" texts is a considerable number of retained lexical units from the autochthonous language, our study will be devoted to the analysis of such non-English units integration in the English texts.

2 Types of Loans

In linguistics loans are classified according to different aspects concerning (a) the way of borrowing, (b) a speaker using them, (c) the stage of conventionalisation. We are going to give an outline of types of loans according to the known classifications.

Regarding the way of borrowing loans are classified as *direct* — as the result of a direct contact of two cultures, and *indirect* — through other languages (Proshina 2001: 184, Aidukovich 2000: 104-110).

For the direct loans there exists a classification based on the *type of the speaker* who uses these units — a native or non-native speaker. So loans are divided into proper loans and retents. In the first case we deal with pure borrowings, whereas in the second case we can notice retention of local vocabulary in the canvas of non-native English (Semenets 1985: 94-95, Cherednichenko 1981: 251).

Since the process of borrowing is not reduced to the simple transferring of one language elements into the other language system, the foreign language element goes through the specific way of assimilation, where we can mark out several steps: 1) occasional use in the speech of bilinguals, 2) quoting in the written language, most frequently accompanied by different types of explanations, 3) phonological adaptation and morphological integration in the borrowing language.

According to the *stage of loans conventionalisation* in the receiving language two large classes of loans are distinguished: conventionalised (integrated, assimilated) words and the non-conventionalised (heterogeneous, foreign, nonce) words (Bragina 1981: 82-83, Krysina 1993: 43, Grinev 1982: 127). The assimilated words, as a rule, are registered in lexicographical sources while the heterogeneous ones appear in rare occasional uses in texts without being fixed in the language, but sometimes getting to a special type of dictionaries — the dictionaries of foreign words (Proshina 2001: 185).

Taking into consideration the loans classifications, Kabakchi (1998) proposes a more accurate division of loans into three main groups 1) *basic* (lexical units registered in abridged dictionaries and known to an average language speaker); 2) *special* (lexical units registered in unabridged dictionaries and known to the domain specialists); 3) *occasional* (lexical units not registered in dictionaries but appearing in the texts devoted to the external culture) (Kabakchi 1998: 31-36).

3 Graphic and Phonetic Conventionalisation of Loans

The **graphic** form of a borrowing depends not only on the *degree of conventionalisation* (as a rule, earlier loans are mostly differed from their original forms) but also on the *homogeneity/heterogeneity* of the contacting languages. When we deal with a homogeneous alphabetical pair of languages (French-English, for example) there occurs the transplantation of lexical units — "mechanical, without any changes transferring of units of one language into the text in the other language" (Kabakchi 1998: 73), sometimes with the loss of diacritical signs.

In the case with the heterogeneous languages the methods of transliteration and practical transcription are used. Under practical transcription we understand the foreign words spelling by the means of receiving language alphabet taking into consideration their original pronunciation, while transliteration is "scientifically substantiated system of switching from one written language to another" (Kabakchi 1998: 75-77).

Concerning **pronunciation** of the borrowed vocabulary the linguists (Haugen 1972, Kabakchi 1998, Proshina 2001) concur that the loans may have several pronouncing variants, as a result of their conventionalisation on several models: 1) imitation of the original pronunciation, when the phonetic standard of the source language are maximally preserved; 2) observance of the receiving language reading rules resulting in appearance of a somehow changed, assimilated variant of the correlated word.

The choice of pronunciation variant depends on the *time* of the borrowing (pronunciation of earlier loans differs to the utmost from their original forms) and from the speaker's *degree of bilingualism* – bilingual speakers manifest the tendency to pronounce the borrowed words in the form closer to original, and people speaking one language only, fulfil almost complete replacement of foreign sounds by the sounds of their native language.

As soon as English is in contact with both accent and tonic languages the question arises as to preservation/modification or acquisition of a *stress pattern*.

Researchers in this domain (Martyanova 1971, Yermolovich 2001) note, that in the words, borrowed from the accent languages the displacement of stress is frequently observed. That is caused "by the internal laws of speech rhythm system and has an involuntary nature" (Yermolovich 2001). For the loans from the tonic languages "the place of stress is determined by the accent system of the borrowing language which causes the appearance of accento-rhythmical variants in many disyllabic and trisyllabic loans (Martyanova 1971: 67).

