INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN ENGLISH ON THE BRITISH ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Abstract: The article touches upon the issue of influence of Americanisms on the English language. The article broaches a question of paying attention to this problem to prevent the loss of the great cultural layer – British English. This work is concerned with the absorption of British English by American English which shows its relevance. There are quotes of authoritative sources in the article emphasizing the importance of this issue.

Key words: British English, American English, Americanisms, influence, absorption.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается влияние американализмов на британский вариант английского языка. Затрагивается вопрос о необходимости привлечения внимания к этой проблеме для предотвращения потери великого культурного пласта – британского
In the 19th century, Oscar Wilde reckoned: “The Americans are identical to the British in all respects except, of course, language”. Actually, British English and American English have the same roots, but when the first European immigrants came to the New World, these two languages launched to slowly split. American English began to develop in its own way, because of the different living conditions and other immigrant languages. The main differences between American English and British English are the tone and rhythm. A number of new words and new metaphors originally produced in the United States have gradually taken root in the United Kingdom only now.

Recently I have found out that the English language is on its way of dying out. By saying that, I mean the original British language.

If you follow linguistic news, you must be acquainted with changes of British English, and see what I am talking about. Americanisms are gaining more and more popularity and seem to colonize the language. In the second quarter of the 20-th century, one well known US host of PBS Masterpiece Theatre said: “Every Englishman listening to me now unconsciously uses 30 or 40 Americanisms a day”. Due to statements of scientific researchers, nowadays people use Americanisms in their everyday speech ten times more than they did previous year.

But why is it considered to be such a pressed issue, if the British language seems to get richer and more multivarious due to borrowed words?

In the very beginning, Americanisms were brought to British culture to name some scientific and bottom-line words. But, in recent decades, the United States are widening the gap with Europe constantly in trade, military, science and
technology industries, what makes America’s position in the international arena particularly prominent, so the process of borrowed words spreading became uncontrolled.

At the early stages of Americanization of British English, some linguists confirmed, that Americanisms made the language more tactful, expressive, and euphonious. Nevertheless, there are many oppositionists of this point of view.

Nowadays, people of all strata, ages and professions use Americanisms. The reason seems to be obvious: it happens because of its popularity, freshness, novelty and glamour. People prefer a more modern American equivalent to its conservative version.

But, when we look at the depth of this problem, we can discover, that history repeats itself. Many new glamorous words have already existed in British English, but were borrowed and changed after that came back in their new form. Some scientists predict that British English can be entirely absorbed by American one by the beginning of the next century.

Besides, I should mention, that eventually it’s turned out that the two languages (British and American English) can’t stay equal and be used at the same time. American version starts to push out the British one. As G.B. Shaw incontestably declared: "We (the British and Americans) are two countries separated by a common language." If the expansion of Americanisms keeps going, we might lose the great cultural layer – British English.
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