4 Character of the Chuvash loans.

Loans from the Chuvash culture are not numerous in English. The dictionary borrowings include the name of people and language (*Chuvash*), republic (*Chuvashia*) and the capital (*Cheboksary*). These conventionalised loanwords are most likely special and not basic lexical units as they appear in unabridged and encyclopaedic English dictionaries. The fact that only these words appear in the dictionaries may be explained their official status as soon as this is the minimal set of units to represent any nation – the names of people, language, country/republic, and capital. It is also necessary to mention that in spite of their being registered in English dictionaries these loans have varying spelling in texts *Chuvashia* – *Chuvashya/Chuvashiya*, *Cheboksary* – *Ceboksary*, what testifies the incomplete conventionalisation of these terms.

The non-conventionalised occasional loans belong mostly to the group of toponyms (*Shupashkar*, *Chavash En*, *Atal*, *Alatyr*, *Shumerlya*, *Kozlovka*, *Vyrnary*, *Ibresi*) and appear in the English texts mostly in parallel construction: *Atal* (*Volga in Chuvash*), *Shupashkar* (*the capital of Chuvashia*).

Chuvash loans may be divided into directly and indirectly borrowed ones. The number of direct loans is not very impressive whereas the quantity of indirect ones is much more considerable. Analysis of Chuvash loans in English shows that most of them pass through the Russian language and acquire some changes before being used in the English texts.

Two basic methods of indirect borrowing are revealed. In the first one we find, as the basis of loans in English, the Chuvash borrowings in Russian. For example, the Chuvash term for indicating the people is Chuvash *Чăваш* → Russian *Чуваши* → English *Chuvash*. But the situation is not the same with *Chuvash* indicating the language. In fact in English we find the borrowed root of the relevant Russian term *Чувашский (язык)* ← Chuvash *Чăвашла*.

The second method uses the Russian lexical units for Chuvash cultural phenomena. For instance, the original name for the Chuvash capital is *Shupashkar* (*Шупашкар*) while it is the Russian term *Чебоксары* that has been conventionalised in English as *Cheboksary*.

Loans are characterised by different degrees of conventionalisation expressed in their phonographic and grammatical adaptation in the system of the receiving language. In this article we will examine the spelling and pronunciation of loans, registered in the texts and the dictionaries. The method of proper phonetic transplantation, characteristic for the oral communication and being the privilege of the source language speakers, when the phonetic standards of the source language are completely preserved, will not be examined in this work.

5 Graphic Conventionalisation of Chuvash Loans

Spelling. In the process of the Chuvash culture description in English we deal with the languages of heterogeneous alphabets. This fact explains the choice of transliteration method for borrowing from Chuvash.

As soon as most of Chuvash loans are borrowed through the Russian language where words are read practically in the same way as they are written it is possible to suppose that the method of practical transcription is used. The latter stands for writing down the borrowed words by means of receiving language alphabet according to the initial pronunciation of these loans. For example, *Novocheboksarsk* (Russian, *Новочебоксарск*).

Roughly 600.000 people live in Cheboksary and the nearby city of Novocheboksarsk.

But the direct Chuvash loans demonstrate proper transliteration. For example, *Atal* (Chuvash, *Атал*) and *Shupashkar* (Chuvash, *Шупашкар*). For example:

The guests of Chuvashia can stay at comfortable hotels "U Iriny", "Atal".

Cheboksary (Russian *Чебоксары*, chuvash *Shupashkar*) is a city in Russia, capital of Chuvashia.

In the English spelling of the words *Atal* and *Shupashkar* intervocalic consonant vocalisation is not reflected and the imitation of Chuvash initial pronunciation is not preserved. It happens obviously because of the occasional use of these loans and there is no need to know the peculiarities of the Chuvash language to find the relevant words.

Adal → 1) Атал

2) *Адал, whereas

Atal → Атал

Transliteration of Chuvash loans. The analysis of the English-language texts devoted to the Chuvash culture shows that the rules of russisms transliteration (Kabakchi 1998) are applied. This may be explained by the fact that the Russian and Chuvash languages use homogeneous alphabets and most of the Chuvash loans pass through Russian before attaining to English.

Still there are several symbols used to convey the sounds and letters unique for the Chuvash language:

- Ş ← Ç. For example:

"Arşurri" (Forest of Wisdom) written by M.F. Fedorov is considered as the starting point of the contemporary Chuvash literature.

The newspapers that were also published are the newspapers titled as Kanaş (Consultation) published in Kazan in 1918, "Şuranpus" (Dawn) published in 1919 and some other newspapers.

- Ü ← Ÿ For example:

The research of Fuchs /.../ was followed by the epic of N.I. Polorusov titled as "Pülere lin" (Decline of Boler City) published in the following years.

But we should admit that new symbols introduction is not typical for intercultural English in general and the Chuvash culture case is once more the demonstration of this fact – all the above-mentioned symbols are taken from the only site (www.ozturkler.com/data_english/0007/0007_15_05.htm) devoted to the Chuvash literature.

6 Phonetic Conventionalisation of Chuvash Loans

Pronunciation. In this article we shall study the pronunciation of dictionary Chuvash loans. We should point to the extremely little number of such loans – *Chuvash*, *Chuvashia* and *Cheboksary*. Although it is possible to distinguish two methods of loans pronunciation – a) partial imitation of the initial pronunciation and b) assimilation according to the receiving language phonetic rules.

For the illustration of these methods we shall take the word *Cheboksary* that has two phonetic variants a) [tʃɪbək'sari] and b) [tʃɪbək'sa:ri]. The other loans have assimilated pronunciation *Chuvash* [tʃu'va:ʃ] and *Chuvashia* [tʃu'va:ʃiə].

The presence of the two phonetic variants of *Cheboksary* may be evidence of a later entering of this word into the English vocabulary.

7 Grammatical adaptation

One of the main characteristics of the borrowing process from almost all the languages is the overwhelming majority of noun-loans. Chuvash loans are no exception; the entire mass of loans consists of nouns, therefore further illustration of grammatical adaptation will be based on such morphological characteristics of nouns as number and case.

Appearing in English texts Chuvash loans can develop plural forms in different ways that may be divided into two basic categories:

1. according to the English language rules:

- borrowing - s;

e.g. Chuvashia is home to only 45 % of the 2 million **Chuvashs** in the former Soviet Union.

The majority of the Chuvash people live in an area known today as the Chuvash Republic, but still about 900.000 **Chuvashians** live in the surrounding area known as Russia.

- borrowing - es;

e.g. Two nationalities live in Cheboksary: Russians and **Chuvashes**.

2. absence of any plurality indicator

e.g. The data for the republic were in 1979 the following: 1,3 m people, of which **Chuvash** (68.3%) and Russians (26%).

As a rule, the more conventionalised loans form their plural forms according to the rules of English, moreover the source language plural forms never appear in the texts. Thus, for instance, the assimilated loan *Chuvash* has plural forms according to the English rules –

Chuvashs, Chuvashes; the source language plural form *Chuvashsem* never appears in the English-language texts.

Concerning the second characteristic of loans grammatical adaptation, the case, it should be noted that in the English-language texts all Chuvash loans form possessive case by means of English -'s.

The Chuvash government has recently erected a very tall flag pole in Cheboksary's main square, in front of the "Yellow House", the government headquarters.

Given Chuvashia's lack of natural resources, its a mystery how the city is better maintained than its ridiculously oil rich neighbor Kazan.

The ability of loans using productive models of the receiving language to become the basis for the affixative derivation confirms the universality of language (English in this case) and the possibility of its application to any external, non-English, culture.

Taking into account the short duration of Chuvash-English contacts extremely small quantity of loans is not surprising so the only two loans, the nouns *Chuvashia* and *Chuvash*, have become a derivative source in English.

Chuvashia (n.) → *Chuvashian* (adj.) (on the analogy of *Russia* → *Russian*)

Chuvash (n.) → *Chuvash* (att.)

Thus the penury of word-building paradigms of Chuvash loans is one more feature of underdeveloped Chuvash-English contacts.

8 Conclusion

Specific character of contemporary communication in English is a considerable number of "inner-translation" texts, devoted to non-English cultures and created directly in English without any initial text in native language. This specificity makes more loans appear and diversifies their spelling and pronunciation forms as well as their grammatical adaptation in the receiving language.

Our study was intended to overview the forms and functioning of Chuvash loans in the texts in English. The analysis of Chuvash loans in English shows that their functioning is naturally influenced by mostly indirect character and a very short period of Chuvash-English contacts.

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